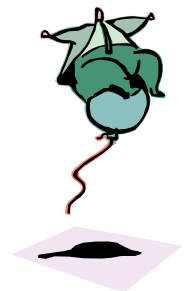
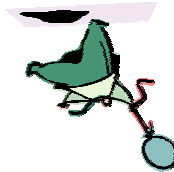
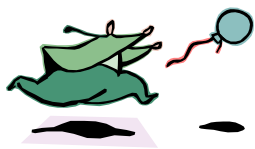


Changes for Life!

A booklet about

Change

for youth



If at first you don't succeed... try something else!



Developed By: Janice Arsenault

Based on the booklet, "Quit to Win" By: Louis Gagnon, M.D., Gilles Pineau, M.D., & Louise Labrie, Edited by: Suzanne Decarie.
BY Acti-menu Health Program, Quebec



Inroads:

Choices and Changes

Day Program for Youth who are experiencing difficulties with substances

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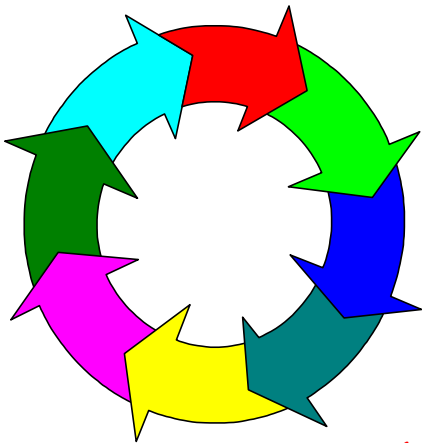
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Changes for Life!

Choosing to make some changes in your use of alcohol and/or drugs is a major decision! Your success will depend on what kind of strategies you have in place for dealing with difficult situations... and your degree of **MOTIVATION!**

If you really do not want to make any changes regarding alcohol and drugs, no advice and no booklet will make it happen.

However, if you want it to, this booklet can help you think about making changes, get ready for change and take some action for change. So, no matter where you are on the motivation scale, this booklet can help!



So... What's your degree of motivation?

Circle the number that best corresponds to your degree of motivation

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

1 is: I don't want to make any changes regarding alcohol and/or drugs over the next few weeks.

10 is: I am ready for changes regarding alcohol and/or drugs.

- Don't feel very motivated? Check out the first part of the booklet, the "I'm Thinking About it" stage.
- Highly motivated already? See the section of the booklet called, "I'm Getting Ready" and take some action!

5 Stages to Changing Behavior

A behavior doesn't usually just change overnight! To change substance use behaviors, most people go through 5 stages. Knowing what stage you are at can help you set more realistic goals and help you find the information that will suit you best.

Stage 1

I'm fine the way I am

At this stage, you have no desire to make any changes. If this is you and you are reading this booklet... keep reading and keep an open mind!

Stage 2

I'm thinking about it

The "I really should" stage. You can see the possibility of making some changes within the next six months. Even if you can see that the advantages of making some changes outweigh the troubles, you have not made up your mind yet.

Stage 3

I'm getting ready

It's going to be soon, within the next month. You've started thinking about small steps you could possibly take that might help you change your habits.

Stage 4

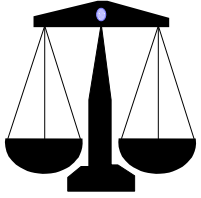
I'm taking action

This is often a difficult stage, because of the strong physical and psychological influences. Remember that gradually you will begin to see the benefits of making these changes.

Stage 5

I'm persevering

This is when new habits begin to replace the old ones! Situations that would normally have caused you to return to old habits will become easier to deal with, especially with all of your new, healthy activities keeping you busy!



What is Decisional Balance?

Decisional balance is simply figuring out the reasons that you use alcohol and other drugs. It also means figuring out the negative experiences you have when you use alcohol and/or other drugs.

