

CHANGE



03303 639 997

A self help manual
for drug and alcohol users
who want to make changes



Acknowledgements

With thanks to.....

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About this self help manual

This self help manual is for drug and alcohol users who are thinking about making changes in their lives.

...to help you make the changes you want around your drug or alcohol use. It's about using more safely, cutting down or stopping. From hitting up to chasing the dragon, from using street gear to getting a script.....

The manual gives you support and choices.

Some things may work better for you than others.

Its your choice and we're all different.

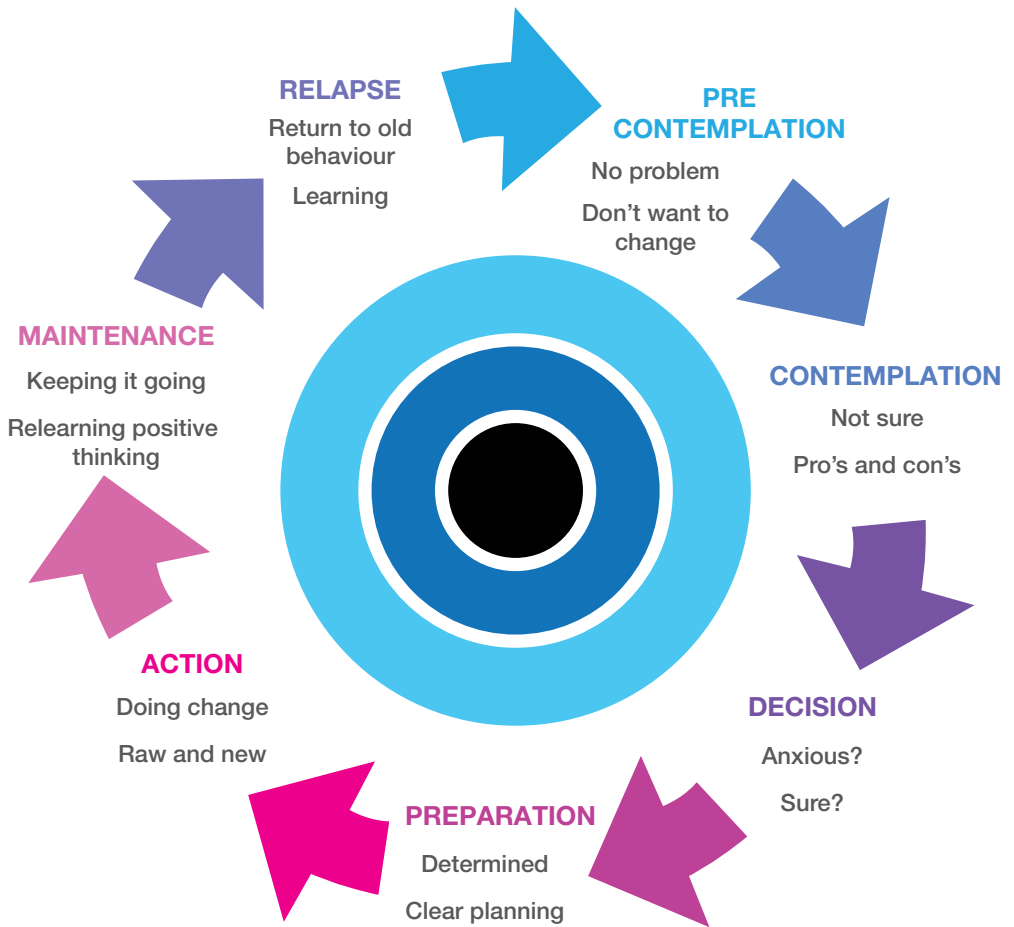
After reading this manual, if you would like more support or advice from a substance misuse worker, please contact Dyfed Drug and Alcohol Service (DDAS) on 03303 639 997 or on confidential@d-das.co.uk - you can get support and see a substance misuse worker immediately by dropping into any of our offices from 9-5 Monday - Friday in Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion.

