

## Shared Assumptions about Change

The items below briefly describe some shared assumptions about change and how coaches can help people in various stages of change.

- 1. Change is usually a process.** Some people change abruptly, while most others have a more elongated path. Some need more information or need to weigh the pros and cons, first stepping their toes experientially with small attempts.
- 2. Lapses and relapses are a typical part of the cycle of change for many clients.** Most of us make at least a few attempts before a change becomes a part of our normal life. Change is a continual process, and “errors” are viewed as opportunities for growth. To prevent a client from being demoralized, you help the client change their view from the typical action model. Change does not equal action; it equals progress. “In order to change your behavior, the first thing you need to change is your mind” (Prochaska & Prochaska, 2016, p. xiv).
- 3. Coaches use a client-led approach to help workers along each stage of change.** Small incremental changes, even changes in thinking or making efforts to search for resources, are significant for continued progress. Successes in the early stages of change are essential elements for lasting change, and they serve as a foundation for later goal-setting stages (Thigpen et al., 2007).
- 4. The stages of change guide you in using the best approach to help changers become more motivated to change.**
  - a. With those unready or unwilling to act (precontemplation stage) your goal is to prepare the person for change by helping them consider the negative consequences of their behavior. You help increase awareness and raise the importance of change.
  - b. With those who are in the “I might” stage (contemplation stage), the goal is to resolve ambivalence and help the client choose to make the change.
  - c. For those who are ready to change within the next month (preparation stage), your goal is to help the client identify and plan appropriate strategies to take action.
  - d. For those who have been actively changing their behaviors for less than 6 months (action stage), your goal is to help the client implement strategies and learn to eliminate obstacles and potential setbacks.
  - e. For the changers who have achieved their goals and are working to maintain them (maintenance stage), your goal is to help the client prepare for and bounce back from lapses and develop skills for sustained recovery.