+ PROS

- CONS

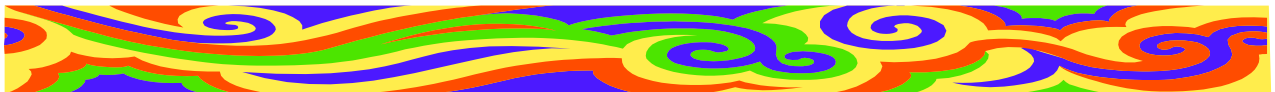
1. I get a buzz from it	1. I feel sick the next day
2. I have fun with friends	2. It costs a lot of money
3. I am more talkative	3. My parents get mad at me
4. It helps me relax	4. Trouble with the law

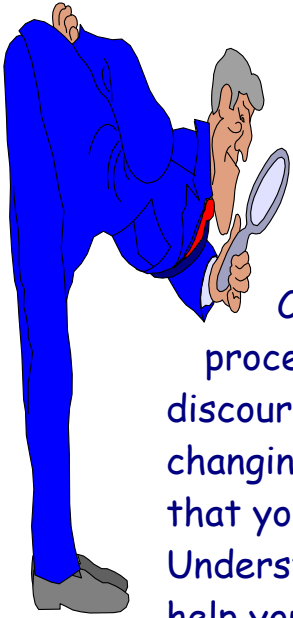
Can you think of some of your own pros and cons of use?

+ PROS

- CONS

1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.
7.	7.
8.	8.





Analyzing Past Attempts

Changing any kind of behavior is hard work. It is a learning process, like learning to play the guitar or drums. Don't get discouraged by sour notes. People often make many attempts at changing behaviors before they are successful. The important thing is that you learn something from each attempt to change your behavior. Understanding why things did not work out as planned previously will help you adjust your plans and goals to make success more likely. You can also see what strategies helped the most in other attempts, so you can use them again.

The list below will help you with your goals

REASON ATTEMPT DIDN'T WORK	WHAT CHANGES CAN I MAKE FOR A BETTER CHANCE OF SUCCESS?
I wasn't prepared to be around friends when they were using	Stay away from using friends for the first few weeks
I went to a party	
I went through a stressful time	
I had withdrawal symptoms	
OTHER REASONS?	



MY CURRENT PROFILE

Date: _____

For each statement, write down one or two key words.

1. I use alcohol and/or drugs because...

2. I want to change my using habits because...

3. The situations where I use most are...

4. The people I use most with are...

5. In the past, I returned to old using habits because...

6. My degree of motivation is now... /10

Now you have a good understanding of why, when, and with whom you use; and reasons you might want to change your using behaviors. The trick is to find new activities that will give you the same pay-offs (positives) that you now get from drinking and/or using drugs. Can you think of any such new activities?

New activity #1 _____ New activity #2 _____ New activity #3 _____



Stage Two

"I'm Thinking About it"

During this stage, you read up about alcohol and drug use and the effects the different substances have on your body and other areas of your life. It is very important to really think about the advantages and disadvantages of making some changes regarding alcohol and drug use... AND to figure out what would motivate you to make changes in your life.

Some questions to ask yourself

- Do I know why I use substances?
When you are thinking about making changes, you should get to know the reasons you use. Understanding the benefits you get from using and the costs to you can help you maintain the goals you have set for yourself.
- Do I have strong reasons to make changes?
There is no denying that you get some great benefits from your use of substances, so looking at these benefits as well as the costs is going to help you decide if these changes are right for you at this time. Do your cons outweigh your pros, or do your pros outweigh your cons?
- I tried to make changes before and I failed, is it worth the trouble to try again?
Of course it is! Many people have tried several times to reach goals before their changes become permanent. Analyze your previous attempts and learn from these experiences. Consider each attempt as a step toward your goals.