CHANGE

You know and we know that changing your drug or alcohol use is not as easy as it sounds. As well as your use there will be other areas in your life you may have to change. Often it's the thought of changing that is more scary than doing it. This pack is about helping you make a plan for change – old habits die hard. Achieving change is much more likely if you are armed with knowledge and have done some preparation.

The Stages of Change

We might think about what we want to change in our lives but we do not often think so much about how we do it. The Cycle of Change is a diagram commonly used in drug treatment services to show people the process. This can help you start thinking about it. Not all people will follow the stages in the Cycle of Change and people may go round the cycle several times. Every time you go round you will be learning more about what works for you and what you need to look out for.



Look at the Cycle of Change above – which stage are you in right now?

A word in your ear

Lapses and Relapses

Lapse and relapse is not inevitable but it is part of the process especially when you try to make major changes – many people go through the cycle many times before sticking at their preferred level of use. Some people feel that they are ‘back at square one’ when they have a lapse. The problem with this kind of thinking is that you then feel bad about yourself. That just gives you one more reason to use and forget about it all.....does this sound familiar?

Just remember that when you try to change you will often learn a considerable amount from your mistakes. Any lapse that you have is not as important as the way that you deal with it. Don't give up trying to reach your goal – just ask yourself:

What is it I really want in life ?

Three Myths About Change

False

Change is easy.

You decide to change and then you “just do it.”

True

Change is not that simple!

Most of us will “lapse or relapse” many times before a change in our behaviour becomes permanent.

Think of making a change like climbing a ladder. You may know where you want to go, but at times you can slip and go back down a few feet, or even fall all the way down to the bottom! Although having a setback can leave you feeling like a “failure,” it is important to realize that when you “fall,” you never go all the way back to the beginning because you have gained some experience on the journey. You can use what you have learned to increase the odds of success the next time.

With reference to the Cycle of Change model, do NOT think of these stages as being a one-way street starting at Precontemplation and ending with Maintenance. It is much more realistic and helpful to think of the stages as being more like a spiral staircase where you can move up, but you can also come back to a place you have been before.

Myth

If you don't make a change the first time, you will never change.

Fact

At any given point, only 20% of us are able to make a permanent change with only one try. Those who eventually reach their goal are determined and don't let their “lapses” stop them!

Myth

It only takes willpower to make change happen. If I can't change a habit, it's because I'm too weak and too scared.

Fact

If changing habits were only a matter of willpower, we would all be more successful at making changes and sticking to them. Making changes in your behaviour is more about being smart and courageous than being strong. If you are going to attempt to make a change, it really helps to understand what you are up against. There are specific things you can do at each stage of the model to help you move through the process of change much faster. For example, from research it is known that in order for a person to move from Contemplation to Action, the pros of making a change **MUST** outweigh the cons of changing. There are techniques you can employ to help shift that balance in favour of moving into Action.



