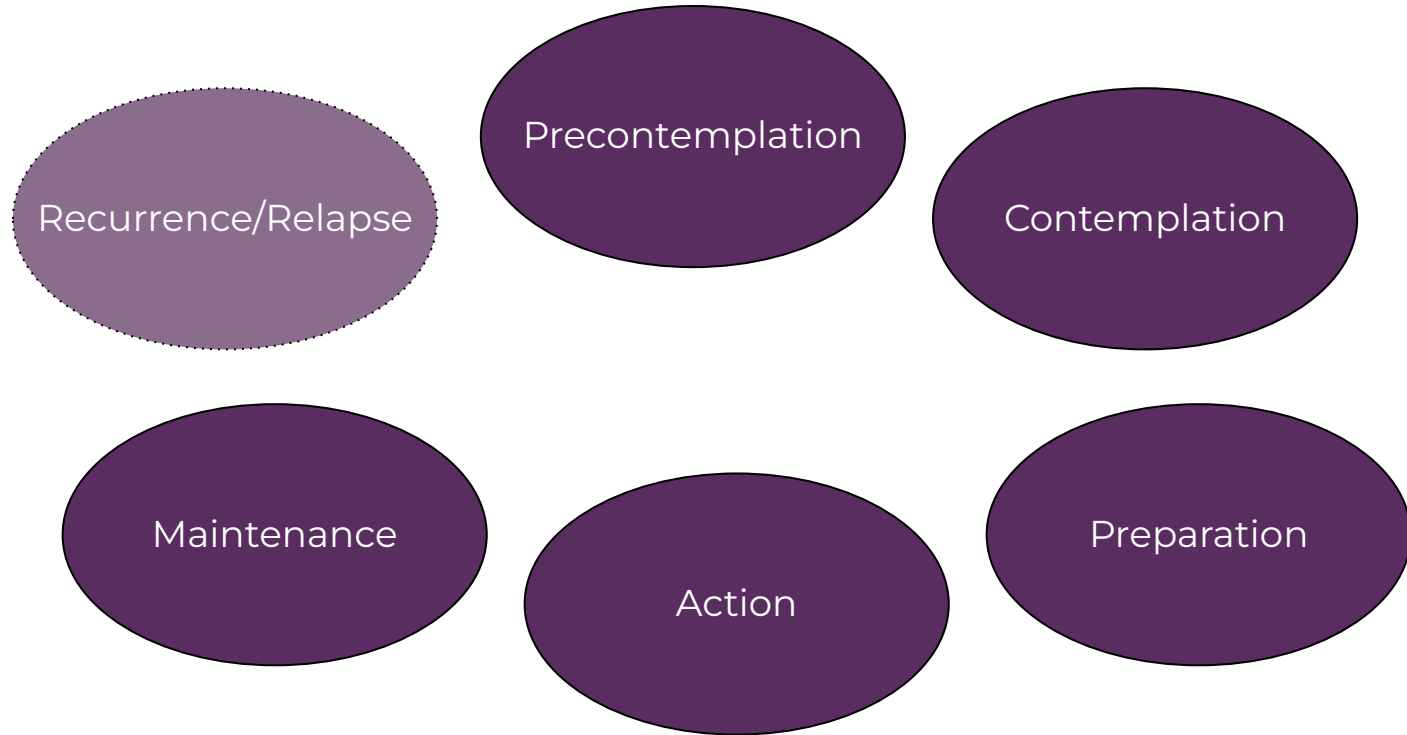

“Riding the Struggle Bus” Learning to Value Struggle

Objectives

- Identify the dynamic between struggle and success
- Learn how to support your young adult child in their own journey
- Converse and connect with fellow Dorm parents

Stages of Change



How do you define struggle & success?

What is the purpose of struggle?

What does it really mean to be successful?



