

Understanding the Stages of Change (Prochaska et al, 1997) will help you:

- Be patient with your client – facilitates understanding and acceptance
- Avoid getting too far ahead of the client
- Reduce resistance or non-compliance
- Apply appropriate coaching strategy
- Offer change options that match the client’s readiness for change
- To be realistic: recommend the ideal change, but accept less as the change is ‘client dependent’

Stage of Change	Example	What the Client May Be Experiencing	Goal of the Stage	Strategies for Working with the Client
<p>Precontemplation</p> <p>Client is not considering change, is unwilling or unable to change.</p>	<p>A manager who makes his/her numbers, but is increasingly alienating everyone in the office with a growing retention issue.</p>	<p>Unaware or denies there is a problem with their behaviour.</p> <p>May be feeling angry, anxious or embarrassed that their behaviour may be ‘the’ problem.</p> <p>May want to change, but does not feel they could be successful.</p> <p>“Ignorance is bliss.”</p>	<p>AWARENESS needs to be raised.</p> <p>Provide information that can lead to personal awareness.</p>	<p>Establish rapport, ask permission, and build trust. Offer compassion, empathy, and hope. Raise doubts or concerns in the client about their behaviour. Elicit the client’s perceptions of the problem. Offer factual information about the risks of continuing in same manner. Provide personalized feedback about assessment findings. Explore pros and cons of continuing behaviour. Examine discrepancies between the client’s and others’ perception of the problem behaviour (360). Express concern and keep the door open. Reassure the individual about choices and next steps.</p>
<p>Contemplation</p> <p>The client is unsure about what to do. Acknowledges concerns and is considering the possibility of change, but is ambivalent and uncertain.</p>	<p>A manager who has been given a verbal or written warning about negative behaviour in the workplace and says it will not happen again. Knows they need to change, would like to change, doesn’t know how they will change.</p>	<p>Aware of the problem and seriously thinking about overcoming the problem. Not yet made any commitment to take action to overcome the problem. May be feeling ambivalent, uneasy or relieved at discussing the problem. There are both good and not-so-good things about their present situation. Client in this stage also struggle with the good and not-so-good things that might come with change. Both want to change and yet want to stay the same at the same time. This can be confusing as they feel torn between these options. “Fence sitting.”</p>	<p>GET COMMITMENT</p> <p>Weigh costs and benefits, demonstrating the Return On Investment (ROI) of making the change.</p> <p>Show the movement from Pain to Pleasure.</p>	<p>Provide support. Share examples of people who have successfully overcome a similar problem. Normalize ambivalence. Help to ‘tip the balance toward the benefits’ Elicit and weigh pros and cons of change. Examine the client’s personal values toward the change. Emphasize the client’s free choice, responsibility, and self-efficacy for change. Elicit self-motivational statements of intent and commitment from the client. Elicit ideas regarding perceived self-efficacy and expectations. Summarize self-motivational statements. Offer information about options and success.</p>

Stage of Change	Example	What the Client May Be Experiencing	Goal of the Stage	Strategies for Working with the Client
<p>Preparation</p> <p>Client is committed to and planning to make a change in the near future although is still considering what actions to take.</p>	<p>A manager who is actively considering available options to assist in making necessary changes in behaviour.</p>	<p>Has come to realize that the reasons for change outweigh the reasons not to change. Sees that the pain of staying the same outweighs the pain of change. As this weight increases on the side of change, the client's determination builds. Client begins thinking about how they can go about making the change they desire, making plans, and then taking action toward stopping old behaviours and starting new behaviours. With plans falling into place, clients often become more ready, determined, committed and excited about making the change.</p>	<p>MAKE A PLAN</p> <p>Create a developmental action plan with realistic 'doable' steps that the client can actually take. Ensure the client sees a clear path toward their ultimate goal.</p>	<p>Clarify the client's goals and strategies for change. Make goals S.M.A.R.T. goals. Offer a menu of options for change. With permission, offer expertise and advice. Negotiate a developmental action plan. Identify barriers to change and plan to overcome barriers. Identify resources to support change efforts. Enlist support of others and share developmental action plan with others.</p>
<p>Action</p> <p>The client is actively taking the steps outlined in the development action plan for change, but has not yet reached their goal.</p>	<p>A manager who has identified and selected a suitable coach and is attending coaching appointments.</p>	<p>Client begins to implement change plan and trying out new behaviours. Is actively engaged in working on the problem. Making significant efforts to succeed. May be on a bit of an emotional rollercoaster with the difficulty of change. Actively eliciting the support of others and realizing that people care.</p>	<p>ACTION BASED ON THE PLAN</p> <p>Others can actually see action, effort, interest, enthusiasm, pride in achievement in the client.</p>	<p>Engage the client in their action plan and reinforce the importance of sticking to the plan. Affirm positive changes and provide support for difficult changes to behaviour. Support a realistic view of change through small steps. Acknowledge difficulties for the client in the early stages of change. Assist the client in finding new reinforcers of positive change. Help the client assess social support for plan implementation. Refer to outside sources of support in the community and family.</p>
<p>Maintenance</p> <p>Client has achieved initial goals and is now working to maintain gains.</p>	<p>Client is attending regular coaching sessions and has made some visible changes in behaviour, as noticed by several staff members, but slipped up on one interaction with a colleague. Called coach in-between coaching sessions to debrief the slip-up.</p>	<p>Client is working the plan and expecting that he/she may revert to old behaviours, but is trying not to let that happen. May be feeling greater comfort with each success, but has concerns about continued success. Has the expectation that they will return to earlier stage. Expectation that there will be some 'recycling' through the stages and it's okay, it's normal.</p>	<p>RELAPSE PREVENTION</p> <p>Create a plan for dealing with relapses when they occur and acknowledging that they will occur.</p>	<p>Discuss and normalize the cycle of success/relapse. Acknowledge our humanity and that perfection is never a realistic goal for human change. "Welcome to the human race!" Reinforce self-efficacy and self-management efforts. "Progress not perfection" Help the client to identify a number of strategies and tactics to analyze and learn from relapses. Explore triggers for relapse, revise relapse prevention plans and review goals with client.</p>