

STEPS TO CHANGE

We all follow a similar pattern



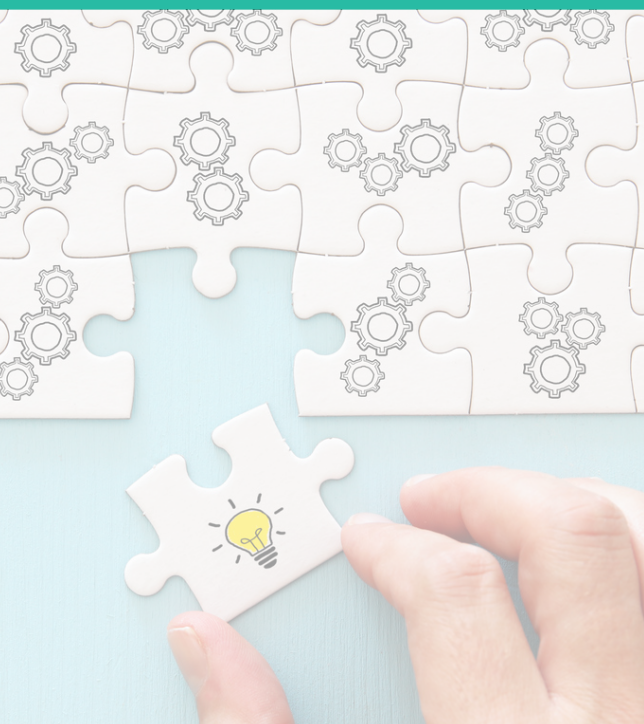
Moving toward change

There are several accepted models to explain how we can take steps to create change although we tend to follow a similar pattern when we decide that '*it is time*' or '*we have had enough*'. Each of us progress through a similar process as we move toward change.

It is natural to resist change, at least initially.

Change is a big step although it is actually good for us whether that be changes in our personal or professional lives as change encourages flexibility, opens us up to new experiences and provides opening to new opportunities.

First think about what you want to change.



Align core values and goals

Whenever you decide to implement changes, particularly change that is going to have an impact, spend some time thinking about why it is that you want change in the first place.

Some find this step easier to think through after they have defined their core values and have a deeper understanding what it is that is important. If your goals align with your core values you will feel more at ease about implementing the change.

Acknowledging and understanding the need for change is an early step in creating the change you desire. We all find it tempting to see that something needs fixing and quickly jump to a solution.

A better idea is to resist this temptation and spend time understanding the situation, the possible outcomes and how it is that you will achieve the results you desire.

In this tip sheet I have included the model developed by Prochaska and Di Clemente (1983). It is now rather old, but is still relevant and I think you will find it useful. Originally the model was used to help people overcome addictions however the model is now used in a variety of therapies to help people understand the steps involved in creating change

With intention and support, it is possible to successfully move forward.

The model by Prochaska and Di Clemente (1983) has six steps and I have listed them below for you to look over.

Stages of change

Pre -contemplation: A logical starting point for the model. Where there is **no intention of changing behaviour**; the person may be unaware that a problem exists and perhaps not even think that they have any behaviours to change. You have already had some thoughts about implementing some changes so you have already completed this step!

Contemplation: At this stage, the person has become aware that there is a problem but has **no commitment to change**.

In this stage, a person may be experiencing uncertainty, conflicted emotions or ambivalence about changing. Where do you think you are in relation to this step? Have you become aware that there is some aspect of your circumstances that you know need to change and yet have no commitment to change? Spend some time thinking this through.

Preparation: If you are at the preparation stage, you are intent on taking action and steps to correct the problem. You believe you can make the required changes and are showing willingness to prepare a plan of action. How does this sound? are you at this stage yet?