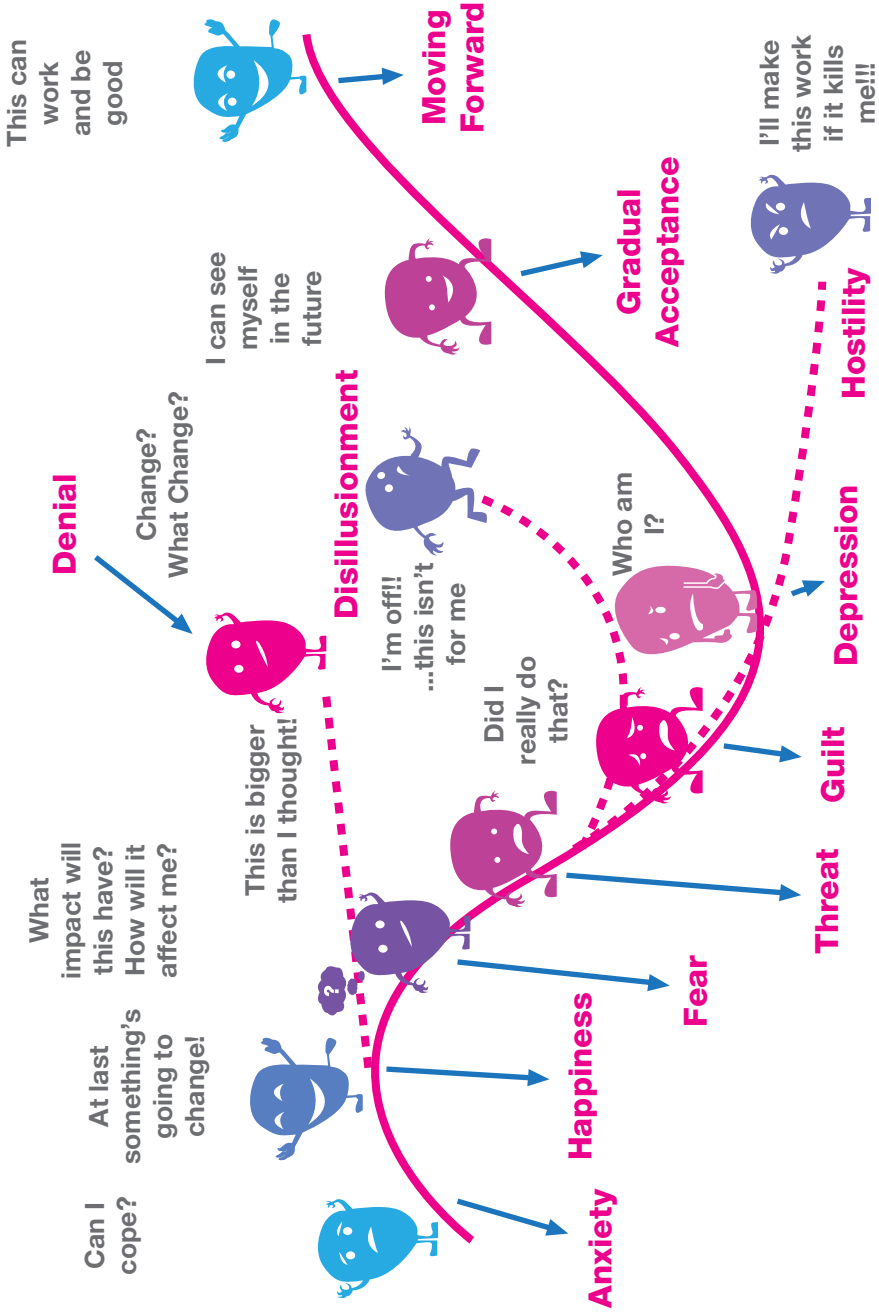


Tipping Point of Change

When you are weighing up your drug use the point you are trying to get to is one when the reasons for not using (or cutting down) outweigh your reasons for use (or using at the same level). If you recognise that you may lose things that you have and hold dear, such as relationships, money, job, etc, by not changing you will make the necessary change. Or if you can build up things in your life that become ‘too much to lose’ you are much more likely to sustain the changes you have made.

On the next page is another model of change. You may find it useful to think which one you can most relate to based on your experiences of making changes in the past.

The Process of Transition



Exercises

The self help tools on the following pages will help you look at your drug use and make a plan to change.

It could also be useful to talk to someone; two heads can be better than one.

If you want to work with a drug or alcohol worker, you can ring us 03303 639 997

Exercise 1

Firstly take a look at what it is you want to change and then you can think about how you will go about it.

Where are you at right now?

Drug I am using	Don't want to change my use	Want to change my use	What change do I want to make?
Alcohol			
Heroin			
Crack			
Cannabis			
Cocaine			
Amphetamine			
Methadone Subutex			
New psychoactive substances			
Benzodiazepines			
Ecstasy			
Ketamine			

Exercise 2 - Pros and cons of use

Think about why you use and why you want to change your use. In the box below list the benefits of using (the pros) and the consequences (the cons), and the benefits of changing (the pros) and the consequences of not changing (the cons).

Keep asking yourself 'what else?' until you have a long list in the boxes.

THE PROS OF USING
THE CONS OF USING

THE PROS OF CHANGING

THE CONS OF NOT CHANGING

When you have completed the exercise look at your answers and identify which things you have listed are of most importance to you.

