

MATCHING AOD INTERVENTIONS TO THE STAGES OF CHANGE

This table outlines recommended actions and approaches for each stage of change. You can use it to guide your AOD intervention with the person you're working with.

NB: The wording in brackets underneath each column heading reflects terminology used in the Indigenous *Stages of Change Story* (Northern Territory Government, 2000)

Pre-contemplation (Not worried)	Contemplation (Thinking)	Preparation (Trying)	Action & Maintenance (Doing it/sticking to it)	Lapse/Relapse (Oops! Learning)
Build a trusting relationship and ensure a positive help-seeking experience	Validate “being in two minds” about change – this is normal	Explore options for change, e.g., “What might change look like?”	Support implementation of small, achievable first steps, e.g., disposal of utensils, connecting to supports	Educate on the difference between a lapse versus a relapse e.g., a ‘slip-up’ versus reverting to previous behaviour
Avoid lecturing or confrontation	Build confidence and belief that change is possible	Identify goal/s for change, e.g., cutting back, quitting, adopting new harm reduction strategies	Explore healthy coping strategies and alternative activities and connections	Normalise lapse/relapse as part of the change process and reframe it as an opportunity for learning
Prioritise health and harm reduction information	Identify strengths that would help them make changes if they decided to	Review and affirm reasons and intentions for change	Identify and plan for triggers and high-risk situations, e.g., certain people, places, feelings, events	Revisit and affirm positive steps taken already
Explore and support other life issues/goals, e.g., 4 Ls	Utilise motivational interviewing approaches	Identify support people, systems and enabling environments for wellbeing	Skill development: managing cravings, changing unhelpful beliefs, new routines	Review and adjust strategies to manage triggers for lapse/relapse
Identify what problematic AOD use might look like, e.g., “How would you know it’s becoming a problem?”	Explore pros and cons of changing versus not changing	Identify obstacles to change and assist in building problem-solving skills	Discuss and plan for coping with lapse/relapse	Reassess motivation and barriers towards achieving goals
Explore the person’s capacity to change in their current environment	Support building insight into their substance use, e.g. use Four Column Diagram activity	Develop a collaborative change plan	Acknowledge any feelings of loss and provide ongoing encouragement, including celebrating achievements	Reaffirm future-oriented goals
Provide information / encourage harm reduction strategies across all stages of change.				

Adapted from: Prochaska JO, DiClemente CC (1986). Toward a comprehensive model of change. In: Miller WR, Heather N, editors. *Treating addictive behaviors: Processes of change*. Boston, MA: Springer US; p. 3-27.

Indigenous Stages of Change Story (2000). *Living With Alcohol Program: Northern Territory Department of Health*.