



## Participation Agreement for Group Therapy:

You will be joining a closed group which means that it is not open to new members. You will be asked to participate as a valuable part of the group as the structured and supportive nature of a closed group can significantly enhance the effectiveness of anxiety treatment.

The stability of the group composition promotes trust and deeper connections among participants, enhancing mutual support. This consistency allows for tailored, progressive therapy sessions that address the specific needs and progress of the group members. Additionally, the sense of community reduces feelings of isolation, a common issue in anxiety sufferers, while encouraging accountability and sustained engagement in therapeutic activities.

## Confidentiality in Group Therapy:

You have the right to confidentiality under federal and state laws relating to the receipt of psychological services (see Informed Consent document). Barnabas Behavioral Healthcare, LLC maintains these confidentiality and privacy standards for group therapy. However, confidentiality from other group members is not protected by these same standards, and BARNABAS BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE, LLC cannot control what information other group members may disclose. Your confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in group therapy. Therefore, confidentiality within group therapy is a shared responsibility among all members and is based on mutual trust and respect.

*You agree to not disclose to anyone outside the group any personal information about another group member. If participating in a group through telepsychology, you agree to use a private setting where the group conversation cannot be overheard or observed by others. If you breach confidentiality, you may be asked to leave the group.*

## Additional Group Agreements:

- *You agree to be on time for group and notify the CPC if you cannot attend.*
- *You agree to be respectful of the therapist and other group members.*
- *You understand you are not required to disclose any information you do not feel comfortable discussing in group.*
- *You understand that you may be asked to leave the group if you are disruptive or negatively affecting other group members.*
- *You understand that in-person group sessions may be recorded for training purposes.*

- *You understand that in-person and online groups may be observed by the therapist's supervisor or other therapists-in-training.*
- *You will be notified prior to any recording or observation of group sessions.*

**Financial Agreement:**

- *You agree to make payments at the time of service.*
- *You agree that you are joining a closed group which means that we will not replace you as group member should you leave the group. Any missed meetings will not be billed to your insurance and you will be charged a \$50 no show fee.*
- *You are agreeing to 5 weekly meetings as a part of this program.*

**Care Coordination Agreement:**

- You understand and agree that we may communicate with your referring or primary care provider to update treatment status and screening scores.
- You agree and understand that we may communicate with your counselor

Date:

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Signature:

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Printed Name:

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# GAD-7 Anxiety

Over the <u>last two weeks</u> , how often have you been bothered by the following problems?	Not at all	Several days	More than half the days	Nearly every day
1. Feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge	0	1	2	3
2. Not being able to stop or control worrying	0	1	2	3
3. Worrying too much about different things	0	1	2	3
4. Trouble relaxing	0	1	2	3
5. Being so restless that it is hard to sit still	0	1	2	3
6. Becoming easily annoyed or irritable	0	1	2	3
7. Feeling afraid, as if something awful might happen	0	1	2	3

Column totals    \_\_\_\_\_ + \_\_\_\_\_ + \_\_\_\_\_ + \_\_\_\_\_ =

Total Score \_\_\_\_\_

If you checked any problems, how difficult have they made it for you to do your work, take care of things at home, or get along with other people?

Not difficult at all

☐

Somewhat difficult

☐

Very difficult

☐

Extremely difficult

☐

Source: Primary Care Evaluation on Mental Disorders Patient Health Questionnaire (PRIME-MD-PHQ). The PHQ was developed by Drs. Robert L. Spitzer, Janet B.W. Williams, Kurt Kroenke, and colleagues. For research information, contact Dr. Spitzer at [ris8@columbia.edu](mailto:ris8@columbia.edu). PRIME-MD IS A TRADEMARK OF Pfizer Inc. Copyright 1999 Pfizer Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduced with permission

## Scoring GAD-7 Anxiety Severity

This is calculated by assigning scores of 0, 1, 2, and 3 to the response categories, respectively, of “not at all,” “several days,” “more than half the days,” and “nearly every day.”