Keep in mind the important benefits and positives of change as these are the things that will keep you motivated.

Exercise 3

Think about what change would be like for you:

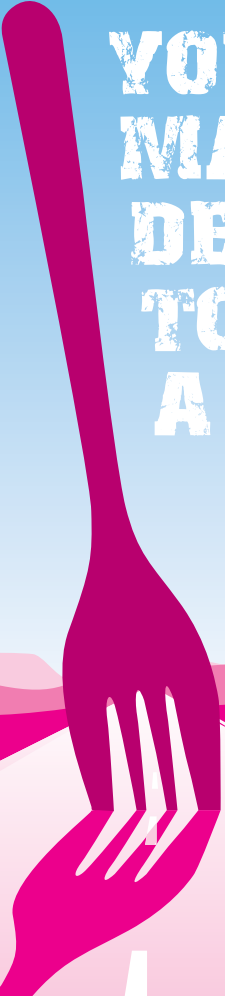
The best thing about changing my drug use use would be:

The worst thing about changing my drug use use would be:

The easiest thing about changing my drug use use would be:

The hardest thing about changing my drug use use would be:

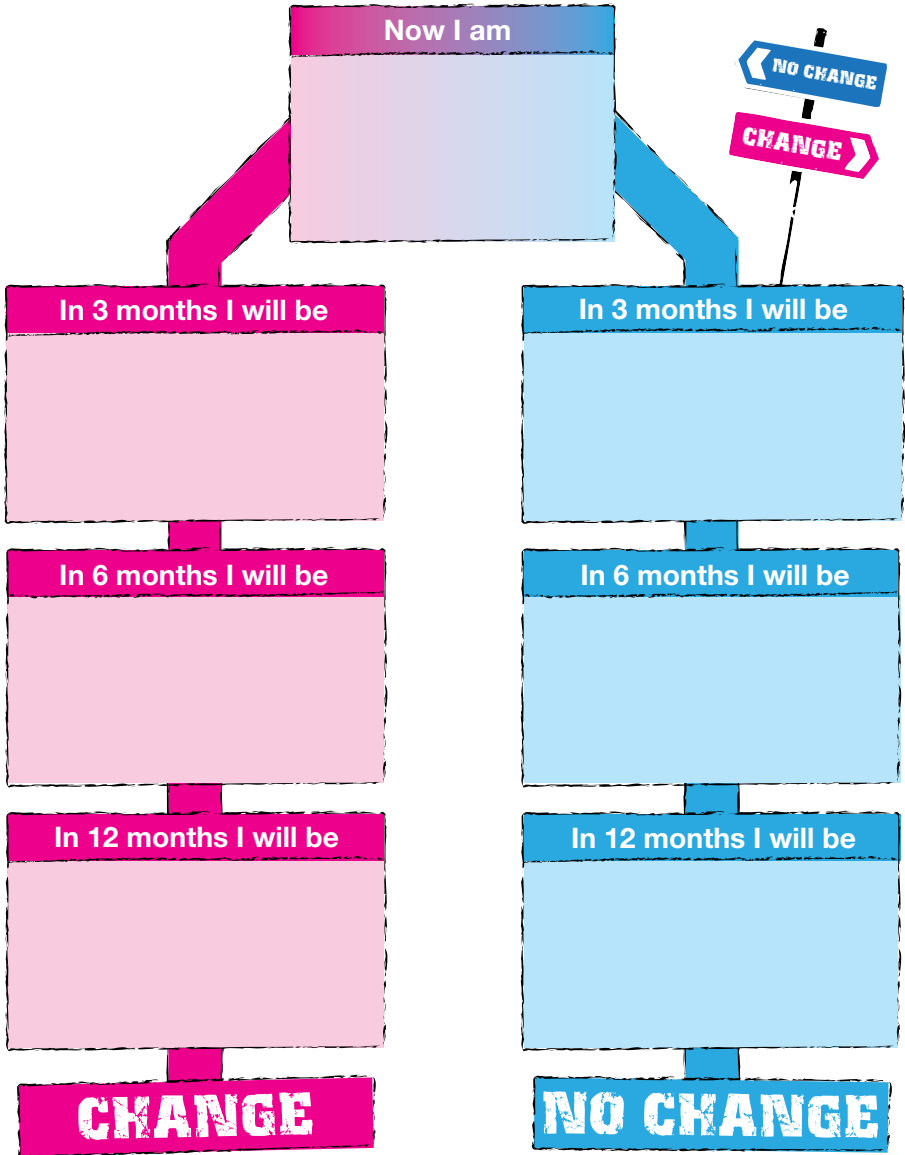
Exercise 4 - Fork in the Road



**YOU HAVE
MADE A
DECISION
TO MAKE
A CHANGE**

The next exercise is to help plan where you would like to be in the future. It also highlights where you will be in the future if you do not make the change.

In the boxes write down where you think you will be if you made the change and if you do not. Look at both options and decide which road you will take.



Considering this exercise, what do you need to help you make these changes to your drug use? Write a list.....

Who can help me?..... e.g A friend, my GP, A worker at Drugaid, a peer support worker, AA or NA	How can they help?..... Encouragement, Listen to me, Offer support etc
What practical things will I need to do?..... e.g Arrange to see someone at Drugaid or contact a service user group	When can I do this?..... Put a date or time in here that is realistic

Anything else?.....

Exercise 5 - UNDERSTAND YOUR USE

Before making a change with your drug use it can help if you analyse your use. Firstly look at the triggers surrounding your use – these may be external (causes, reasons, situations etc) or internal (feelings, attitude etc) and then look at the consequences.