List your top 3 PROS Reasons to use	List your top 3 CONS Reasons to change
1	1
2	2
3	3

A Suggestion: List the reasons why it is worth it to start making changes around alcohol and drug use, the solutions you can come up with, and some of the things that are stopping you, or helping you. Keep your list handy and go over it whenever you need to. Start your list on the next page.

I'm Thinking About it



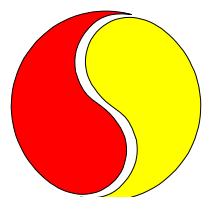
I've read about it,
I've thought about it,
I've weighed the pros and cons...
But I'm still not sure...
Do I have a **PROBLEM**?

Drug and alcohol problems can affect every one of us regardless of age, sex, marital status, place of residence, income level, or lifestyle. The following checklist may help you determine if you would like to make some changes in your life.

- ⇒ You can't predict whether or not you will use drugs or get drunk before going out for the evening.
- ⇒ You really believe that in order to have fun you need to drink and/or use drugs.
- ⇒ You turn to alcohol and/or drugs after a confrontation or argument, or to relieve uncomfortable feelings.
- ⇒ You drink more or use more drugs to get the same effect that you got with smaller amounts.
- ⇒ You drink and/or use drugs when you are alone.
- ⇒ You remember how last night (last time you went out) began, but not how it ended, so you are worried that you may have a problem.
- ⇒ You have trouble at work or school because of your drinking or drug use.
- ⇒ You have made promises to yourself or others that you will stop getting drunk or using drugs.
- ⇒ You feel alone, scared, miserable, and depressed because of your substance use.

If you have experienced any of the above problems, take heart, help is available. Millions of people all over the world have taken charge of their lives and are now living healthy, substance-free lives.

Look for BALANCE in all areas of your life



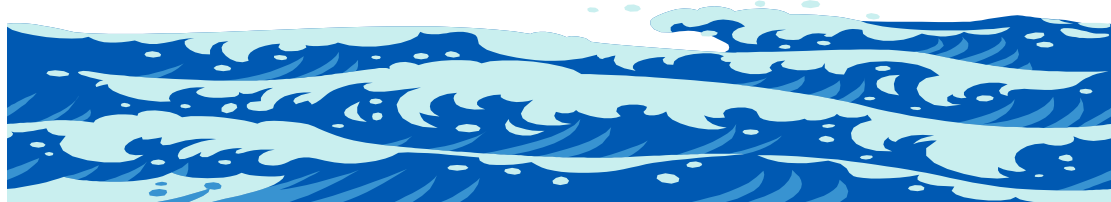
For Those Who Care... How To Help



A Friend's Role:

- Show your friend that you are interested in the process and how optimistic you are, but don't exaggerate. Be available to your friend but don't be pushy.
- Ask how you can help, it may be talking, it may be listening - but it is up to your friend.
- Show you are aware of how hard it is to make changes and remind your friend to live one day at a time.
- Unexpected emotions might bubble up to the surface. Be as understanding as you can and let your friend know that it is OK to express emotions.
- Get your friend to do some activity with you that you both enjoy... Most importantly...

Remember the Seven C's



1. I didn't **CAUSE** it.
2. I can't **CURE** it.
3. I can't **CONTROL** it.
4. I can take **CARE** of myself.
5. I can **COMMUNICATE** my feelings.
6. I can make healthy **CHOICES**.
7. I can **CELEBRATE** being me.



Stage Three:

"I'm Getting Ready"

This is the stage to prepare the tools you need so that you are ready when the time comes for change. You are already taking small steps to change your habits, weighing the pros and cons of use and assessing past attempts at change... YOU ARE GETTING READY!

The date that I have chosen to make some changes in my life is: _____

SOME QUESTIONS:

Why set a specific date to make changes in your alcohol & drug use?

Deciding on a specific date in advance lets you make your decision a part of an action plan, instead of depending on your willpower alone, the date you start making changes fits in with your larger goals.

Am I motivated enough to make changes?

You can't expect good results for your goals unless you are motivated. How motivated are you? Check your level again on page one.