GAD-7 total score for the seven items ranges from 0 to 21.

0-4: minimal anxiety

5-9: mild anxiety

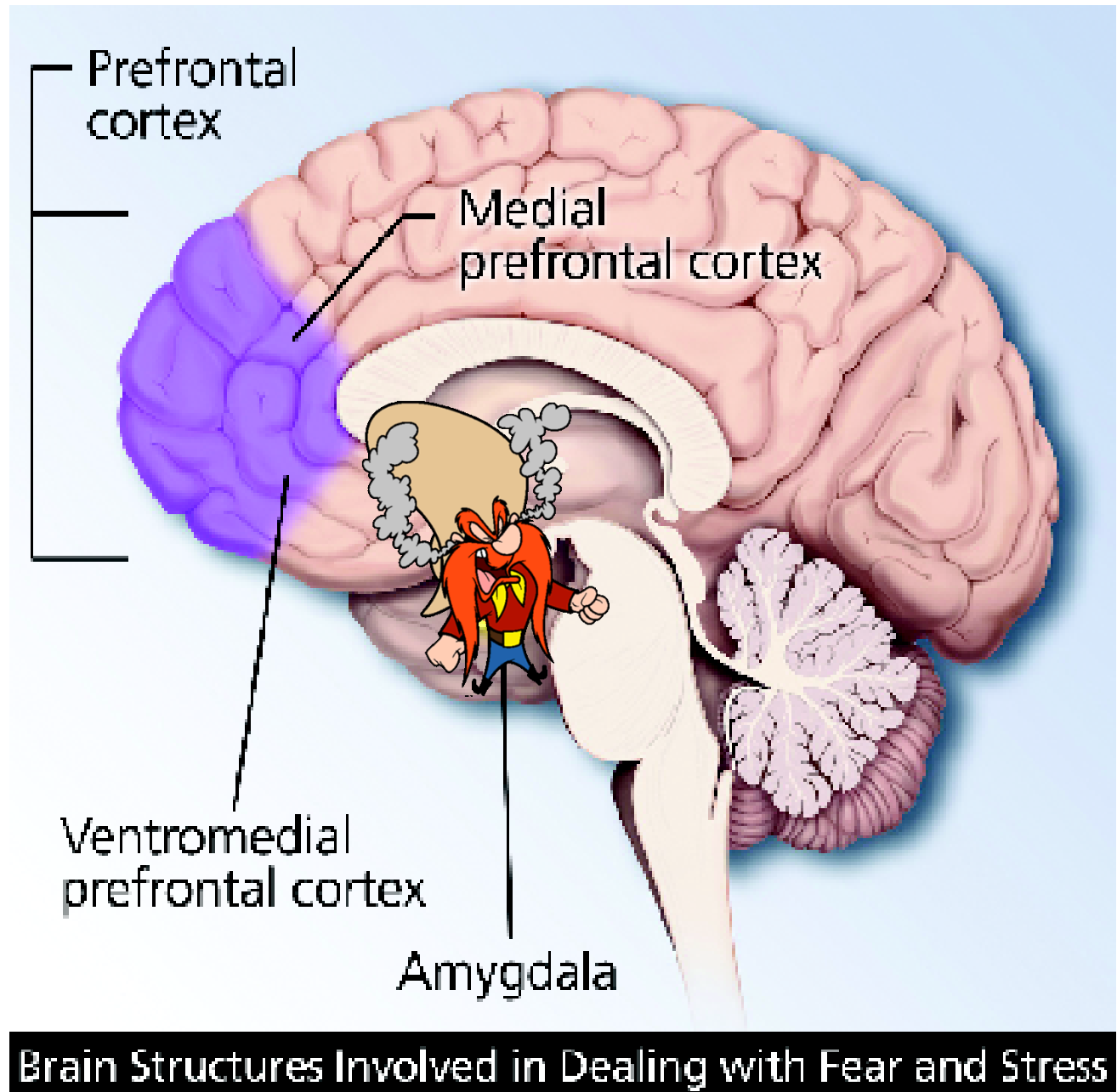
10-14: moderate anxiety

15-21: severe anxiety

# RESTRUCTURE REWIRING ANXIETY

Barnabas Behavioral Healthcare, LLC

*Anxiety is not a disease- it is simply a symptom of an **irritable** Amygdala*



# ■ How Trauma Can Be Passed From Mother to Child

## 1. Biological Pathways

- **Stress hormones (cortisol, adrenaline):** High maternal stress can cross the placenta and affect fetal brain development.
- **Epigenetics:** Trauma can alter gene expression, and some changes can be passed to children.
- **Birth outcomes:** High maternal stress is linked to premature birth, low birth weight, and later health challenges.

## 2. Emotional & Behavioral Pathways

- **Attachment:** Trauma can disrupt secure bonding, leading to emotional regulation difficulties.
- **Parenting styles:** Survivors may struggle with hypervigilance, withdrawal, or inconsistent caregiving.
- **Modeling:** Children learn coping behaviors by observing parents' responses to stress.

## 3. Social & Environmental Pathways

- **Household stressors:** Poverty, violence, or instability often accompany trauma and impact children's sense of safety.
- **Community influences:** Living in unsafe or unsupported environments can reinforce trauma cycles.

## 4. Protective Factors

Trauma transmission is **not inevitable**. Protective factors can break the cycle:

- Supportive relationships and community
- Access to therapy and trauma-informed care
- Mindfulness and stress reduction practices
- Stable, nurturing home environments

■ **In Short:** Trauma can be passed biologically, emotionally, and socially from mother to child — but with awareness, support, and healing practices, cycles of trauma **can be interrupted and replaced with resilience**.

# ■ Epigenetics: How Environment Shapes Genes

## 1. What is Epigenetics?

Epigenetics is the study of how genes are switched on or off without changing the DNA sequence itself. Think of DNA as the hardware and epigenetics as the software instructions that tell the hardware how to function.

