

# Ready, Willing and Able:

*Applying the Stages of Change to  
Working with Young People at the Center  
of Urban Violence*

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**The Roca** **IMPACT INSTITUTE**  
**THINK DIFFERENT. DO DIFFERENT.**



# INTRODUCTIONS



# ROCA'S MISSION

**Roca's mission** is to be a relentless force in disrupting incarceration, poverty, and racism by engaging the young adults, police, and systems at the center of urban violence in relationships to address trauma, find hope, and drive change.

We work with 16-to-24-year-olds who have experienced extensive trauma and are the primary victims or drivers of urban violence.

**They are often:**

- Involved in the criminal justice system
- Have low literacy and typically no HS degree/GED
- Have no formal or sustained employment history
- Involved with guns, gangs, and drugs
- Have failed out or dropped out of programs, schools, and jobs
- May be young parents

# ROCA 101



# WHAT WE DO



## 1 CREATE SAFETY AND STABILITY

We do **relentless outreach** and build **transformational relationships** with young people to develop the foundation for change. We meet basic needs, make meaningful connections, and provide moments feeling free from harm.



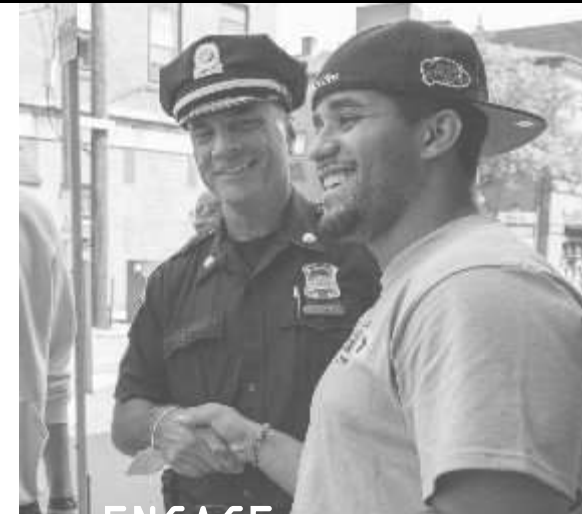
## 2 TEACH LIFE SAVING SKILLS

We teach a relatable and simple version of **CBT** in the streets – and anywhere a young person is.



## 3 PRACTICE SKILLS, RELAPSE, & REPEAT

We create tailored programs that serve as spaces for young people to change, not when they are “ready,” but as they still struggle.



## 4 ENGAGE INSTITUTIONS & SYSTEMS

We relentlessly reach out to system partners, build relationships, and jointly practice new skills that produce better outcomes.

# WHO WE ARE & WHAT WE DO



**The Roca Impact Institute** equips institutions and individuals working at the center of urban violence with tools and strategies to address trauma, reduce violence, and improve outcomes for young people.

## **We do this through:**

- Training in trauma informed interventions to build knowledge, skills, and practice
- Facilitation, design, and implementation of focused, coordinated approaches to support agency and systems change.
- Intensive coaching to build staff capacity and sustain change in agencies and systems

# KEY CONCEPTS



- Understanding what it means to serve young people who are not **ready, willing, or able.**
- Unaddressed trauma impacts our behaviors – but **we are not our behaviors.**
- Behavior change is not an “event” but a **series of steps and shifts over time.**
- Multiple **relapses are a part of the process** of change and should be built into program models.

# UNDERSTANDING TRAUMA



**“Trauma is fear that won’t turn off.”**



“

Consider the psychological burden of living in fear every day—feeling like you are in a state of ‘fight, flight and/or freeze’ and/or ‘seeking safety’ every waking moment of the day.

”

- Dr. Alisha Moreland-Capuia



# UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF TRAUMA

## Trauma = Fear that won't turn off

IMPACT OF TRAUMA	WHAT WE CAN DO DIFFERENT
Trauma changes the way the brain physically develops and functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create safety to get people to the top brain for learning to happen</li><li>• Be willing to repeat and practice skill development a lot</li></ul>
Traumatic responses can easily be triggered by a look, sound, smell, thought or touch and drive reactive behaviors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Manage our own behaviors and reactions</li><li>• Understand we could be triggering</li><li>• Don't take things personally</li><li>• Understand they might need a little more room</li></ul>
Unaddressed trauma increases the risk of aggression and violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Find meaningful and effective ways to support healing and behavior change to reduce violence</li></ul>

# CONSIDER THIS



Think of a young person you tried to engage in your program who was challenging to engage....

After a few weeks of trying to talk to him, you get him to agree to come to some programming.

At first, he does ok, but then starts pulling back and acting out.

Two weeks later, he blows out completely.

What happened?



# WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW



**Only a minority (usually less than 20%) of a population at risk is prepared to take action at any given time.**

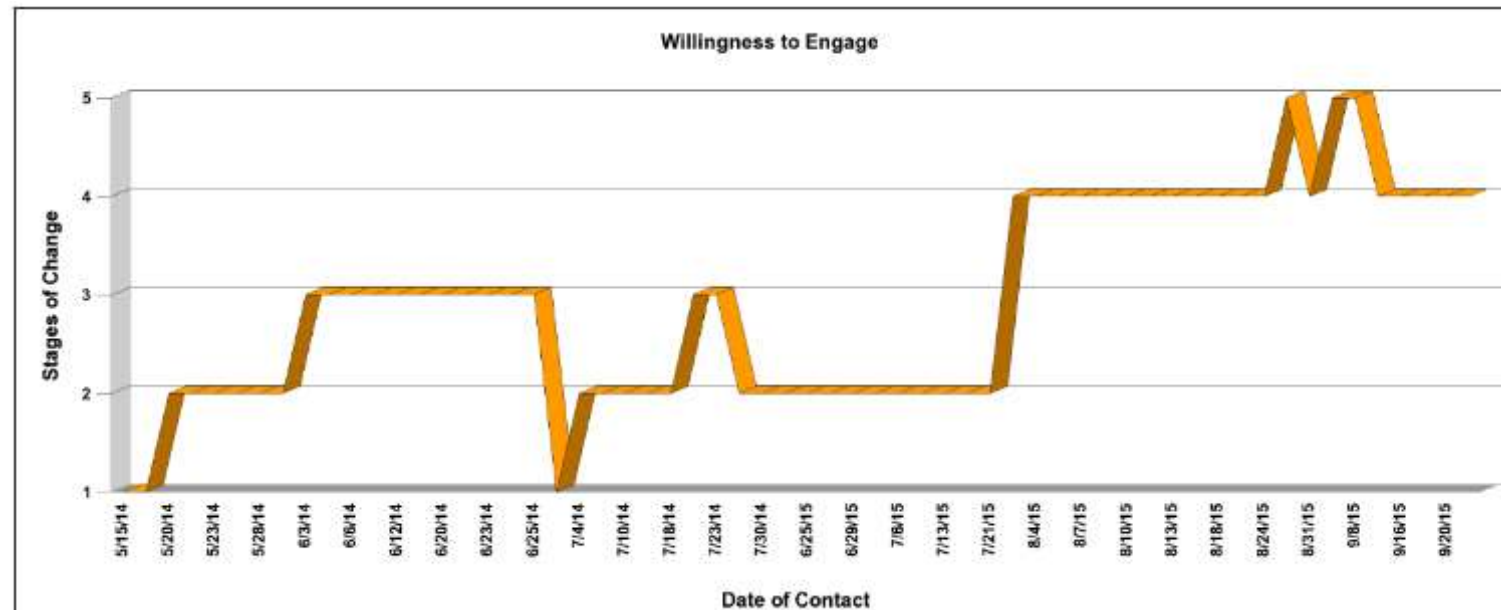
*-Pro Change Behavior Systems*

# STAGES OF CHANGE - READY, WILLING, ABLE



1. Pre-Contemplation = NO
2. Contemplation = MAYBE
3. Planning = GETTING READY
4. Action = ACTING DIFFERENTLY
5. Sustaining = MORE THAN 51%

**Relapse**  
is part of any  
behavior change.



# RELAPSE



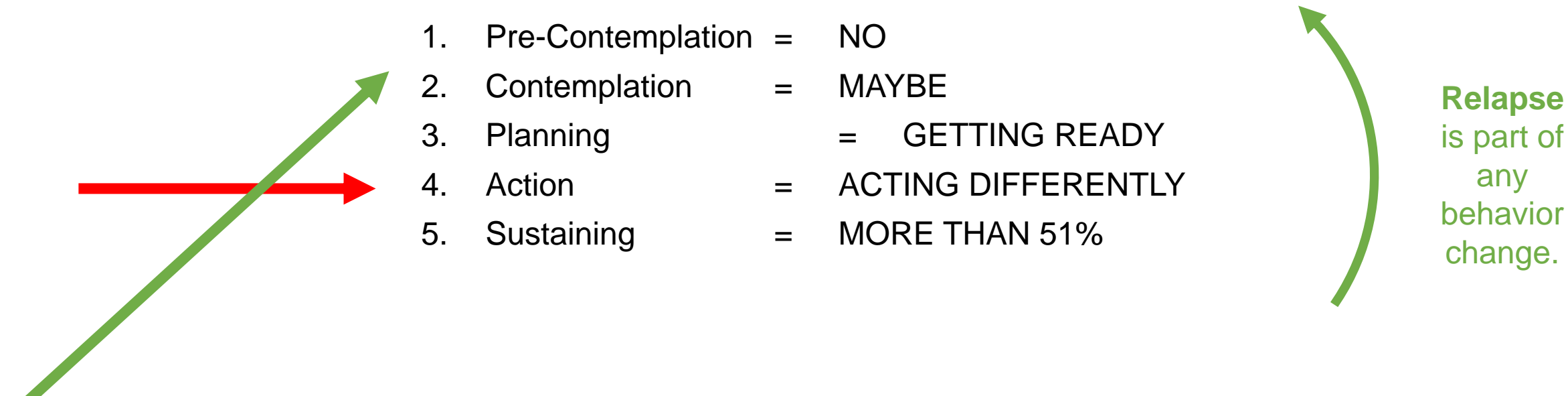
Relapse is a natural part of the process of change.