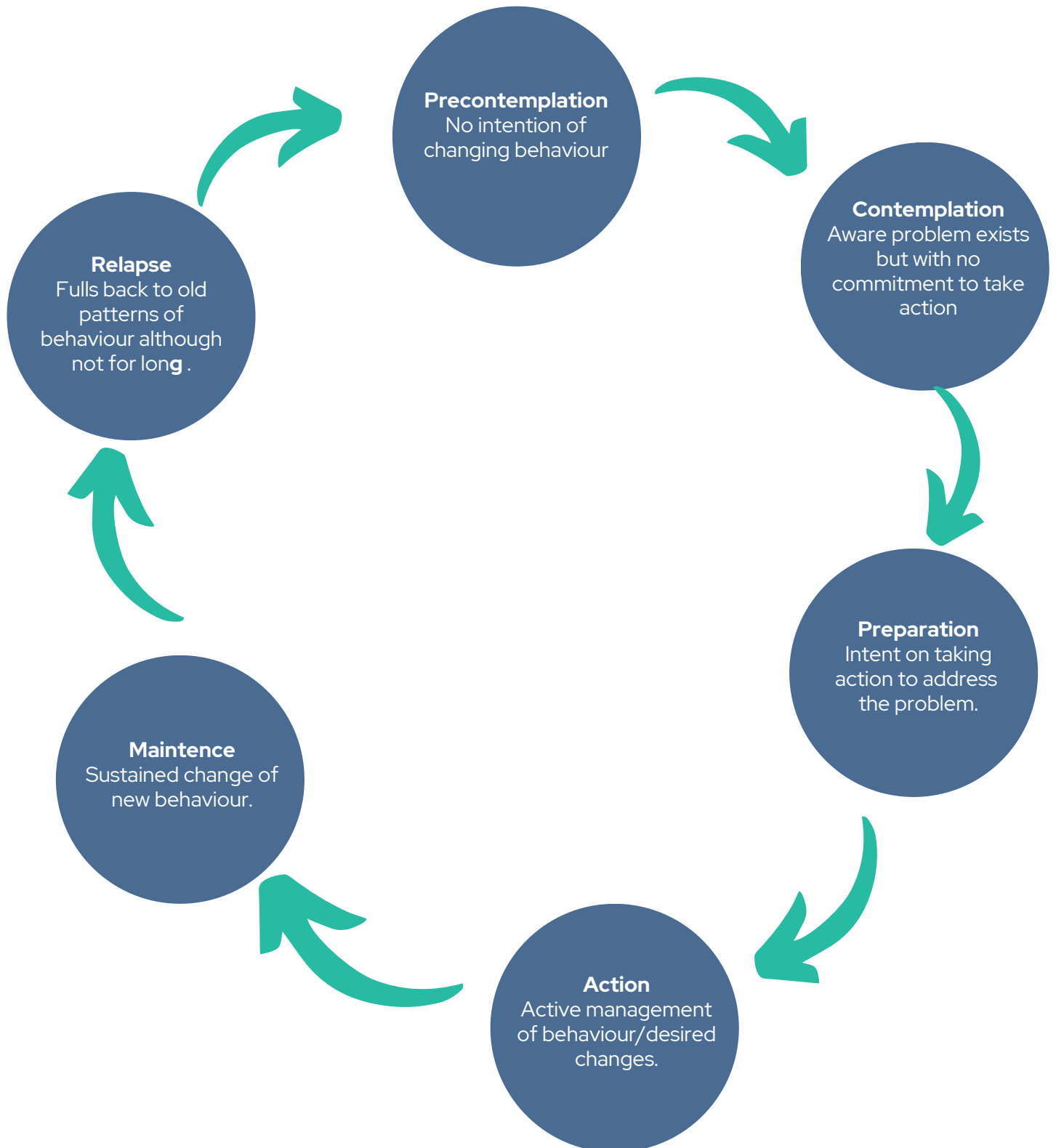
Action: Are you actively changing your behaviour? If yes, you have a greater confidence and ability to achieve your goals.

Maintenance: Sustained change occurs and new behaviours replace old ones. After adopting new change for at least six months, you are more prepared for potential setbacks as you will have developed skills and support systems along your way to create the desired changes.

Relapses: Yes this does happen and yes it happens to all of us, we go well for some time and then '*out of the blue*' we find ourselves back in old patterns. This is normal so do expect periods of relapse.

Upward Spiral: What is good to know is that each time you go through the cycle, you learn from each relapse and hopefully grow stronger so that relapse is shorter and not so devastating.

A diagram to show the steps of change



Model developed by Prochaska and Di Clemente (1983), although 'Relapse' stage has been added by others to the original model.

We sometimes get stuck

There are several models to show how we complete change in our lives and this is just one. When you are intolerant of uncertainty, your mind tends to be focused on the future rather than the present.

No doubt you wonder why some people seem to sail through all the challenges and changes that life throws at them while others get upset if they have to change their route to work on the odd occasion!

The key is how you view change and your level of acceptance of uncertainty.

Much has been written about the fact that human beings find uncertainty related to change as being stressful and not the actual change itself. Very often, it is not the event but the associated worry about 'what will I do?' Or 'how will the kids cope', that is what the majority of people find hard. There are several skills that you can develop that will help you to manage change in your own life and those same skills are helpful if the change is a personal change or work related.

The most important element to remember is that:

Once you have made your final decision about what you can and can't change, and what you are going to do about it, stick to it.

It is important to accept your decision and move on. Constantly worrying about 'what if' will undermine all your good work in managing those aspects of life that you can't control.

Give yourself a break, accept your decision, change what you can and accept what you cannot change.

***If you are seeking support to help you propel forward, please email
rhonda@mediationcoachingcounselling.com.au***

Support is available

This is just one of several resources available to you and I encourage you to subscribe so that you can receive regular update, announcements and offers.

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