## 2. How It Works

- **DNA Methylation:** Adding chemical tags (methyl groups) onto DNA that turn genes “off.”
- **Histone Modification:** DNA is wrapped around proteins called histones. Modifying histones can loosen (activate) or tighten (silence) DNA packaging.
- **Non-coding RNAs:** Molecules that influence whether genes are expressed or silenced.

## 3. Why It Matters

Epigenetics links **genes and environment**. Life experiences — such as diet, stress, trauma, or exposure to toxins — can alter epigenetic markers and influence health and behavior.

## 4. Examples

■ Identical Twins	Same DNA, but their traits and health differ due to different life experiences → difference
■ Nutrition	Maternal diet during pregnancy can affect a child's long-term health risks via epigenetics
■ Trauma & Stress	Severe stress can alter gene expression in stress-response systems, sometimes across generations

## 5. Key Takeaway

DNA provides the blueprint, but epigenetics determines how that blueprint is read and used. This means our environment and experiences can shape health, behavior, and even how traits are passed to future generations.



# Adverse Childhood Experience Questionnaire for Adults

California Surgeon General's Clinical Advisory Committee



Our relationships and experiences—even those in childhood—can affect our health and well-being. Difficult childhood experiences are very common. Please tell us whether you have had any of the experiences listed below, as they may be affecting your health today or may affect your health in the future. This information will help you and your provider better understand how to work together to support your health and well-being.

**Instructions:** Below is a list of 10 categories of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). From the list below, please place a checkmark next to each ACE category that you experienced prior to your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. Then, please add up the number of categories of ACEs you experienced and put the *total number* at the bottom.

