



Page summary

This page provides information on the journey a person may go on if or when they want to change their crystal **methamphetamine** use. This journey is called "the stages of change".

The 5 stages are "pre-contemplation", "contemplation", "determination", "action", "maintenance" and "recycle".

Learn more below about these stages in detail, and how to support a loved one through the process.

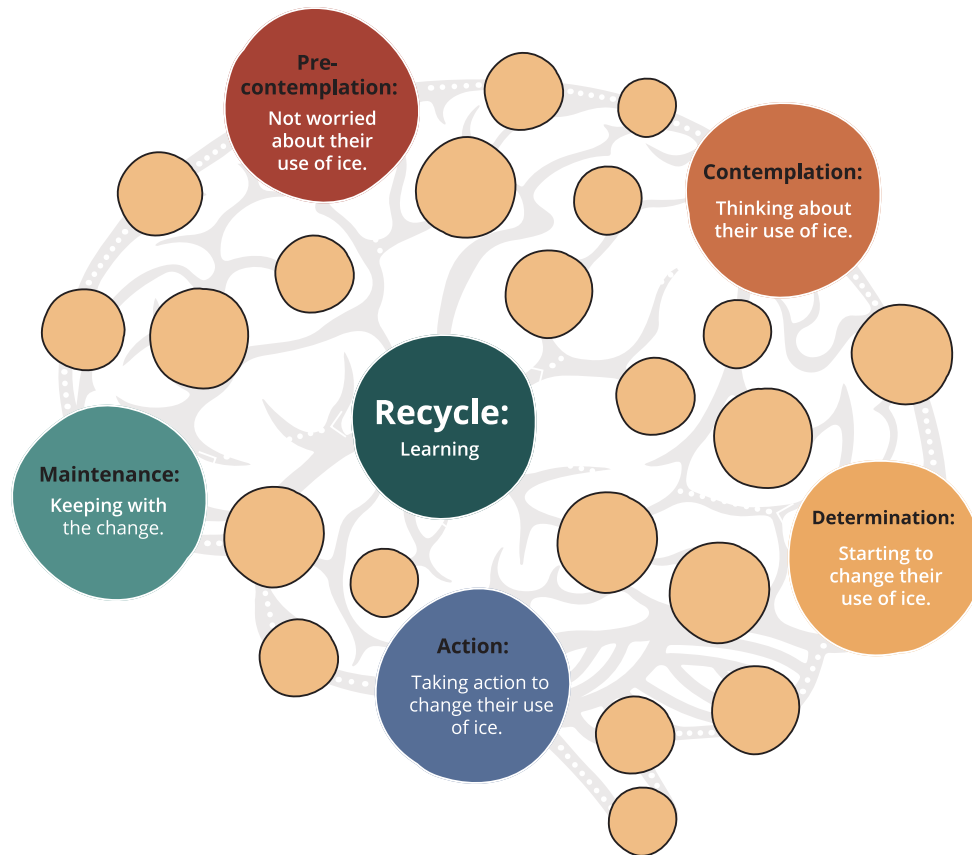


The stepping stones on the journey

The stages of change show the steps that may happen in the decision-making of a person when they change a behaviour, or misuse substances like crystal **methamphetamine** ('ice'). This journey can happen at an individual, family or community level. **It is not a step by step, or straight-line process.** Rather, individuals, families and communities may experience a change in behaviour over a long time, frequently cycling through the stages.

This factsheet may help explain where a friend, family member, community member or patient is on their journey to change. There are many people who may be able to provide support throughout the journey to change. Changing a behaviour takes time and people may make mistakes along the way. It is important to help support change by connecting the person with family and community throughout the journey.

Click the circles below to learn about each stage.



Stage 1. Not worried about use of ice (Pre-contemplation)

- People may not see the harm that their use of ice is having on themselves, their family or their community.
- The person continues to take ice.

How can you help someone at this stage?

- Don't shame them for their use of ice.
- Give them information about ice, its risks and where they can seek support.
- Talk about ways they can stay safe.
- Keep them connected with you, family and community.

Stage 2. Thinking about their use of ice (Contemplation)

The person is:

- Uncertain and starting to see the harm that ice is having on themselves and those close to them.
- Starting to think about the good and not so good aspects of their ice use.
- May still not want to change or stop their use of ice.

How can you help someone at this stage?

- Start a yarn with them about their use of ice.
- Tell them you are there to support them.
- Help them connect with support or treatment.

Stage 3. Starting to change the use of ice (Determination)

- The person is wanting to change and may have started to make plans to cut down or stop taking ice.
- The person may try some small changes like not taking ice on particular days or reducing the amount they are using.

How can you help someone at this stage?

- Talk about the reasons why they want to stop their use of ice.
- Help them think of ideas of how to stop or cut down their use of ice.
- Yarn about some goals they can set.
- Encourage them to ask for help from their clinic, GP or other treatment services.

Stage 4. Taking action to change the use of ice (Action)

Stage 4. Taking action to change the use of ice (Action)

- The person has decided to change their use of ice. They carry out their plan which may include things like trying to cut down or stop taking ice.
- They may also distance themselves from other people who may be using ice and try to connect with family, services or other help.
- The person may experience a '**comedown**' (feeling down or depressed, exhausted and anxious) and **withdrawal** (feeling unwell for several weeks including headaches, cramps and vomiting, **anxiety**, restlessness and aggression).

How can you help someone at this stage?

- Talk often about the reasons why they want to stop their use of ice – this may help to keep them on track.
- Look at ways they can make sure they are well supported throughout the change journey.
- Talk about times they may be at risk of using ice again and think of ways to help reduce the risk they return to taking ice.
- Connect them with friends, family and community.
- Encourage yourself, family, friends of theirs to read about the experiences of **dependence** and **withdrawal** [here](#).

Stage 5. Keeping with the change (Maintenance)

- The person continues to work to keep the changes they have made and wants to continue to stay with their journey to stop using ice.
- The person may have re-connected with family, culture and community.

How can you help someone at this stage?

- Keep supporting them
- Talk to them as much as you can – What is the hardest thing for them? What are the good things about not using ice?
- Continue to connect them with family, friends, their community and culture

Stage 6. Learning! (Recycle)

- The person may have started using ice again. This can occur at any time and be temporary as a result of triggers (e.g. stressful event).
- This is a time when the person may return to try their first plan or learn new ways to help change their use of ice.
- Family, health/clinic workers and community members may be helping the person to re-enter the healing journey again.

How can you help someone at this stage?

- Let them know that it is normal to have a slip up and they can stop their ice use again.
- Talk about what may have caused them to start using ice again.
- Talk about the reasons why they wanted to stop their use of ice in the first place.
- Remind them of those who care about them, their successes so far and that they can stop again.
- Encourage them to ask for help from their clinic, GP or other treatment services.

When a person stops using ice their health and wellbeing will improve and they may engage more with family and communities. They may even go on to help other people who have problems with ice.

Key Sources

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