When you have identified your triggers you can use them to create a plan to either avoid high-risk situations or to get the necessary skills to face them. Once you have looked at the consequences, you can identify other ways of achieving similar beneficial consequences (laughs, good feelings etc) and see the price paid (in terms of money, impact on relationships etc) when you look at the negative consequences.

When making a change get as much support as you can. Tell supportive friends, family members, partners etc your plan and ask them to be on hand if you need them. Make sure the people you choose to support you are understanding (one of these could be a Drugaid worker).

The idea is to tip the balance and by looking at Exercises 1, 2 and 3 together - work towards the positives outweighing the negatives.

When completing this exercise think of a typical scenario – either the one that happens most often or one that may come up in the coming week.



External triggers



Who?

Who are the people who will trigger me to use?

Where?

Where will I most likely be ?



When am I most likely to want to use?

When?	Monday	Tuesday	Wednes- day	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Morning							
Afternoon							
Evening							

Behaviour – use the above exercise to track your use over the next few months – in order to see if your use goes up or down – this will help you measure your progress.

Internal Triggers

What will I be thinking
before I use to justify it?

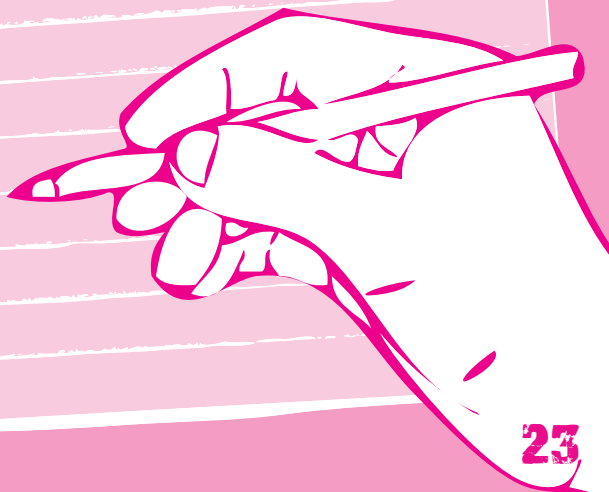
What will I be feeling
before I use?



How will I be behaving?

How much do I use?

How much do I have to spend?