1. Did you feel that you didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, or had no one to protect or take care of you?	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Did you lose a parent through divorce, abandonment, death, or other reason?	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Did you live with anyone who was depressed, mentally ill, or attempted suicide?	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Did you live with anyone who had a problem with drinking or using drugs, including prescription drugs?	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Did your parents or adults in your home ever hit, punch, beat, or threaten to harm each other?	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Did you live with anyone who went to jail or prison?	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Did a parent or adult in your home ever swear at you, insult you, or put you down?	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Did a parent or adult in your home ever hit, beat, kick, or physically hurt you in any way?	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Did you feel that no one in your family loved you or thought you were special?	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Did you experience unwanted sexual contact (such as fondling or oral/anal/vaginal intercourse/penetration)?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Your ACE score is the total number of checked responses</b>	

Do you believe that these experiences have affected your health?

☐ Not Much ☐ Some ☐ A Lot

Experiences in childhood are just one part of a person's life story.  
There are many ways to heal throughout one's life.

Please let us know if you have questions about privacy or confidentiality.

# Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Scoring & Risks

## ■ What ACEs Are

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are potentially traumatic events occurring before age 18. The standard ACEs questionnaire has 10 items, covering abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction. Each 'yes' answer counts as 1 point. Scores range from 0 to 10.

## ■ ACEs Scoring

Score	Meaning
0–1	Few or no reported adverse experiences
2–3	Moderate exposure to adversity
4+	High risk – outcomes strongly associated with long-term risks

## ■ Potential Risks of High ACE Scores

A higher ACE score increases risk across physical, mental, behavioral, and social health:

Category	Risks
Physical Health	Heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes, chronic pain, obesity, autoimmune disorders
Mental Health	Depression, anxiety, PTSD, suicidal thoughts
Behavioral & Social	Substance misuse, risky behaviors, relationship difficulties, incarceration
Generational Impact	Parenting struggles and intergenerational trauma cycles

## ■ Protective Factors

Not everyone with a high ACE score experiences negative outcomes. Resilience factors can buffer risks:

- Strong, supportive relationships
- Access to therapy or trauma-informed care
- Safe, stable, nurturing environments in adulthood
- Healthy coping strategies and self-regulation skills



