

# 5 Stages of Change



## Precontemplation

**Definition:** Not yet considering change or is unwilling or unable to change.

*Peers in precontemplation often seek services because of pressure from others. They can often feel their situation is hopeless.*

**Primary Task:**  
Raising Awareness



## Contemplation

**Definition:** Sees the possibility of change but is ambivalent and uncertain.

*Peers in contemplation will acknowledge that they have a problem and begin to think about solving it.*

*Peers can struggle to understand the problem, the causes or possible solutions.*

**Primary Task:**  
Resolving ambivalence/helping to choose change.



## Preparation

**Definition:** Committed to changing. Still considering what to do.

*Most peers in the preparation stage are planning to take action and are making the final adjustments before they begin to change their behaviors.*

**Primary Task:**  
Help identify appropriate change strategies.



## Action

**Definition:** Taking steps toward change but hasn't stabilized in the process.

*Peers in the action stage overtly modify their behavior and their surroundings. They make the moves for which they have been preparing.*

**Primary Task:** Help implement change strategies and learn to eliminate potential relapses.



## Maintenance

**Definition:** Has achieved the goals and is working to maintain change.

*Change never ends with action. Without a strong commitment to maintenance, there can be relapse, usually to precontemplation or contemplation stage.*

**Primary Task:**  
Develop new skills for maintaining recovery.