

CHANGE IS DIFFICULT, BUT POSSIBLE

Change can be hard for everyone. To succeed, a person has to be willing, ready, and able to make the change.

Below, you'll find quick facts that can help you think about how a person decides to change. Use this information to help someone you care about, who may be struggling with a substance use or mental health issue, to change their thoughts and behaviors.

WHAT IS MOTIVATION TO CHANGE?

- Motivation to change refers to a person's drive or desire to change their own beliefs and behaviors.
- A person must have a reason to want to change their behavior.
 - For people who have a substance use or drinking problem, having a reason to want to change is the key to getting motivated.
 - Change is a gradual process that happens over time, not an instant or one-time event.
 - Influencing a person's motivation to change is also something that gradually happens over time.
- Motivation may change from day to day or moment to moment.
- Motivation is a concept that involves not only being willing to change (having the desire), but also being ready and able to change (having the drive).

WILLING, READY, AND ABLE

- Being **willing** to change means that the person understands that there is a concern.
- Being **ready** to change means that the person sees the need to change as a priority, even over other life priorities that may seem just as important.
- Being **able** to change means that the person:
 - Feels confident about their ability to change.
 - Feels that they have the skills and knowledge to change.

INTERNAL VS. EXTERNAL MOTIVATION

How a person thinks about change and their motivation to change can come from within (internal motivation) or from another person or event (external motivation).

- **Internal motivation** means that your reasons for changing are for your own happiness and well-being, and not for anyone else.
- For example, you might be sick and tired of always feeling sick and tired.
- **External motivation** means that your reasons for changing are because someone else wants you to change, whether it's for their well-being or your own.
- For example, a spouse pleading with their partner not to drink anymore because it is destroying their marriage.

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WHAT AFFECTS OUR MOTIVATION?

Things that can help motivation include:

- Feeling like a success.
- Having custody of one's children.
- Getting or keeping a job.
- Having supportive friends and family.
- Staying out of jail.

Things that can hurt motivation include:

- Not having enough support.
- Fear or doubt.
- Negative thinking.
- Feeling like a failure.

HOW TO MOTIVATE

Think about your own life and the changes you have made.

Were you motivated to change because of something from within?

Or were you motivated to change because of someone who cared about you, or an event that happened?

Ask yourself, "Who supported my change?"

- Did you decide that you wanted to change because you felt supported?
- Or did you want to change because you felt their anger or intimidation?
- Which of these two approaches worked for your situation?

Empathy is your ability to understand and share the feelings of another person.

- Using empathy when talking to someone is much more effective.
- Empathy, not shame or intimidation, can help a person understand the need to change.



TAKE ACTION

If you have reason to believe that you or someone you love is experiencing symptoms of a substance use disorder and needs to make some changes in their behavior, the sooner you address the issue, the better the outcome.

Substance use disorders are treatable, and people can go on to live happy, healthy, and productive lives when connected to the right treatment, supports, and services.

- Reach out to your child's school counselor, a pediatrician, a primary care physician, or a mental health professional.
- Remember that early intervention is always best for your health and well-being.

Call 910-862-6900 today to speak to someone who can help.

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