# ■ Key Findings and Impact of the ACE Study

## 1. Major Findings

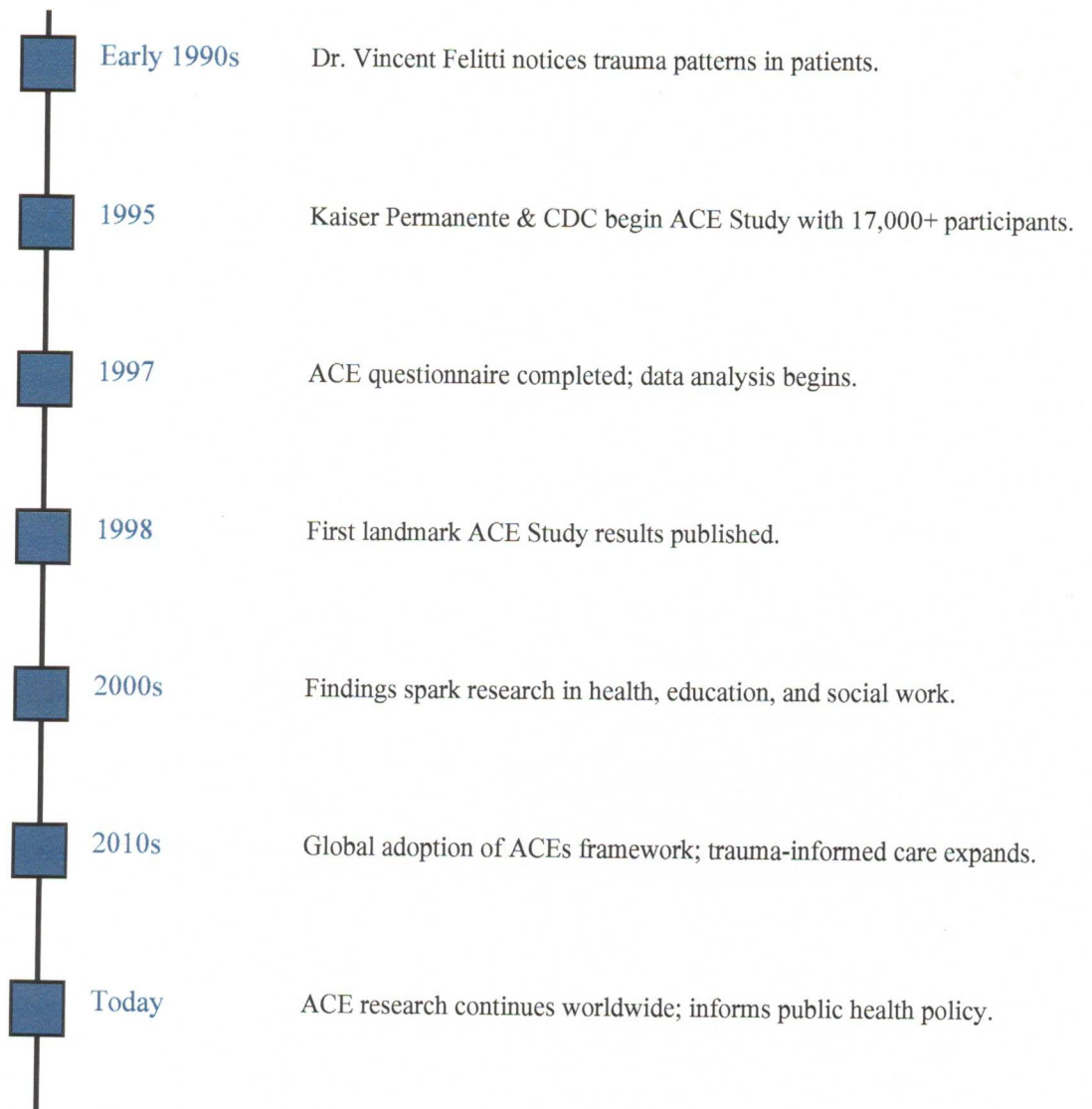
- Higher ACE scores are linked to greater risk of chronic illness (heart disease, cancer, diabetes, stroke).
- Strong association with depression, anxiety, and suicide attempts.
- ACEs increase risk of substance use, risky sexual behavior, and incarceration.
- Having 4 or more ACEs significantly raises the likelihood of poor health outcomes and early death.

## 2. Impact

The ACE Study transformed how we understand public health. It showed that childhood adversity is not just a social issue but a critical medical and public health challenge. The findings have led to trauma-informed practices in healthcare, education, and social services worldwide.

## 3. Key Takeaway

The ACE Study revealed that **what happens in childhood shapes health for a lifetime**. Recognizing and addressing childhood trauma can prevent long-term health and social problems.



### Negative Effects of Cortisol on the Human Body

- Immune system suppression – Increases vulnerability to infections and slows wound healing
- Weight gain and obesity – Promotes fat storage, especially in the abdominal area
- Muscle breakdown – Leads to muscle wasting and weakness over time
- Insulin resistance – Raises blood sugar levels, increasing the risk of type 2 diabetes
- Bone density loss – Inhibits bone formation, increasing risk of osteoporosis
- Cardiovascular strain – Elevates blood pressure and cholesterol, contributing to heart disease
- Digestive problems – Can cause or worsen acid reflux, IBS, and ulcers
- Sleep disturbances – Disrupts circadian rhythms and contributes to insomnia
- Mood disorders – Linked to anxiety, depression, and irritability
- Memory and cognitive decline – Impairs hippocampus function, affecting memory and learning
- Skin issues – Can lead to acne, thinning skin, and delayed healing
- Reproductive health disruption – Suppresses sex hormone production, affecting fertility and libido

