

Stages of Change

Breaking Negative Habits

Built on the Transtheoretical Model
of Individual Change

Organizations don't change, people do

Organizational change is the collective change
of many individuals along the same path

Ross A. Wirth, Ph.D.
wirth@franklin.edu
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Discussion Overview

- Application – examples for discussion
 - Organizational setting – collective change of individuals
 - Personal change of a negative habit
- Introduction to the theory of (personal) change
- Discussion of the 5 Stages of Change
 - Description
 - Examples
 - How to help as an outsider at each stage
 - Personal action plan at each stage
- 10 Change Processes (cognitive & behavioral)
 - Mapped to Stage of Change

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Transtheoretical Model of Change

- Developed by Prochaska & DiClemente
 - Used in many health related change programs
 - Smoking, drug addiction, weight loss, cardiac care, etc.
 - Used in organizational change initiatives
 - Tactics for communicating change throughout the process
 - Comparative analysis of 18 major psychotherapy and behavioral change theories
 - 10 change processes
 - 5 Stages of Change
 - Precontemplation – benign ignorance of problem
 - Contemplation – basic awareness attained, no change planned
 - Preparation – want to change, but need to learn how
 - Action – working to change
 - Maintenance – establishing new habits

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Precontemplation

- Need to change is totally outside current awareness
 - There is no problem to address
 - Benign ignorance (no “decisional balance”)
 - What you don’t know won’t hurt you
- No intention to change at this stage
 - Will resist if pushed to change (“no need to change”)
- Examples
 - Employee not being given truthful evaluations
 - Thinking boss is looking after your best interests
- Outside help – need to raise awareness & doubts
 - Or wait until “something happens”
- Personal Action – become personally aware
 - Open assessments (self-, friend, family, boss)
 - Cost of existing behavior – lack benefit of change (initial understanding that costs & benefits even exist)

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Contemplation

- Basic awareness of problem attained
- Starting to search for information
 - Search may be unfocused, but willing to learn more
 - Starting to understand cost/benefit of change (tipping point)
- Procrastination is common – not ready to change
 - Fear of unknown and amount of work that may be needed
 - Difficulty – true, internal commitment not normal behavior
- Examples
 - Employee has received a bad evaluation – wakeup call
 - Mid-life crisis – find lack of focus in life
- Outside help – defenses still in place
 - Any forced change is likely to be short-term
 - Need to offer assistance in clarifying cost/benefit trade-offs and encouragement that change is possible
- Personal Action
 - Open dialogue with others about area of change

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Preparation

- Committed to change, but not prepared for action
 - Starting to develop a plan (tipped “decisional balance”)
 - Held back by culture of status quo
 - Discouragement from seeing peers in earlier stages (80%)
- Examples
 - Active reading of self-help books
 - Talking to others who have successfully changed
 - Learn to set realistic goals
 - Identify triggers for old behavior & action plan to alter response
- Outside help
 - Assistance in preparing an action plan (How to . . .)
 - Books, articles, videos, training workshops, seminars, role-playing
 - Encouragement to move forward (strengthen self-efficacy)
- Personal Action
 - Learn & be surrounded by positive people

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Action

- New behavior is tried – maybe without success
 - Old habits in place – relapse likely (this is normal - not failure)
 - Need to identify cue for old behavior
 - Learning process that does not happen all at once
 - Cycle back to Preparation Stage as necessary
- Examples
 - Switching back and forth in use of day timer (etc.)
 - Keeping a clean office (for a little while)
- Outside help
 - Coaching & mentoring
 - Counsel that relapse is normal (learn to identify trigger)
- Personal Action
 - repeat trials at change identifying triggers for old behavior
 - Reward success, even if only an attempt

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Maintenance

- Old behavior (habit) replaced by new
 - New behavior becomes more automatic
 - Working well in routine situations
 - Benefits realized & confidence building
 - Still needs reinforcement (relapse prevention)
 - Backsliding still possible (especially when under stress)
 - Becoming confident that unidentified triggers can also be overcome
- Examples
 - Come back from vacation and not know how to prioritize
 - Good office procedures except with special projects
- Outside help
 - Positive feedback, praise & encouragement
 - Help identify & use relapse prevention strategies
- Personal Action – shift from action to relapse prevention
 - Recognize failure as a need for more learning to overcome habit

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Where to start? What to do?

