

Stages of Change

What conversations can be helpful?

Stages of change	Possible approaches
<p>Pre-contemplation</p> <p>‘I don’t have a problem’</p>	<p>Raise doubts <i>For example, you might ask:</i> What do you think, if any, are the risks of using drugs? How does it affect what you want to do; where you want to live; who you love? What is it you like about using drugs? What is it you don’t like about using drugs? Where does this leave you? (Try not to push the balance. Leave the thoughts hanging there.) Increase their understanding of the risks and problems associated with their behaviour. <i>For example, you might ask:</i> How is your boss reacting to you unexpected absences from work? How do you friends feel about being with you when you are intoxicated?</p>
<p>Contemplation</p> <p>‘I am aware I have a problem’</p>	<p>Tip the balance <i>For example, you might ask:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think will happen if you keep on with this level of use? • What do you like about your drug use? • What are the things you don’t like about your drug use? • What would you like to do that you can’t do because of your drug use? • What things do you find difficult about changing? <p>Highlight the risks of not changing <i>For example, you might ask:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think will happen if you keep on living in that environment? (e.g. on the streets) <p>What might happen to your health if you keep on using?</p>
<p>Preparation</p> <p>‘I plan to change’</p>	<p>Help them decide for themselves the best course of action in regard to their future (e.g. treatment, housing, school) <i>For example, you might ask:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you want to do? • I’d be happy to give some ideas but I don’t want to get in the way of your thinking. • You’re the expert on you. Maybe you have some ideas of your own about what to do • What sort of information do you need in order to bring about change? <p>Increase their sense of personal coping <i>For example, you might ask:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What happens next? • How would your life be different if you pursued this plan/idea? • So what is your goal? • I can see that you’re really trying hard to reduce your drug use. <p>Reduce the conflict which has been a barrier to positive change and reduce the focus on drug use <i>For example, you might ask:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would it be alright if I raised a concern I have about your plans? • Let’s meet and have a coffee/go to the football/have a meal together

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<p>Action</p> <p>'I am changing'</p>	<p>Increase their sense of self-control, using problem solving approaches, so that they can own their decisions</p> <p><i>For example, you might ask:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are your choices now? • What are your strengths that you think will help you to change? • What has worked for you in the past when it comes to making changes? • How have you survived this part of your life? • What gives you the confidence that you can do this? <p>Talk in a positive way about any former negative issues, to help them work through any shame and anger they may have about their previous behaviour</p> <p><i>For example, you might ask:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What obstacles do you see in your way and how might you deal with them? • You must be strong to have reduced (given up) your drug use. • You've done really well and you're looking better. <p>Encourage them to be realistic about their expectations</p> <p><i>For example, you might ask:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the risky situations/times for you? • What do you need to do to keep safe? <p>Encourage them to monitor their own behaviour</p> <p><i>For example, you might ask:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can you put these safety measures in place? • 'When I was angry, I was angry at your behaviour. I still loved you, that's why I was frustrated.' • 'I was scared that you would hurt yourself. I was always waiting for something to go wrong. Now I can see that things will be alright.'
<p>Maintenance</p> <p>'I am maintaining abstinence and/or the changes I've made'</p>	<p>Support them in all areas of the life that they are trying to rebuild</p> <p><i>For example, you might ask:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would you consider looking at training/schooling for hairdressing now that you think you might like to do that? • Now that you have expressed regret that you didn't finish school, would you like to attend adult VCE classes? <p>Introduce them to strategies for coping with problems (other than drug taking)</p> <p><i>For example,</i> offer them information on local classes on relaxation, meditation, art or sport.</p>
<p>Lapse</p> <p>'I am not perfect'</p>	<p>Encourage them to recognise this stage as a short term 'lapse'</p> <p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remind them that they have 'stopped' their drug use before; they have done it once, they can do it again. • Remind them of how long it has taken others you know to stop drinking, smoking or using substances. Try to normalize the lapse and maintain hope <p>They might fear that their old behaviour is stronger than them, they need reassurance that they can do it.</p>