# Negative Effects of Adrenaline

- Raises heart rate and blood pressure
- Reduces blood flow to some organs
- Causes rapid breathing and dizziness
- Increases blood sugar levels
- Slows digestion
- Creates muscle tension and headaches
- Disrupts sleep
- Causes anxiety or nervousness
- Increases risk of heart attack or stroke
- Weakens immune system over time



# Neuroplasticity

- Neuroplasticity is the ability of the brain and nervous system to recognize the neural pathways, connections, and functions.
- It takes place in time, slowly or quickly, over three main time spans:
  - Evolution over eons
  - Development over lifespan
  - Experience-based neuroplasticity that takes place quickly at any age

# ■ Neuroplasticity

## What is Neuroplasticity?

Neuroplasticity is the brain's ability to change, adapt, and reorganize itself throughout life. It happens by forming new connections between neurons and reshaping brain networks in response to learning, experience, or injury.

## Types of Neuroplasticity

**Structural Plasticity:** Physical changes in brain structure (e.g., musicians developing stronger motor areas).

**Functional Plasticity:** The brain shifting functions from damaged areas to healthy ones (e.g., recovery after stroke).

## How Neuroplasticity Works

■ Repetition	Strengthens neural pathways ("neurons that fire together, wire together").
■ Novelty	Learning new skills and challenges creates new connections.
■ Sleep	Consolidates and stabilizes learning.

## Benefits of Neuroplasticity

■ Learning & Memory	Acquire new skills, languages, and habits.
■ Recovery	Supports rehabilitation after brain injury or stroke.
■ Mental Health	Reduces anxiety, depression, and trauma effects.
■ Adaptability	Helps adjust to new environments and challenges.

## Potential Downsides

Neuroplasticity can also reinforce negative patterns (called *maladaptive plasticity*):

- Chronic pain circuits
- Addictive behaviors
- Anxiety and negative thought loops

*In short: Your brain is not fixed — it constantly reshapes itself. With practice, learning, and mindfulness, you can rewire your brain for resilience and growth.*



# PEMSA

Date:

PEMSA instructions: Each morning rate how you feel in the areas of Physical health which would be monitoring pain; Emotion where we are looking for any changes caused by relationship issues; Mental tracks clarity; Spiritual looks within for connectedness; and of course, Anxiety which is the reason that we are here. Using 5 as a baseline of your 'normal' do a quick scan each morning to get a read of what you are taking into the world and a quick scan at the end of the day to see what may have changed. To measure, starting with 5, increase the numbers if symptoms or pain have increased or decrease if symptoms or pain diminished during the course of the day. Use the notes section to record events that could account for the change.

	AM	PM
Physical		
Emotional		
Mental		
Spiritual		
Anxiety		

Notes:

# Benefits of Completing Daily PEMSA

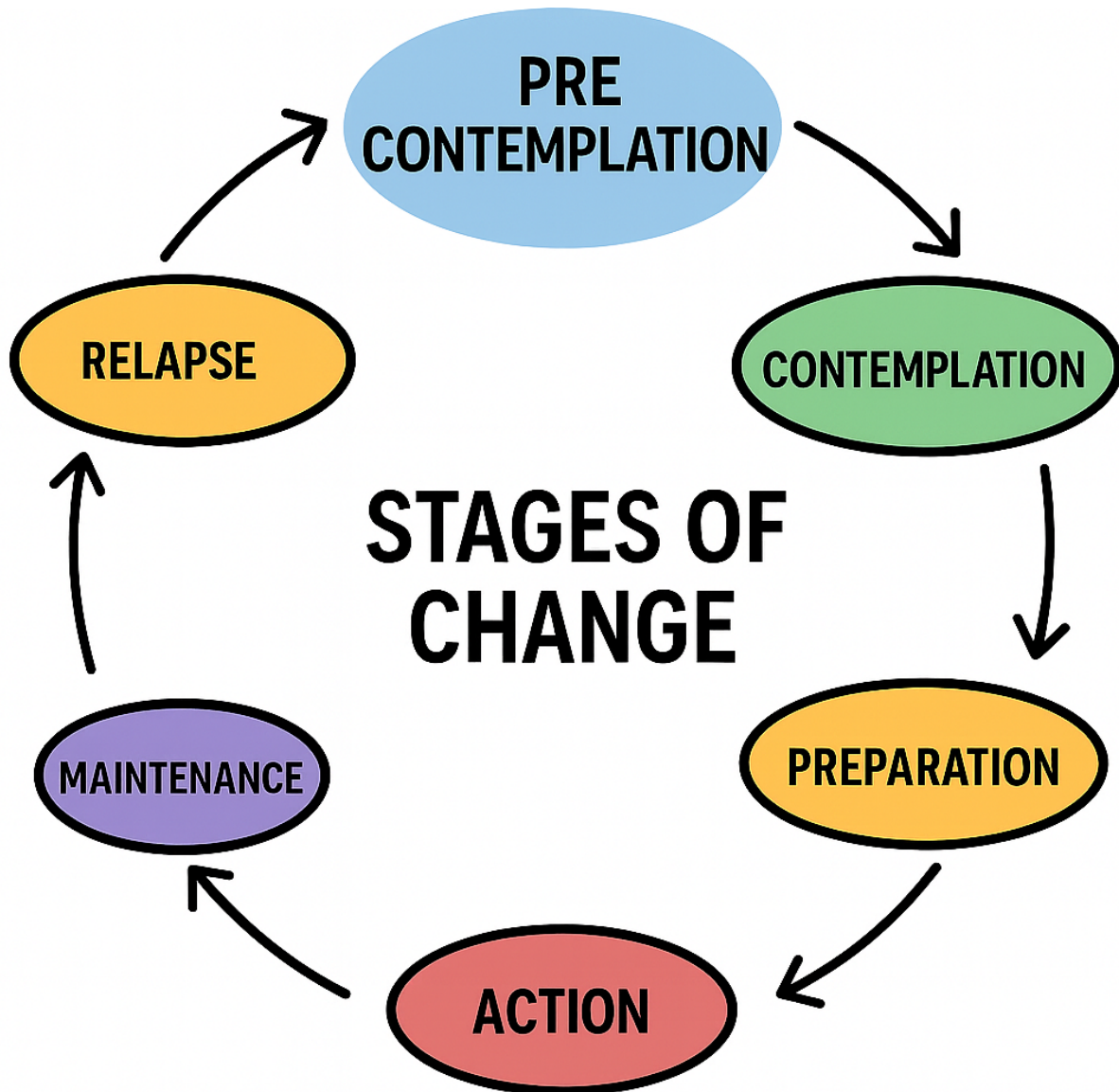
PEMSA is a daily self-check tool that encourages reflection across five areas of wellbeing: **Physical, Emotional, Mental, Social, and Anxiety**. Completing it daily builds awareness and resilience.

Area	Benefit
Holistic Self-Awareness	Reflects on multiple aspects of wellbeing, spotting patterns across life domains.
Early Identification	Detects small issues early before they grow into major challenges.
Mental Health Support	Promotes mindfulness, emotional regulation, and stress reduction.
Goal Tracking	Provides structure for monitoring progress and reinforcing daily habits.
Communication & Support	Helps share needs with mentors, counselors, or peers for targeted help.
Resilience & Growth	Normalizes ups and downs while strengthening coping skills.

*Tip: Completing PEMSA daily only takes a few minutes, but the long-term benefits for self-awareness, resilience, and growth are significant.*



## Prochaska and DiClemente's Stages of Change Model



# Prochaska and DiClemente's Stages of Change Model

The Stages of Change model, developed by James Prochaska and Carlo DiClemente, outlines the process people move through when modifying behavior. It emphasizes readiness, motivation, and the non-linear nature of personal growth.

