



Assessing Your Change Initiative -

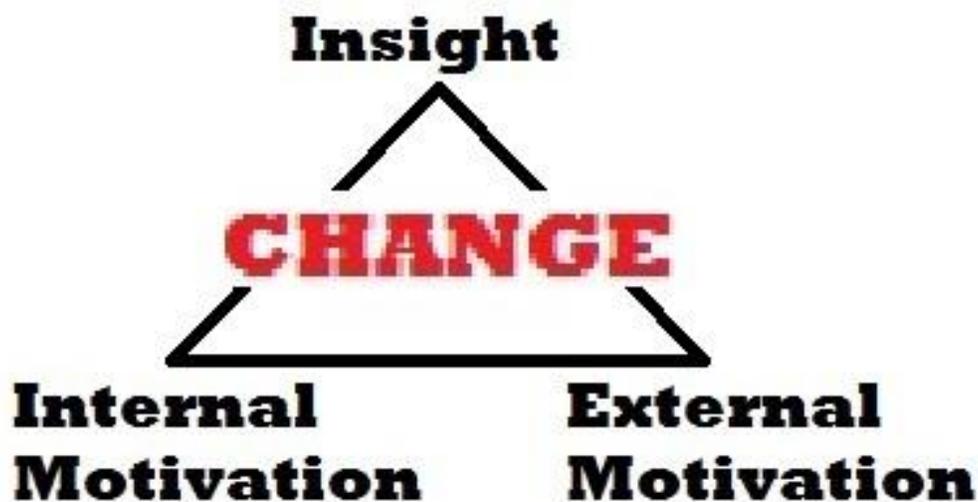
Background:

At first this may come across as complicated but actually, once you get the hang of it, this is very simple and useful for deciding what you need to work on. There are three main factors that drive individuals through the process of positive change. All three factors work together and they can affect one another. They are:

- **Insight** - *Understanding, especially an understanding of the motives and reasons behind one's actions. Recognizing and looking truthfully inside of yourself. "Sight with the eyes of the mind"*
- **Internal Motivation** – *Desire, interest or drive for change that comes from within. Based on what we really want for ourselves rather than just what others are telling us to do.*
- **External Motivation** – *People and other forces and circumstances pushing us to change whether we want it or not (Often connected with consequences of not changing, for example being on parole or probation or external motivation can come from people who support us and encourage us)*

To summarize in simple terms – The most important things that help people change are

- 1) Knowing and understanding the need to change (Insight)
- 2) Wanting to change ourselves (Internal Motivation)
- 3) Things outside of us that keep pushing us toward change even if we feel like giving up (External)





Identify and Discuss:

A. Problem Identification – Whether or not you think you have a problem, what is the main issue you are supposed to be working on right now with regard to substance abuse, mental health or both?

For example –

- “People say I drink too much and smoke too much weed” or
- “I realize that I need to stop using heroin and learn a better way to deal with stress and anxiety”

<Be as clear and honest as possible>

B. Start thinking about Insight – What are some reasons why you may need to change?

For example –

- “I got arrested and now I am on probation so I am supposed to stop using” or
- “I am hurting my family because I am partying too much and I am running out of money”

<Be honest and list as many as you can think of even if you aren't in full agreement>

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

C. Begin to assess your own Internal Motivation for change – What do you want to see change for the better?

For example –

- “I really just want to get the legal system and my family off of my back”
- “I want to stop feeling sick all of the time”
- “I want to stop spending so much money on getting high”

<List a few below but remember to be honest and realistic >

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____



D. Identify External Motivation and support – Who or what is pushing you or encouraging you to change?

For example – Mom, Dad, Probation officer, employer, spouse, partner, children, etc.

<List a few below>

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What is a Change Initiative?

Initiative –

>the first step or action of a matter; commencing move: *he took initiative*

>the right or power to begin or initiate something: *he has the initiative*

>the ability or attitude required to begin or initiate something

Your **Change Initiative** (CI) is a simple three-letter score that identifies your current level of *insight, internal motivation* and *external motivation* (Which are the factors that drive change)

Some things to keep in mind when assessing your Change Initiative (CI):

1. **Stay in the here and now** – Your CI can be different every day as your circumstances change so think in terms of how you think and feel *right now* because tomorrow you may feel very different
2. **When in doubt, choose the lower score** – Changing can be tough and at times we can overestimate how ready we actually are. If you are stuck between two scores, it is usually better to go with the lower one for now.
3. **This is just a guideline** – CI is not something that makes someone better or worse than anyone else so it is not something to rate or compare people with. A low but honest CI is much better than high scores that are insincere or exaggerated to impress others or overestimated just to try to look good.



Assess Your Change Initiative:

Use the following scale to the best of your ability to come up with a three letter Change Initiative (CI) score:

Insight: (Circle A, B or C)

A –I am relatively or mostly sure that I have a problem

B- There is a chance that I have a problem (I am not sure but I am willing to consider it)

C –I am sure that I do not have a problem

Internal Motivation: (Circle A, B, or C)

A – I want to change the identified problem.

B – I am not sure how much I want to change (if at all) but I am at least willing to give it a try.

C – If it were totally up to me, I would not change or I do not want to change (despite what others may tell me)

External Motivation: (Circle A, B, or C)

A – Someone that matters to me is pushing me to change and/or I am facing real consequences if I don't change.

B- Someone is asking me to change, but not necessarily pushing me as there is no immediate threat of consequences (Or the consequences I am facing are not that important to me right now)

C –No one is putting any real pressure on me or strongly encouraging me to change right now if I do not want to.

WRITE YOUR 3-LETTER CHANGE INITIATIVE HERE:

(Insight first, Internal Motivation second, External Motivation third – For example AAA, BBA, BCA, etc.)

- **Before moving on: Get some feedback** – Ask your counselor or at least one other group member what they think about your self-assessment of your CI? (*Too high in one or more areas? Too low? Just right?*)



Now what? – What do we do with our Change Initiative?

Your Change Initiative is just a guideline and a starting point but it can help you decide what you need to work on based on the following simple formula:

1. **FIRST – Start with your strengths – Discuss:**

- a. What was your strongest area(s)? _____
- b. Challenging Question for Thought and Discussion:- How can you use your strengths to your advantage? (*For example*, if you said you have a good amount of insight how can that help you?)
- c. Challenging Question for Thought and Discussion - What can you do in order to make your areas of strength even stronger? (*For example*, if you have a good amount of internal motivation, how can you build on that in order to keep moving in a positive direction?)

2. **SECOND – Work on your weaknesses - Discuss:**

- a. What was your weakest area(s)? _____
- b. Challenging Question for Thought and Discussion: What ideas can you come up with that could help you strengthen your areas of weakness? (**Brainstorm** - No easy answers here, do your best and ask your counselor and group members for their ideas)

In Conclusion: Basic Principle to Remember –

If you get in the habit of assessing your **Change Initiative** on a regular basis, then continue to work on emphasizing your strengths and building up your weaknesses you will continue to have momentum to change your life for the better and move forward in a positive direction.

