Keep in mind these key ideas about change:

- Change can be difficult, but it is possible.
- Building confidence is important in making a change.
- Change is a process, not an event. Change takes time and patience.
- Setbacks are learning experiences, not a sign of failure. Learning to fail better is important too.
- 'Recycling' simply indicates that participants have not yet mastered the necessary skills or built up enough motivation yet. They'll get there.
- Anxiety nearly always accompanies change – it is step into unknown territory.

THE COST–BENEFIT ANALYSIS (CBA)

It is very common for participants to feel ambivalent about making a change. They may be able to see the potential benefits of stopping or cutting down, but they can be reluctant to give up the good things they associate with the behaviour of concern. Unless they are given the opportunity to fully express any doubts or fears, participants may find it difficult to commit to making a change. The cost–benefit analysis (CBA) can help participants make a decision about changing a behaviour.

CBAs encourage participants to write down both the pros (positives) and the cons (negatives) about the behaviour they are thinking of giving up or changing. Although at first glance this may seem very simple, seeing all of the pros and cons in black and white can be powerfully motivating and can sometimes tip participants from the contemplation stage into the preparation stage of change.

Note that the CBA can be useful in any situation where a change is being considered; it doesn't only apply to behaviours of concern. For example, before getting into an argument with their partner, a participant may apply the CBA by asking: 'Is it worth it if I'll get upset and then later drink to calm myself down?'