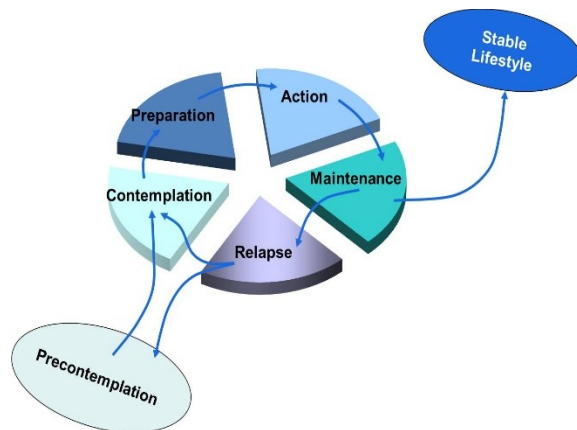


This handout is based on information in Finlay, L. (2015). *Relational Integrative Psychotherapy: Process and Theory in Practice*, Chichester, Sussex: Wiley.

Prochaska's and DiClemente's (2005) 'CYCLE OF CHANGE' MODEL

This cycle of change model has been used (and researched) extensively and has been employed most commonly to work with *specific behavioural change*, for instance, dealing with substance abuse or promoting healthy behaviour. Their model offers a way to match the processes of change to the stage reached. A person in the process of change may go round the cycle repeatedly before eventually managing a new stable lifestyle/change.



Prochaska and DiClemente's *Cycle of Change*

In the initial **precontemplation** stage clients tend not to see themselves as having a problem or as needing to change – rather, they tend to resist change. If a person in the precontemplation stage has been referred to therapy, it is likely they have been forced to come outside agencies (for example forced by Court Order). When working with individuals at this stage, the therapist needs to be more of an uninvested, empathetic, non-judgmental ally. The focus needs to be on simply increasing awareness about the problem or surrounding issues.

When the client is ready to **contemplate** change, the therapist acts as support and offers some challenge. Together therapist and client focus on making the client's fears explicit while acknowledging that change will be in the client's best interest. When clients are contemplating change they tend to still be ambivalent and don't fully want to commit to changing.

In the **action** phase, the client will be fully engaged in therapy and committed to change (for instance, they have decided to give up alcohol or leave an abusive partner). At this point, the therapist might assume a more formal teaching/coaching role and encourage the development of resources. While initially the client might idealise the therapist as an 'expert' or 'much needed support', over time they become more independent.

In the **maintenance** phase the therapist takes a step back and enables the client to assume full ownership of the change and any decisions. If they relapse in their problematic behaviour, then the client may have to go round the full cycle again.