Do I make all my planned changes right away?

It is important to take small, but important steps toward making changes. You can't expect all of the changes you have planned for to happen overnight. Remember that each small step, each small victory increases your confidence in your ability to reach your chosen goals.

Do I understand my alcohol and drug use habits?

To successfully change alcohol and drug use habits, you can first analyze your behaviors and then work out strategies and goals that are appropriate. Become your own observer and self-monitor your patterns of use. Fill out, or review the "My Current Profile" page from this booklet.

If I follow this booklet, am I guaranteed to make the changes I have chosen?

There are no guarantees when it comes to making personal changes. Ultimately, the choice is yours alone and there is not an ideal method that will work for everyone. The best strategy for change is the one that works for you. You may join a program especially designed for making new choices, or you may follow a more personalized program that offers flexibility. That's the beauty of setting your own goals and working toward them... the choice is yours to make.

The choice is yours to make!



The Best Defense A Good Action Plan

- Planning is the key to success in reaching your goals.
- Drawing up a plan is like rehearsing. You go over each step in your mind, imagining how things will happen.
- After exploring the reasons you use alcohol and/or drugs, checking out previous attempts, and weighing your personal pros and cons, you will know what to expect.
- Once you know what to expect, you can figure out the best ways to deal with it, ahead of time.
- You can think ahead about how to reorganize your environment, routines and relationships.
- You can think of ways to reward yourself for positive steps you are able to take toward your goals and appreciate yourself and your progress, one day at a time.
- You can prepare yourself to face the tough times and you can even plan for times when you may slip up.

A Personal Journal

A personal journal is an ideal place to organize your plans. Any plain book with blank pages for you to write in will do, but you may want something a bit fancier because this is so important to you. This book is where you might want to pour out your feelings leading up to and beyond the day you choose to make your changes. You can record your own personal pros and cons for change. You can put anything you want to think about in this book.

- One valuable thing you can keep in your journal is a self-monitoring chart. Make a little chart with columns. For example, you could have columns for the place, time, circumstances, people you were with, reason for using, strategies you can use next time, or anything else that might help you make your changes.
- It is important to start your journal before you get to the "I'm taking action" stage AND read through your journal so that you really understand your habits. This will help you change them.



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Stage Four: "I'm Taking Action"

This is it! Time to make some commitments, and to use every strategy you know, and especially, to live one day at a time. Changes are not easy to make, especially in the beginning because of strong physical and psychological factors.

SOME QUESTIONS

➤ What do I do for the first few days?

Success breeds success. Set small, short-term goals for yourself that you are able to reach.

➤ Do I have a favorable environment?

For a few weeks, it would be best to avoid what you often associate with using alcohol and/or drugs, like certain places, activities, or even people.

➤ What do I do about stressful situations?

Sometimes, when you are making changes in your habits, you might feel very alone in stressful situations. Your best tools are **communication** and a **network of people** you can count on. Look around you and identify friends and other people you can confide in. Find **activities** that you do well and help you relax, like yoga, meditation, tai chi or a massage... sing and yell if you want to... **Let yourself go!**

THINGS I CAN DO THAT WILL HELP ME RELAX AND FEEL GOOD

**I'm
Taking
Action**



Some Helpful Tips & Suggestions

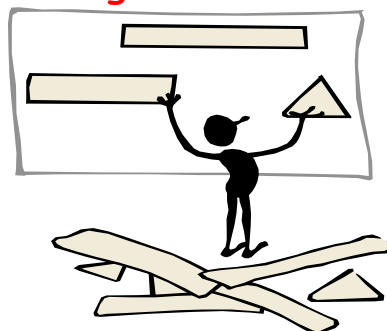
- ❖ **Go out** to safe places with non-using friends and enjoy yourself. Take it one day at a time.
- ❖ **Put together a survival kit.** A package of gum, a deck of cards, a hacky-sack, a worry stone, or a journal & a pen... whatever will help you get through the day.
- ❖ **Find people you can count on** and ask them to help you along your way. Call them when you need them. If there is no one around, go for a walk, take a shower, do something that will distract you.
- ❖ **Get busy!** Drink lots of water and eat foods that are good for you.
- ❖ **Avoid risky situations** and practice what you will do if you find yourself in a situation that you associate with using alcohol &/or drugs.
- ❖ **Acknowledge and reward yourself** when you have taken a difficult step on your own.