- When triggered, we go back to doing what we do - our old, known patterns.
- We have to **plan for relapses** and stay through them.
- The goal is to **shorten the length of time** between relapses and **lessen the degree of harm** that might occur during the relapse.



# STAGES OF CHANGE - READY, WILLING, ABLE

Most programs are designed for people in action.

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How can we design programs for everyone else in earlier stages?

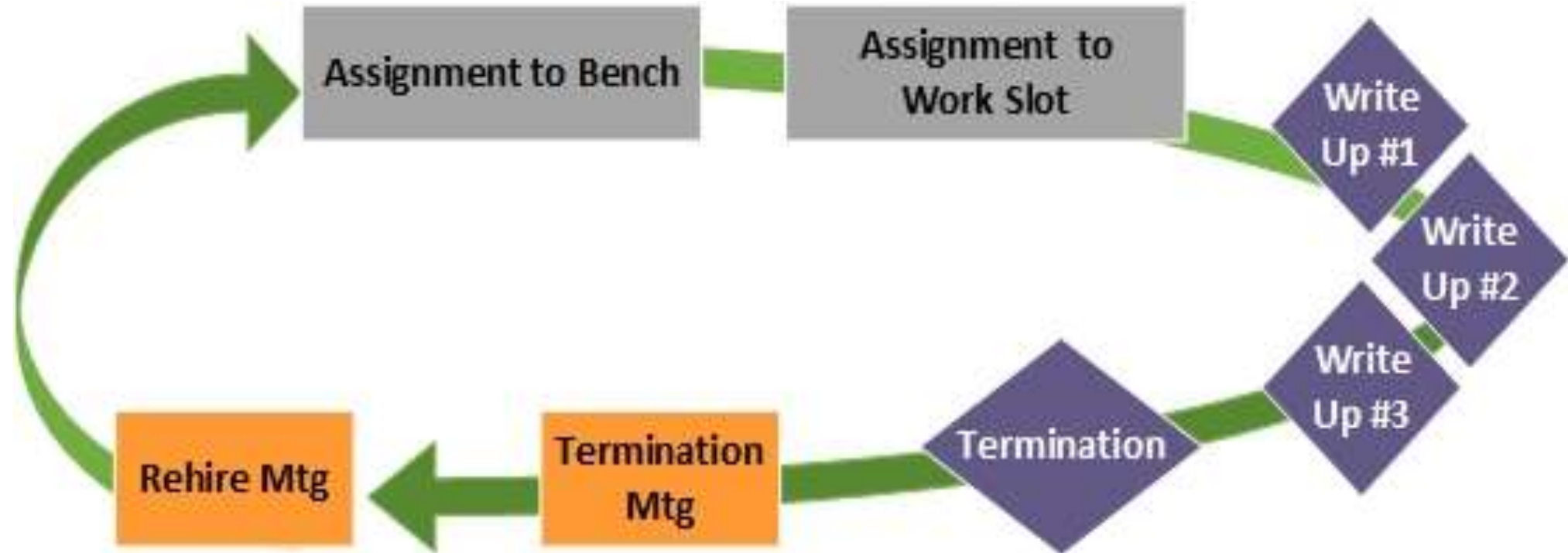
# TRADITIONAL vs. STAGE BASED PROGRAMMING



	TRADITIONAL PROGRAM	STAGE BASED PROGRAM
<b>Enrollment</b>	Driven by Participant	Driven by Worker
<b>Engagement</b>	Driven by Participant	Driven by Worker
<b>Programming</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Driven by Content</li><li>• Fixed Schedule of Classes/Activities<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Place Based</li></ul></li><li>• Requires attendance</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Driven by Individual Need &amp; Readiness<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Multi-Modal Delivery &amp; Times<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Not Place Dependent</li></ul></li></ul></li><li>• Delivered intentionally through contacts</li></ul>
<b>Outcomes</b>	Time Dependent Meet/Not Meet	Takes into account developmental stages and incremental, progressive benchmarks

# DESIGNING PROGRAMMING AROUND RELAPSE

## Transitional Employment Program Flow



Plan for Relapse as part of the process of change.



# REFLECT & SHARE



Think about the young person who was hard to engage at first, then did and then blew out...

- What stage of **readiness** were they at when they started? How do you know?
- What helped them **engage**?
- What triggered their blowing out (**relapse**)?
- What was the **response** to their relapse?
- What could have been done **differently** to use their relapse as an opportunity for change?



# REVIEW OF KEY CONCEPTS



- Understanding what it means to serve young people who are not **ready, willing, or able.**
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# Thank You!



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