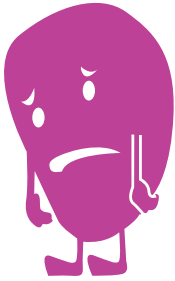
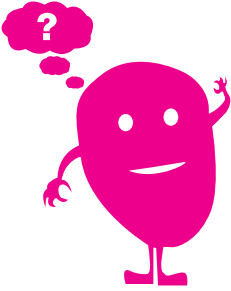


What are the short term positive consequences of using?



What other ways could you achieve this?



What are the long term negative consequences to using?	What could you do to remind yourself of these if you are tempted to use?
	
Relationships:	
Family:	
Friendships:	
Physical:	
Emotional:	
Legal:	
Job:	
Financial:	
Other:	



Who will I need to avoid?

What are the places I need to avoid?



What can I say to myself to challenge these thoughts about using?

勇士

Warrior thoughts:

If your drug use is going down how can you make sure you keep doing what you are doing AND what else can you do to get to where you want to be?



A large white outline of a hand is centered on the page. Inside the outline, there are 15 horizontal white lines for writing, arranged in a column that follows the shape of the hand's palm and wrist.

Exercise 6 - GOAL SETTING AND CHANGE PLAN

Work to your strengths. What are your strengths? List some of them below....

Strengths	Beliefs	Goals

If you have a change plan you are much more likely to get over barriers and obstacles and be successful in your attempts to change. Firstly think of a time in the past when you have made a change and analyse it. Ask yourself questions such as:

What steps did you take in reaching your goals?



What obstacles did you face?



How were you able to overcome those obstacles?



If you can remember past successes it will help build your confidence in meeting future goals. Start thinking of attainable goals that you have for your future. Make sure that they are realistic and achievable. Work through the following questions and you will have a structure to your plan.

What steps I plan to take.....

Be as specific as possible about the actions you will take to reach your goals. *Eg. 'I will stay away from my friends who use and I will avoid pubs' 'I will plan healthy activities, such as exercising, to combat boredom and help me cope with urges to use'*

What can get in the way?

Think about any barriers you might encounter as you work towards your goal and how you will overcome them. *Eg. 'I might get lonely or bored and want to spend time with old friends' 'My cousin might try to talk me into using because he thinks that's how we can have a good time.'*

People who can help me.....

List people (or groups of people) who can help you as you work toward your goals. *For example, Drugs worker, Peer support groups at DRUGAID or NA/AA, Friends and family.*

NB: At the end of this pack you will find contact details for other supporting agencies

All journeys start with one step

1 step forward, 2 steps back but the 1 step forward has been made and you will learn from it.

What could I occupy my time with instead of using? What would I like to be doing? What do I enjoy?

List here the kinds of things I was interested in before I started using	List here what I am interested in now	List here what I would like to find out about	What do I need to do to find out about it	When will I do this?





What could my week look like if I was able to do alternative activities to using

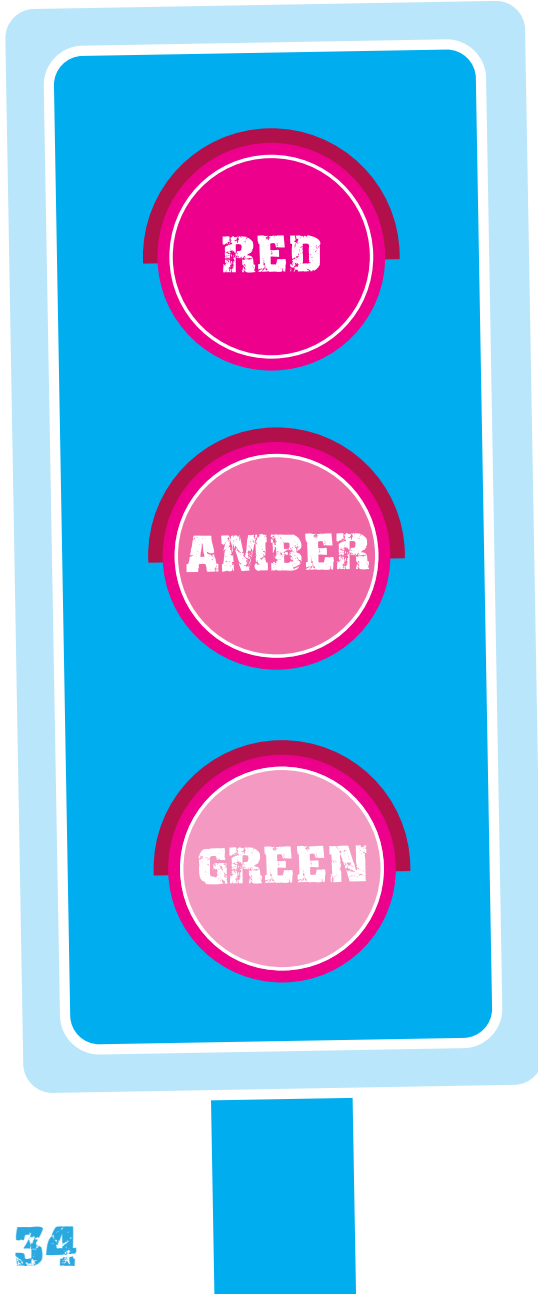
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Morning							
Afternoon							
Evening							

