



STR8UP 10,000 Little Steps to Healing Inc.

THE FOUR PHASES INVOLVED IN STR8 UP RECOVERY ©

STR8UP is committed to the INTERVENTION process. We suggest there are FOUR MAJOR PHASES involved in an active gang member's decision in leaving one's gang and entering a journey of wellness and healing.

1. The Decision-Making Phase
2. The Transition Phase
3. The Transformation Phase
4. The Stabilization Phase

These are all processes, not events. STR8UP members cannot mend or heal their lives without the understanding of when, where, how and why their lives are broken. Healing is a difficult and arduous journey, with many relapses throughout the phases but with hope, courage and perseverance, they will succeed.

DECISION-MAKING PHASE:

The decision to leave their gang can last from one day to many years. Often, serious thinking begins when the individual is incarcerated. Sobriety and time enables the realisation of the negativity of gang membership and the control it has over its members. The violent death of a friend, the birth of a child, the feeling of being sick and tired of living a dysfunctional abusive and criminal life style often triggers the decision.

The individual undergoes numerous inner struggles. Some of these feelings are:

- Feelings of fear, loneliness, anger, insecurity and regrets.
- A sense of self-loathing, loss of self-respect and dignity in what he/she might feel, some sense of betrayal, unfaithfulness and disloyalty.
- A desire of being free, being one's own person.
- Fear of losing friends, a life left behind with no clear vision for the future.
- A loss of excitement, warring, codes, games etc.
- Unsure on how to deal with the various addictions.
- Fear of losing their sense of belonging and identity. "This is all I know"
- Fear of being labelled as a "rat" or a "snitch".

Yet the desire to leave remains. Eventually a decision is made. Higher-Ups are informed. STR8UP is approached. Discussions follow, an autobiography is requested. The decision becomes firm.

TRANSITION PHASE:

The decision to leave is final. The transition phase begins. It is an extremely difficult time. One might have to deal with rival conflict and the negative consequences from leaving their gang from other gang members or their own active gang members.

It contains some of the following:

- Isolation and loneliness from old friends and activities.
- Fear, anxiety, stress, conflicts from the past are everyday possibilities.
- Addiction and sobriety are a daily struggle. Detox, Treatment Centres counselling, A.A., N.A. as well as Church or Indigenous ceremonies and activities become a necessity.
- There are still court days to attend, conditions to follow reporting to Probation or Parole officers is necessary.
- Regrets of leaving still often or occasionally surface with temptation to return to old habits.
- Police, service providers and other agencies doubt their decision and their sincerity.
- STR8UP often becomes their main support system as they search for parallel support systems.

This Transition phase, as difficult as it may seem is possible when they reach out accept help and recognise their need for assistance. Their comfort zone has shifted to one of discomfort. Yet, they discover that they alone must walk this journey, but it is impossible to walk it alone.

TRANSFORMATION PHASE:

STR8UP members have now completed the most difficult aspect of their journey. In this phase, they have accepted new responsibilities as well as new relationships. Nevertheless, there are still major issues to overcome. The old habits, mainly those of addictions or dysfunctional behaviors and partners remain a major challenge. Sickness too often attracts sickness.

This is nevertheless an exciting phase:

- All government issued identification have been obtained
- Courts, conditions, probation have all probably been dealt with
- Family stability with children and partners is being obtained.
- Still attending counselling, parenting classes, when required.
- Maintaining membership and activities with A.A., N.A., elders, First Nations ceremonies and church for others.
- Attending school, acquiring a trade or obtained full employment
- Fully involved in STR8UP programs, activities and various events.
- Members are dealing with new and on-going emotions, such as regret, remorse, discomfort, disappointments and anger.
- They realize they are no longer victims, but victors.
- They are more and more comfortable while living with values such as honesty, humility, courage, loyalty, hope and commitment.

In the Transformation phase, the challenges to meet and overcome obstacles and setbacks are still numerous. Nevertheless the many successes realized hold the possibility and attainability of a clear reachable vision for the future.

STABILISATION PHASE:

STR8UP members have by now acquired many new skills both for new lifestyles as well as for employment, or are achieving success in school, university while maintaining their sobriety. They have discovered sober people for friendship and companionship as well as reconnecting with healthy family members.

It has not been and still is not easy. Their lives have given way to being “down, solid, tough and mean” and to doing the right thing because it is the right thing to do.

They have discovered the positive results of honest work and honest money.

They have discovered their strength and courage to accomplish the almost impossible. By fulfilling their many new responsibilities towards themselves, family and community, they have discovered stability, serenity and harmony in their lives.

They are committed to living a life free from addictions and criminality in action, thoughts and belief.

- They pay their bills
- They might have obtained a drivers license and perhaps purchased a car.
- Their personal health, mental and physical has much improved.
- They are much more centered in dealing with strong emotions, such as anger, rage disappointments, remorse and shame.
- They have re-enforced values such as courage, commitment, humility, honesty and others.
- They have obtained residential stability and regular school, university or employment.
- They have positive involvement within the larger community and organisations.
- They are still connected with STR8UP, but with new and different roles.

Full stabilisation is never 100% guaranteed. It is attainable when one never gives up in the struggle, not only to reach ones goal but also to perfect them as much as possible. In spite of all the past and present successes, the human condition is one where mistakes are often repeated. Progress is always a process. We learn from one another, from mistakes made and lessons learned. When this happens, healing and advancement lasts a lifetime.