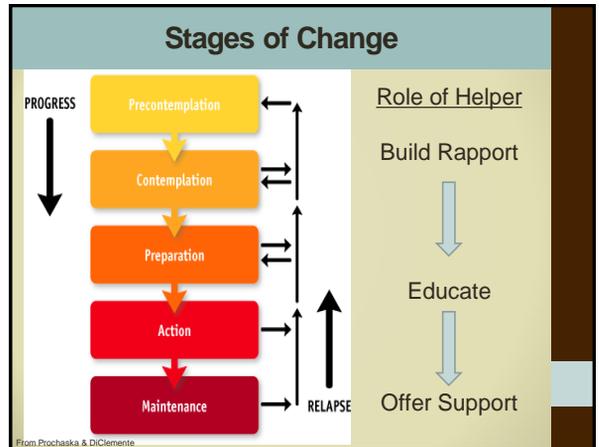


Stages Of Change

Matching Interventions
to
Personal Readiness



1. Pre-Contemplation

Characteristics of this Stage

- No consideration to change.
- Lack of motivation to change.
- Low self-efficacy (i.e., the person may not believe that they can actually change).
- Lack of information
- Contentment with the "status quo."

Helpers can...

1. Establish rapport and build trust.
2. Offer factual information about the problem.
3. Explore pros/cons of continuing on the road they are on.
4. Discuss the effect of the negative consequences they are experiencing.
5. Express concern and keep the door open.

From Prochaska & DiClemente

2. Contemplation

Characteristics of this Stage

- Active consideration to change.
- Ambivalence.
- Self re-evaluation.
- External motivation.
- Person starts considering the pros/cons or risks/benefits of changing.

Helpers can...

1. Encourage the person that feeling ambivalent is normal.
2. Emphasize the person's free choice, responsibility, and ability to change.
3. Help the person to see change as having internal as well as external benefits.
4. Help the person "tip the scale" toward change by helping the client focus on his/her own true values and goals.

From Prochaska & DiClemente

3. Preparation

Characteristics of this Stage

- There is a commitment to act.
- The person is seeking a window of opportunity to do it and how.
- Cognitive reframing.
- Internal motivation.
- Person is willing to take a risk and try something.

Helpers can...

1. Help the person clarify their own goals and strategies for change.
2. Offer a menu of options of ways to begin.
3. Help person enlist social support.
4. Consider the barriers to change and help the person lower them (finances, child care, transportation, work, etc.).
5. Discuss a change plan.

From Prochaska & DiClemente

4. Action

Characteristics of this Stage

- Active change is occurring, but the person hasn't reached a stable state yet.
- Behavior is goal directed.
- Active response to challenges.
- Willingness to experiment and learn new skills.

Helpers can...

1. Assist the person by focusing on reinforcing positive change.
2. Support a realistic view of change through small steps.
3. Acknowledge the difficulties of beginning a change.
4. Help person identify high-risk situations and plan for them.
5. Assist the person in finding coping strategies.

From Prochaska & DiClemente

5. Maintenance

Characteristics of this Stage

- The person is working to prevent relapse.
- As time goes on, person becomes less tempted.
- Re-evaluation
- Setting long-term goals
- Continued development of new skills
- Open to feedback

Helpers can...

1. Help the person identify new and healthy sources of pleasure (i.e., "don't take something away without adding something")
2. Help the person practice new coping strategies.
3. Develop a "fire escape" plan in event of relapse.
4. Maintain supportive contact.
5. The person needs to think about how s/he becomes part of the solution.

From Prochaska & DiClemente

So, what does this mean for helpers?

- Change is not a simple yes or no decision
- The people you are trying to help are at various points (stages) along a continuum of readiness to change.
- Typically, an individual doesn't skip stages; although the time spent in each stage by different people can vary widely.
- Ways to help an individual are different depending on what stage he or she is in.
 - If someone is in *Pre-Contemplation*, it does not good to ask them to start an *Action* program tomorrow!