

## BUILDING MOTIVATION TO CHANGE BEHAVIOUR

Making changes in our behaviours can often be very challenging. Building motivation to change problem behaviours can be an integral part of the process of change.

There are many different types of behaviours that we may need to consider changing. For example:

Alcohol consumption	Excessive gaming
Drug use	Excessive spending/shopping
Binge/comfort eating	Excessive gambling
Lying/cheating/stealing	Blaming yourself for everything
Compulsive or repetitive behaviours such as excessive cleaning, ordering, washing, checking	Blaming others for everything
Being angry	Detaching from your feelings
Being aggressive	Hurting yourself
Being passive	Always putting others first
Being manipulative	Always putting yourself first
Avoiding situations or people	Expecting too much of yourself
Procrastinating	Expecting too little of yourself
Withdrawing & isolating yourself	Being lazy
Being too dependent & needy	Approval seeking & pleasing others
Being too independent & distant	Being defiant & oppositional
Refusing to ask for help	Being overly controlling

The list above is by no means exhaustive. Whatever the problem behaviour, this worksheet is designed to help you build motivation to change the behaviour by raising your awareness & understanding of:

- The behaviour in question
- How it manifests in your life
- How it creates problems & negative consequences in your life
- The function or purpose of the behaviour i.e. what it does for you
- What you stand to gain by changing this behaviour
- What you need to do to change this behaviour
- What are some of the hurdles you will need to overcome to change the behaviour

What are you considering changing? Describe the behaviour

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<b>Benefits</b> What are the advantages of this behaviour? What are the pros? What do you gain from this behaviour? In what ways does the behaviour work?	<b>Costs</b> What are the disadvantages of this behaviour? What are the cons? What do you lose from this behaviour? In what way does the behaviour not work?

Place an \* next to those that are most significant & important to you. Consider why these are so special.

Examine the costs. Consider in what ways this behaviour is *most unhelpful & dysfunctional*.

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Examine the benefits. Even though the costs might outweigh the benefits it is likely this behaviour is “doing something for you”. Identify the primary *function or purpose* of the behaviour.

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Consider how this behaviour started. When did it start? What were the circumstances? Who else was involved? How has it developed or changed over time? What was its function in the past?

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What are the most important things you stand to gain by changing this behaviour?

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What are the most important things you stand to lose by changing this behaviour? Despite the benefits of changing this behaviour, it is likely you will lose something. You will need to let some things go & give them up.

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How do you feel about what you will lose by changing the behaviour? Does it make you less motivated to change the behaviour?

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What does changing your behaviour actually entail? Consider specifically what it is that you have to do, stop doing or do differently in order to make the change in behaviour?

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*Do you believe you are personally capable of changing your behaviour?* Do you think you have the skills, knowledge or ability to change? Or do you think it goes beyond your capabilities? Do you think it is too difficult?

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*Do you think you have the power & control to change your behaviour?* Or do you think your behaviour is governed by forces that you cannot do anything about such as other people, circumstances or events or even forces within yourself that you are unable to change such as your thoughts, feelings, urges, compulsions?

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*How does this behaviour & its consequences compare with your values?* Your values describe what is most important to you. It taps into your heart's inner most desires. Is the behaviour consistent with your values? Or is the behaviour inconsistent with your values?

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*How does this behaviour fit with your goals?* Does this behaviour help you to achieve your goals or does it hinder the achievement of your goals?

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*How does this behaviour & its consequences compare with your perception of yourself?* Does this behaviour fit with how you see yourself or how you want to see yourself?

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*Do you need to find alternative ways of achieving the function of the old behaviour?* If so, how can you achieve the same outcomes & benefits of the old behaviour? What else could you do? What new skills or abilities might you need to learn in order to achieve the same outcomes of the old behaviour?

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You are more likely to make changes in your behaviour if you have the following mindset:

- ✓ You believe the behaviour is a problem that is causing or has the potential to cause significant distress, pain, loss or other negative outcomes for yourself or others
- ✓ You believe by changing your behaviour you can reduce the risk of experiencing these negative outcomes
- ✓ You believe the benefits of changing your behaviour outweigh the costs
- ✓ You believe it is worth changing your behaviour & all that it entails
- ✓ You know what to do to change your behaviour
- ✓ You believe you are capable of changing your behaviour
- ✓ You believe you have the skills, knowledge & abilities to change your behaviour
- ✓ You believe it is possible to change your behaviour
- ✓ You believe by changing your behaviour you are acting in accordance with your values & perception of yourself & who you see / or want to see yourself as being

Therefore, you are less likely to be motivated to make changes in your behaviour if you have the following mindset:

- × "I really don't think this is a problem"
- × "There really isn't much to be gained by changing what I'm doing"
- × "It's not worth the hassle"
- × "It's too hard"
- × "I don't think I have what it takes to make the change"
- × "Even if I wanted to, I don't think it's possible, there are too many factors I have no control over"
- × "I don't really know what I am supposed to do"

Consider your answers to the points made above. What mindset do you have?

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