

Motivation for change

Objectives

This module aims to help you:

- Understand the stages of change
- Start goal setting
- Introduce short term changes to reduce risk of offending

The stages of change

‘Change’ means different things for different people and each person will have different goals when using this guide.

Some people will recognise they need to change harmful behaviours, such as viewing sexual images of children or others will want to change their thinking patterns or fantasies.

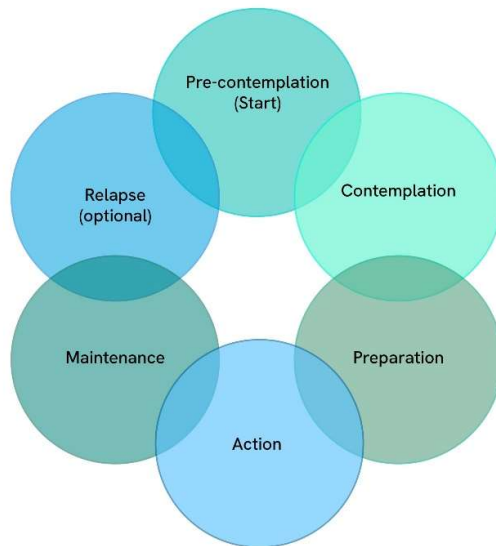
For some people, change will mean feeling better or spending less time on inappropriate sexual thoughts.

Working on these problems can be difficult and distressing, as is often the case with personal growth and change. Change happens over time, rather than suddenly. As this process happens, a person’s motivation changes.

Choosing to use this guide is an important first step, and working through it will increase your understanding and awareness. Take one step at a time and don’t rush through the guide. You need to engage in the work and reflect on your life. It has taken a long time to get where you are and change can take time too. Don’t be hard on yourself if it doesn’t happen overnight. People who struggle with sexual thoughts or behaviour towards children often have feelings of fear, guilt, and shame. This can reduce their self-esteem and hopes for the future.

A framework for discussing the motivation to change is the Stages of Change Model. They outline six stages.

- Pre-contemplation: a person is not aware there is a problem.
- Contemplation: a person is aware of a problem and starting to think about making a change.
- Preparation: a person is planning to make a change, finding support groups or talking to people about making changes.
- Action: a person is starting the new behaviour or stopping negative ones, attending support groups, completing self-help modules, calling the Stop It Now! helpline!
- Maintenance: a person doesn’t engage in old behaviour and has moved to a new normal.
- Lapse/Relapse: a person has returned to old behaviours, either as a one-off (lapse) or for longer (relapse). This does not always happen, but if a lapse occurs, you can choose to move back into the ‘action’ phase, rather than go into a complete relapse.



Setting goals

By using this website, you have recognised that you have a behaviour you want to change and are at least in the preparation stage. Move into action and start these self-help modules today. Anyone who commits themselves to change is able to change, even if they have tried in the past without success. With the right tools, you can move forward.

You need to take one step at a time, do not rush through it. Our role is to ask the right questions not give you the answers; you need to engage in the work and reflect on your life.

My goals exercise

Spend some time thinking about some positive goals that will help you move towards being the person you want to be. It is important to set goals in manageable bite-size ways that make them more achievable which, in turn, makes change even more likely.

It may help you to focus on the following five key areas of well-being; routine, sleep, nutrition, movement and social contact. When we are not feeling our best, these things tend to slip but when we are at our most peaceful, it's usually because the above needs are being met.

Example: My goals for the next week

- Routine: I will get up at 7am every day, and have a list of things I will do in the day such as washing or cleaning, which I will tick off once completed.
- Sleep: I will not go online after 9pm, I will create a sleep routine (for example, hot drink, bath, reading) and be in bed by 11pm.
- Nutrition: I will eat three meals per day and cook one healthy meal per week.
- Movement: I will go for a 10-minute walk each day.
- Contact: I will call a friend I haven't spoken to recently, or talk to someone serving me in a shop.

You can achieve these goals and you have taken the first step to change. Be proud that you have started this journey and let us support you as you take the next steps.

Continue

Short-term changes to your thoughts and behaviour

It can also be useful to make some changes specifically connected to problematic behaviour.

Some examples might include:

- contacting your internet provider to prevent access to sexual material online or use [Bulldog Blocker](#), or similar, to filter pornography
- changing your laptop, phone or tablet wallpaper or screensaver to a photo of someone who is important to you, and who would be supportive of the changes you are making
- read books which could help you to understand compulsive behaviour (for example, *In the Shadows of the Net: Breaking free from compulsive behaviour*)
- reducing how much alcohol you drink, for example, having three alcohol-free days or not going online after drinking alcohol

These are a few examples, but you are the expert on your life and in knowing what changes you could put in place today.

If your risky or illegal behaviour happens online, there are lots of options to consider such as only going online in public spaces or when other people are nearby. If you are concerned about your pornography use, there are several apps which could be helpful such as [Remojo](#) and [Accountable 2U](#).

Change I want to make	Making it specific – how will I achieve this?	What will be the outcome?
Feeling less anxious	I will contact my GP today and make an appointment to discuss what options are available to me	I will feel like I am addressing the problem and being proactive. Long-term, I hope to feel more peaceful and in control.
Reduce my pornography use	I will contact my internet provider within the next two days and request that parental controls are put in place, to prevent my access to sexual material	I will spend less time viewing pornography which will allow me to focus on having quality time with my partner, friends and family. This will reduce my feelings of guilt and improve my connections with others.

If you have people you can talk to about the changes you want to make, it's a good idea to include them in your plan. It's helpful to have someone to check in with and keep you on track when you're making changes. If you can, share your plan with your supporters and ask them to see how you're doing. They might also give you some advice. For example, if you set a goal to join a new club to make more friends, your supporters might notice that you're feeling more confident. Hearing their thoughts can help you stay motivated, so don't hesitate to ask them how you're doing.

It's also important to notice your own progress and give yourself a pat on the back. We suggest taking a moment every day or every few days to look at your goals. If you haven't reached them, think about what made it tough and how you can overcome those challenges. And if you have succeeded, don't forget to praise yourself and acknowledge your progress. You can keep adding new goals as you achieve your current ones.

*Please return to the website and complete the **Reflection** questions at the end of this module.*