

Change - We Can Learn A lot Working In Social Work Industry and Their Results

by Ty Bechel
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I have been working in the treatment and recovery field for roughly six years. To some more seasoned in that field that have worked for decades may consider me a *pup*, but I can attest to what has been learned in that time. Human behavior's defining moments are highlighted when someone's life has been ravaged directly by a substance use disorder (SUD). It is fair to recommend that the underlining behaviors are quite similar among many different individuals.

We can learn a lot working in the industry of social work. If we pay close attention and observe correctly, we see patterns in human behaviors, even outside the demographics we are working with. It becomes almost a sixth sense and making anecdotal predictions about what someone may say or do is typically spot-on. I can tell you from about a 2-minute conversation what your stance on addiction is. This goes for both the person struggling and someone in our community that may not be entirely supportive.

Someone struggling must move across the lines of stages of change. A more formal name is the transtheoretical model of behavior change. Have you ever asked yourself why someone "just cannot get their life together?" We know about change because it is constant, and that people can indeed change if they develop a plan of action. We can recognize areas in our life that may need attention. The stages of change are pre-contemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, and maintenance. When looking at anyone or anything that needs to change for a more positive or pleasant outcome, this simple guide makes sense and *paints* a clear picture of what an individual may be experiencing and why they may be ambivalent.

We, regardless of what we are experiencing, can be stubborn and resistant. Some of us will blame others for our situation or talk so negatively about ourselves that it defeats us daily. We see many memes on social media pointing to apologizing but continuing to do what we apologized for. It is about breaking habits or behaviors.

On the other side of the coin is personal accountability. We cannot put all the pressure on society that may not fully understand addiction and mental health. After all, those struggling must decide to seek help and make their action plan come to life. This is where proper support and those that understand what someone may be experiencing, especially personally, can provide something that society cannot – a space of discernment and empathy. Motivational interviewing techniques utilized in a supportive role help tremendously for someone struggling to see and understand how some of their decisions are creating a downward spiral. From there, the problem is known, and now the solution can follow.

As a recovery coach, I blend life coaching with my style. My job is not to scold, scoff, or scrutinize. I help the people I am working with to discover life and areas they want to improve at their pace (I meet them where they are). We develop a recovery management plan that is tailored to their life experiences and set goals that they can achieve. Autonomy is essential to developing confidence and self-efficacy. We all want to be accepted and successful, but our realities have been distorted, and sometimes we hold a twisted definition of success.

We grow up seeing and being introduced to environments that have conditioned us to develop personalities and ways of doing things that are sometimes baffling. Escaping a

world full of anger and trauma is sometimes why many people begin using drugs and alcohol. This is beyond parody, change can be challenging, but it can be achieved, especially if we seek the support and help where we *grow* without hateful rhetoric or metaphorical death wishes.