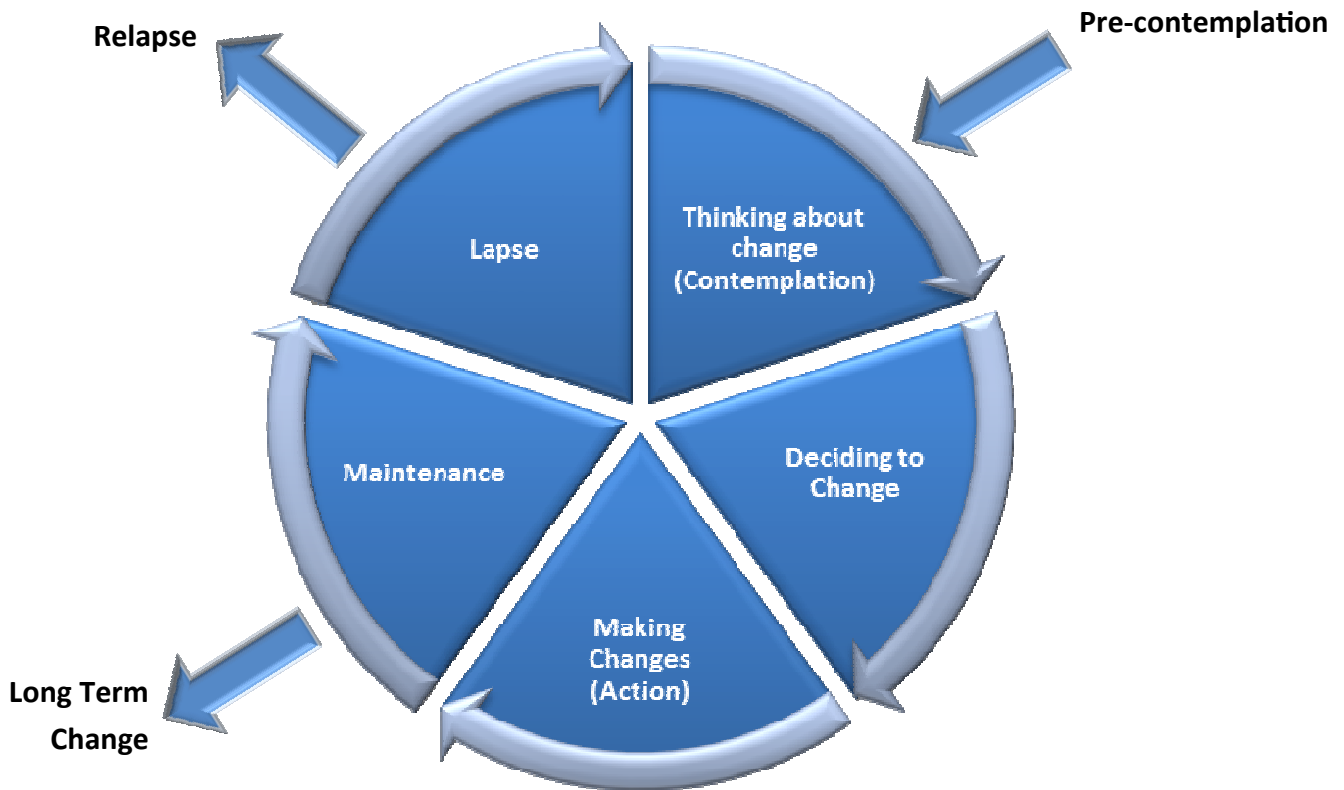


Client name:

Keyworker:

Date: / /

# The Cycle of Change



Prochaska and DiClemente (1992)

## Pre-contemplation

Someone can be in pre-contemplation when they are not thinking about changing. The person may feel that there is no need to change, for example a person may not see their substance use as a problem that needs to be addressed at this stage. They are outside the cycle of change.

## Contemplation

At this stage the person realises that they have a problem at some level and intend to take some action at some point in the near future. They may be weighing up the advantages and disadvantages of stopping their substance use. If they believe that there are more disadvantages to stopping, the person may remain at this stage for ever.

## **Decision**

After contemplation, the person may decide that it is time to change and move on to making a decision. This is where they intend to take action, usually quite soon. A plan of action should be made whilst in this stage, for example finding out about where to get treatment or support services, how to access them, make childcare arrangements etc.

## **Action**

Once the person has made the decision to change and made a plan, they are able to start taking action. This might be to seek one-to-one support or attend AA or NA meetings. The rewards of taking action may be evident when it results in reducing the risk of harm to the person or to other people. If these actions are continued and the changes made become established, this can lead the person on to the maintenance stage.

## **Maintenance**

In this stage, the person plans strategies and arranges support to help them actively maintain the changes they have made during the action stage and to prevent lapse and relapse. For example they may have stopped receiving one-to-one support, but may still benefit from support from NA, AA or friends who do not use.

## **Lapse**

Lapse occurs when a person returns temporarily to substance use, for example a one-off set back, but learns from the experience and re-evaluates the advantages and disadvantages of change in the contemplation stage. They may then return to the decision stage and move once again into the action and maintenance stages. Lapse is still within the cycle.

## **Relapse**

Relapse occurs when the person returns to full-blown substance use for a longer period of time. For many people who are attempting to make changes, such as to their substance use, a lapse or relapse can occur. However, they can always return to the contemplation, decision and action stages of the cycle before achieving maintenance and a new lifestyle or long term change.