“No mud, no lotus”
Thich Nhat Hanh

- Overcoming challenges & confrontation
- Resiliency
- Development of personal values, beliefs, & goals
- Trying again, shifting approach, building flexibility

MYTH: Struggle is a sign of weakness

MYTH: You are a bad parent if you allow your child to struggle

Benefits of struggle

- **Development of important life skills**
 - Hard work
 - Delayed gratification
 - Internal motivation
 - Self-discipline
 - Taking accountability for problems
 - Ego development
 - Emotional regulation skills
- **When people achieve on their own they develop:**
 - Self-esteem
 - Confidence
 - Sense of mastery
 - Problem solving skills
 - Other internal resources

“Do not handicap your children by making their lives easy” - Robert Heinlein

Valuing Struggle

Parental Roles:

- Create safe container- provide safety net & support
 - Set behavioral **boundaries**- remove emotions from boundaries, define clear limits
 - Emotional **attunement**- validate emotions, acknowledge what they are feeling, become in touch with *your* own emotions
 - **Value struggle**- normalize experience, let go of the reins

"You seem sad about _____"

"I can tell this is really bothering you. How do you want to handle it?"

"This is a very difficult time. What's helped you to get through this far?"

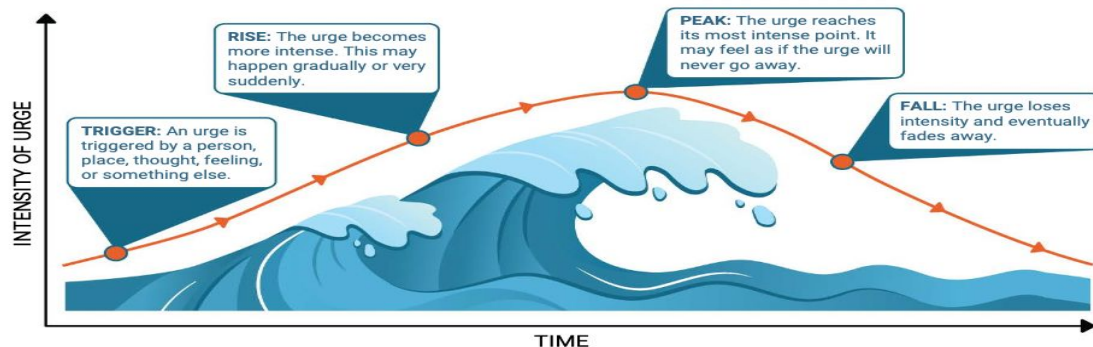
"Do you want to talk more about it?"

"If you do____, the consequence will be _____"

Urge Surfing

Urge surfing is a technique for managing your unwanted behaviors. Rather than giving in to an urge, you will ride it out, like a surfer riding a wave. After a short time, the urge will pass on its own.

This technique can be used to stop or reduce drug and alcohol use, emotional reactions such as “blowing up” when angry, gambling, and other unwanted behaviors.



How to Practice Urge Surfing

1. Acknowledge you are having an urge.
2. Notice your thoughts and feelings without trying to change or suppress them.
Note: It is normal to feel some discomfort during an urge.
3. Remind yourself...
 - It is okay to have urges. They are natural reactions to addictions and habits.
 - An urge is a feeling, not a “must.” I can have this feeling and choose not to act.
 - Some discomfort is okay. I don’t have to change it.
 - An urge is temporary. Like any other feeling, it will pass on its own.

Other Skills

Managing Triggers

Use coping skills to reduce the power of triggers. Know your triggers ahead of time, and have a strategy or skill prepared for each one.

Examples: deep breathing if stressed, eating if hungry, leaving a location if it is high risk

Delay & Distraction

Do something to take your mind off the urge. Every minute you delay increases the chance of the urge weakening on its own.

Examples: go for a walk, listen to music, call a friend, read a book, practice a hobby

Avoid the Urge To Fix

How to respond instead of React

In the immediate/moment responses(there is an emergency or imminent relapse or regression):

- **Check for Safety** → *identify if Dorm Emergency Line or 911 is indicated*
- Are there any safeguards we can put up together? (throw away any dangerous items/substances)
- *What skills can you use in this moment?*
- *How can I best support you in navigating your current situation?*
- Remember you don't have to have all the answers, you just need to be there and support in the ways they may not be able to support themselves

In a prepared sit down/meeting(things have started to regress):

- *What skills have you been using to help you get to all you have achieved thus far?*
 - *How can I best support you where you are at right now?*
 - *Are there any areas of accountability I can provide for you?*
 - Important to be direct and compassionate.
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Discussion

- Can anyone describe ways in which you did NOT jump in & fix. Tell us about it.
- How do you model that it's okay to have struggle?
- How responsible do you or have you previously felt for your young adults well-being, happiness, and/or problems?