Stages of Change

Pre-contemplation

The individual is not yet considering change.

- Establish rapport and trust
- Raise doubt about whether their behavior is working for them
- Explore the circumstances that led to CPS involvement
- Elicit individual's perception of the risks and problems with current behaviors
- Offer information about consequences
- Move the individual to thinking about the need to make changes

Contemplation

The individual acknowledges concerns and is considering but is ambivalent and uncertain.

- Help the person tip the decisional balance scale towards change
- Provide support that the individual can change their behavior
- Emphasize the individual's ability and choice to make the change
- Strengthen the individual's self-efficacy for change
- Elicit the individual's perception of self-efficacy and remove barriers to change

Preparation

The individual is committed to and planning to make a change in the near future but is still considering what to do.

- Help the person determine the best course of action in seeking change
- Offer resources and services for the individual to engage in to make the change
- Discuss a plan while considering barriers
- Ask what has worked in the past
- Assist with what is needed to ensure a successful change

Action

The individual is actively taking steps to change but has not yet reached a stable state.

- Help the person take steps to implement the change
- Provide resources and supports
- Acknowledge difficulty and plan for challenges to implement change
- Reinforce positive changes
- Check in on the change process
- Help the person build a support system that supports positive change

Stages of Change

Maintenance

The individual has achieved initial goals and is working to maintain gains.

- Help the person identify and use strategies to prevent recurrence of old behaviors
- Support making and maintaining lifestyle changes
- Maintain supportive contact
- Identify and plan for challenging circumstances
- Review long-term goals

Recurrence

The individual has reverted back to old behavior and must cope with the consequences and decide what to do next.

- Help the individual renew the process of change without becoming stuck or demoralized because of the recurrence
- Ask about challenging circumstances, barriers to change, and necessary supports to assist with positive change
- Remain supportive and encouraging

Change is a process.
The individual may resist change.

Resistance

Resistance is a predictable and natural emotional reaction to feeling forced to change or when facing a difficult situation. Resistance occurs as a response to feeling vulnerable, out of control, or threatened by change.

Anger/Hostility

- Threats
- Aggressive Posturing
- Blaming
- Using Authority
- Getting Loud
- Amped-up Behaviors

Passivity

- Silence
- Excuses
- Denial
- Blaming
- Rationale
- Feigning Ignorance

Avoidance

- Physically Flee
- False Compliance
- Illness
- Substance Abuse

Children's Court Improvement Program and the Department of Children and Families
Tailored Dispositional Orders Project - Engaging Families