- Where should the process be started?
 - Wherever the individual is in the Stages of Change
 - Effort on the wrong Stage of Change is wasted
 - Change programs too often start with a forceful call to Action
 - » If that fails, most fall back to Preparation (may still be too advanced)
 - Arguing your position is useless unless individual is receptive
 - Responding to change resistance with greater force is futile
- Key issues for implementation
 - Sequential growth through the stages
 - Backsliding is “normal” – not failure
 - Indication that not all “behavioral triggers” have been identified and addressed – learning process
 - Cycle back to earlier stage as necessary

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Change Processes

1. **Consciousness raising** (ongoing need) – thought
 - Becoming aware of nature and negative implications of certain behaviors
 - Includes awareness of others having made a change
 - **Precontemplation stage**
 - Reflecting on articles & comments of others
2. **Social liberation** – thought
 - Provide more alternatives and resources to assist in the change process (move toward a decision point)
 - Clarify benefits associated with changing
 - Increase costs associated with not changing (shift change anxiety)
 - **Contemplation stage**
 - Seeking out positive behaviors in others (positive deviance)

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Change Processes

3. **Dramatic relief – emotional arousal – thought**

- Identification, experiencing, and expression of emotions related to consequences of existing behavior
 - Inspiration for successful change
 - Fear for maintaining existing behavior
- **Contemplation stage**
 - Becoming *upset* with consequences of bad behavior

4. **Self-reevaluation – thought**

- Personal reflection on existing behavior & desired change
 - Benefits relative to identify, happiness, and success
- **Contemplation stage**
 - Thought self-management – how we think about the behavior

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Change Processes

5. **Environmental reevaluation – thought**

- Understand cultural implications of behavior & opinions of others whose opinions are valued
 - Observational learning
- **Contemplation, Preparation & Action stages**
 - Seeking out impact of bad behavior on others

6. **Self-liberation – commitment – behavioral**

- Personal commitment to both ability to change and the necessary follow through
- **Preparation stages**
 - Peer accountability “going to change”
 - Purposeful *attempting* the new behavior (trial)

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Change Processes

7. **Counter conditioning – substituting** – behavioral

- Finding new behaviors that can be substituted for undesirable behaviors
 - Active creation of new mental models (how we think about things)
- **Preparation & Action stage**
 - Taking up a hobby or doing something relaxing

8. **Stimulus control** – behavioral

- Altering the surroundings to remove stimuli that trigger the undesirable behavior
- Establish new stimuli that triggers desired behavior
- **Preparation & Action stages**
 - Signs & reminders – physically remove triggers

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Change Processes

9. **Supporting relationships** – behavioral

- Emotional support, moral guidance, sounding board, encouragement, etc.
- **Preparation, Action, & Maintenance stages**
 - Join a support group
 - Break co-dependent relationships

10. **Reinforcement & rewards** - behavioral

- Internal & external rewards (positive feedback)
- **Action, & Maintenance stages**
 - Establish an active reward system
 - Repeating positive affirmations

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Points of Intervention

- **Precontemplation**
 - Focus on creating awareness of the need to change
 - Identify costs associated with the status quo and benefits from change
 - Accomplished within the individual's existing mental model
 - Not to create a tipping point for change, but an awareness that costs & benefits do exist
- **Contemplation**
 - Move to tipping point of benefits > cost of change
 - Increase (or clarify) perceived benefits of change
 - Reduce the expected or perceived cost of change
 - Clarify the costs of not changing

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Points of Intervention

- **Preparation**
 - Nurture self-efficacy
 - Developmental material
 - Formal training programs
 - Practice or role-playing
- **Action**
 - Coaching & mentoring
 - Recognize & reward success (even if only an attempt)
- **Maintenance**
 - Positive feedback & encouragement
 - Reposition “failure” as additional learning

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