Where can I find out about doing this?

Your Drugaid worker could help you with this. Or pop in to the drop in and we can give you contact details and information about many different activities you could get involved in....

AND FINALLY, REMEMBER - ACT DON'T REACT

When we are put in threatening or difficult situations, unless prepared you may react to them as opposed to acting. Below are listed skills which may help eliminate the urge to lapse.



A – AWARENESS

How do I feel? How is my body reacting? Why do I feel like this?

C – CONSEQUENCE

If I use today, what will I achieve? What will the consequences of my actions be?

T – TIME

Allow yourself time to feel emotions, and to notice how your body feels.

DON'T FORGET

Traffic lights change!

AWARENESS

When put in stressful situations your body goes naturally into “fight or flight” mode. This basically means that your body produces more adrenaline, and gets ready to fight or flight. Your heart rate raises, your breathing gets quicker, you may become anxious and sweaty. If you are unaware why you feel like this, it can be scary, and in some cases may lead to lapsing.

It is important to recognise why you feel the urge to use. Is it the drug you crave or are you feeling anxious or stressed about something else? Has something happened? Has someone said something? Be aware that at this stage of change your triggers are likely to be internalised as opposed to external. i.e. feelings as opposed to situations. It is not weak to feel, it is a strength to be aware.

CONSEQUENCES

If you use today how will you feel? Remember how you felt saying to your using peers, “No thanks I don’t use anymore” - pride is a very powerful feeling. Look in the mirror, and tell yourself how proud you are and how far you have come. Allow yourself to feel proud of your achievements, and smile – it really does help!

TIME

If you were to have reacted you would have lapsed or not reached the goals that you set in your change plan. Allow yourself time to feel those emotions that may not have been there before. Allowing yourself time, buys you more time. The longer you give yourself the less likely you are to lapse.

ACT – Don’t react!!!!

DRUGAID'S approach and work with drug users



Who we are and what we do

Dyfed Drug and Alcohol Service (DDAS) is a service run by Drugaid. It works with drug and alcohol users and concerned others who live in Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion. DDAS offers a range of support including:

- Long term / short term one to one support using psycho-social interventions
- Harm reduction information and resources
- Brief interventions (up to 3 sessions with a drugs worker)
- Access to substitute prescribing (eg. methadone, Subutex and Suboxone)
- Counselling service
- Diversionary activities
- Open access sessions
- Complementary therapies
- Groupwork programmes
- Relapse prevention
- Outreach
- Peer support
- Service user involvement
- Aftercare

Notes

This manual has been brought to you by Drugaid workers and our service users.



www.drugaidcymru.com



DDAS

**DYFED DRUG AND
ALCOHOL SERVICE**

DDAS offers a point of contact into adult substance misuse services to individuals aged 18 years or over and their concerned others in Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion.

Contact DDAS on the phone number on the front cover or email confidential@d-das.co.uk



Choices West offers a point of contact into children and young person's substance misuse services to individuals under 18 years of age and their concerned others. Contact Choices West on 01554 775779 or text the team on 07896 248911