Breathing and Affirmation

- 1 **Get into a comfortable position...** Breathe in slowly through your nose and fill your lower abdomen first, then your chest. Hold your breath and slowly count to three. Then exhale completely through your nose and say something to yourself like, "I am relaxed and I have made fantastic changes that will make my life even better."



The best protection against failure is a good action plan!



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Stage Five

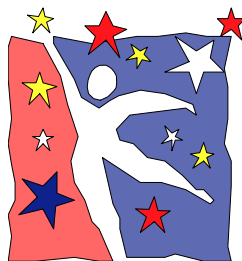
"I'm Persevering"

Congratulations! You have come a long way. You still need to be careful in situations that remind you of alcohol and/or drugs. You are still at risk in some situations but you know that your goals are yours alone and you want to succeed. Gradually, you may be able to face these situations and stick to your goals. During this time, put your new strategies to work and think of every setback as an opportunity to learn about yourself and get back on track.

More Suggestions

- If you do not reach or completely stick to the goals you have set for yourself, do not think that all is lost. A slip-up is not the end of the world, it is natural
- Give yourself a break and instead of feeling bad or guilty, look at what happened. What were you feeling? Learn from the experience by analyzing your slip-up and you will have new ways of coping next time. You have come so far, don't give up now.
- Find fun things to do to outsmart the old habit.
- Remember to reward yourself, buy yourself something special, go ahead, you deserve it!
- Eat nutritious meals, you'll feel good.
- Congratulate yourself for your progress and your courage. You have taken control of your life, you have a right to be proud!
- Share your experience with others that might want to make changes in their own lives.

You are the conductor of your own life!



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For Those Who Care^{Do}

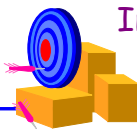
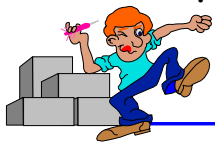
you want to help someone that you care about make changes in their life? Wonderful! People who are making changes, whether the change is to cut back on their use of substances, or to quit altogether can often use support. As a support person, it is good to know that it is possible to do more harm than good, so select some of the ways suggested in this booklet that fit with the stage of change your loved one is in. Ask how you can help; show interest in the person's process, encourage and congratulate your loved one - but don't lecture, just be available.

For those in the "I'm Fine the Way I am" stage...

If someone has no interest in quitting, it's important not to insist. People who feel harrassed can react negatively by digging in their heels. Simply let them know that you are there to help them whenever they are ready. This is the "Open Door" approach.



For those in the "I'm Thinking About it" & the "I'm Getting Ready" stages...



In both of these stages, you can be helpful by talking about why they use substances and what would motivate them to make some healthy changes. Try to understand their main concerns - are they worried about withdrawal, or losing friends?

Encourage every small step that they are preparing to make and, if you have been through it, reassure them by sharing your experiences. Pay attention to "My Current Profile" in this booklet and have fun filling it out.

For those in the "I'm Taking Action" stage...

This is a decisive moment. Remind them that difficulties are real, but they can be overcome when taken one by one, one day at a time. Point out that gradually, things will get easier. Show that you are ready to provide support, even when your friend is irritable or angry.



For those in the "I'm Persevering" stage...

If your loved one has a slip up, don't make a big deal of it. Your reaction can have a great influence on how your friend recovers from this small setback. You can be most useful by telling your friend that each little step brings him/her a bit closer to reaching their goals.

