

Think about a behavior that you would like to change in your life. This could be related to eating healthier, reading or studying more for class assignments, showing up on time, getting to the gym, or addressing unhealthy behaviors in a dating relationship.

Change theory helps us understand the process of change and how we can successfully achieve change in our lives. The five steps of this approach are outlined here:

- 1. Pre-contemplation:** You are unaware that there is a problem or thing to change, and you haven't thought much about change.
- 2. Contemplation:** This is the most common stage of change. You have thought some about changing a behavior and are getting ready to take steps to change soon. You realize your current behavior is not good for you, but you aren't quite ready to begin to take steps to change.
- 3. Preparation for Action:** You are aware of a problem and ready to actively create goals to change your bad habit or behavior.
- 4. Action:** You have put your plans into action. You are actively trying to alter your negative behaviors and develop new positive behaviors to replace them.
- 5. Maintenance and Relapse Prevention:** You are either successful or need to re-evaluate your plan. If things are working well, you are in maintenance. Continued success depends on repeating those action steps that work while adjusting things that don't. If change is slow or difficult, look for ways to overcome obstacles and reduce the risk of falling back into bad habits.

When you think about the behavior you have tried to change (or are trying to change), think about the stages above and write where you currently are in the change theory steps.