- 1. Precontemplation** – Not yet considering change; unaware or underestimating the need for it.
- 2. Contemplation** – Acknowledging the problem and thinking about change but feeling ambivalent.
- 3. Preparation** – Intending to take action soon and beginning small steps toward change.
- 4. Action** – Actively modifying behavior and environment to create new habits.
- 5. Maintenance** – Sustaining new behavior, preventing relapse, and strengthening commitment.
- 6. Relapse (Recycling)** – Temporary return to old behavior; viewed as part of learning and growth.

Change is a cyclical process, not a straight line. Understanding which stage someone is in allows for better support and realistic expectations of progress.

# Affirmations and Coping Statements

*Affirmations and coping statements can be a powerful tool to balance, counter or replace negative or fearful thoughts with positive statements that promote self-worth and self-efficacy*

- ★ I accept myself as I am.
- ★ I am a capable person.
- ★ I am a good and caring person.
- ★ I am doing the best that I can.
- ★ I am good enough.
- ★ I am valuable because I am human, alive and unique.
- ★ I can be anxious and still deal with this situation.
- ★ I can do my coping strategies and allow this to pass.
- ★ I can handle my feelings and sensations.
- ★ I can handle these symptoms or sensations.
- ★ I can make a difference in the world.
- ★ I can relax and let go of tension.
- ★ I can take all the time I need in order to let go and relax.
- ★ I deserve to feel O.K. right now.
- ★ I don't need these thoughts – I can choose to think differently.
- ★ I have confidence in myself.
- ★ I've survived this before and I'll survive this time, too.
- ★ There's no need to push myself. I can take as small a step forward as I choose.
- ★ These are just thoughts – not reality.
- ★ This anxiety won't hurt me – even if it doesn't feel good.
- ★ This feeling isn't comfortable or pleasant, but I can accept it.
- ★ This is an opportunity for me to learn to cope with my fears.
- ★ This isn't an emergency. It's O.K. to think slowly about what I need to do.
- ★ This isn't the worst thing that could happen.

## Remember keep them:

- Personal
- Present Tense
- Positive



## How To Use:

- ✓ Say them before bed or after waking up
- ✓ Use them with relaxation techniques
- ✓ Use as needed throughout the day
- ✓ Write them on cards or “post-its” and place them where you will read them.
- ✓ Create an audiotope and listen when you need them

# 15 Things You Can't Control

## (And What You Can Control Instead)

A companion to Tiny Buddha's Inner Strength Journal

[tinybuddha.com/strong](https://tinybuddha.com/strong)

### **1. You can't control what other people do**

You can control whether you participate in their behavior or enable them.

### **2. You can't control how other people see you.**

You can control how you show up in your relationships and how you see yourself.

### **3. You can't control how other people treat you.**

You can control how you internalize and respond to their treatment

### **4. You can't control whether other people like you.**

You can control how true you are to yourself

### **5. You can't control what people think, feel, and believe.**

You can control how you engage about your different opinions, feelings, and beliefs.

### **6. You can't control how other people internalize things you say and do**

You can control your intentions and how you respond when you unintentionally hurt



**7. You can't control what happens to other people**

You can control how you show up for them when things get hard

**8. You can't control your thoughts and feelings**

You can control whether you attach to them, identify with them, or act on them.

**9. You can't control the things that have already happened**

You can control what you do in the present

**10. You can't control everything that's going to happen**

You can control how you strengthen yourself to handle the unknown

**11. You can't control the outcome of anything you do.**

You can control your efforts

**12. You can't control your body aging**

You can control how well you take care of your body and how you think about it.

**13. You can't control all aspects of your health**

You can control the preventative health measures you take

**14. You can't control the inevitability of you getting hurt**

You can control how you treat yourself when you're hurting

**15. You can't control the fact that there's suffering in the world**

You can control whether you contribute to it or help alleviate it.