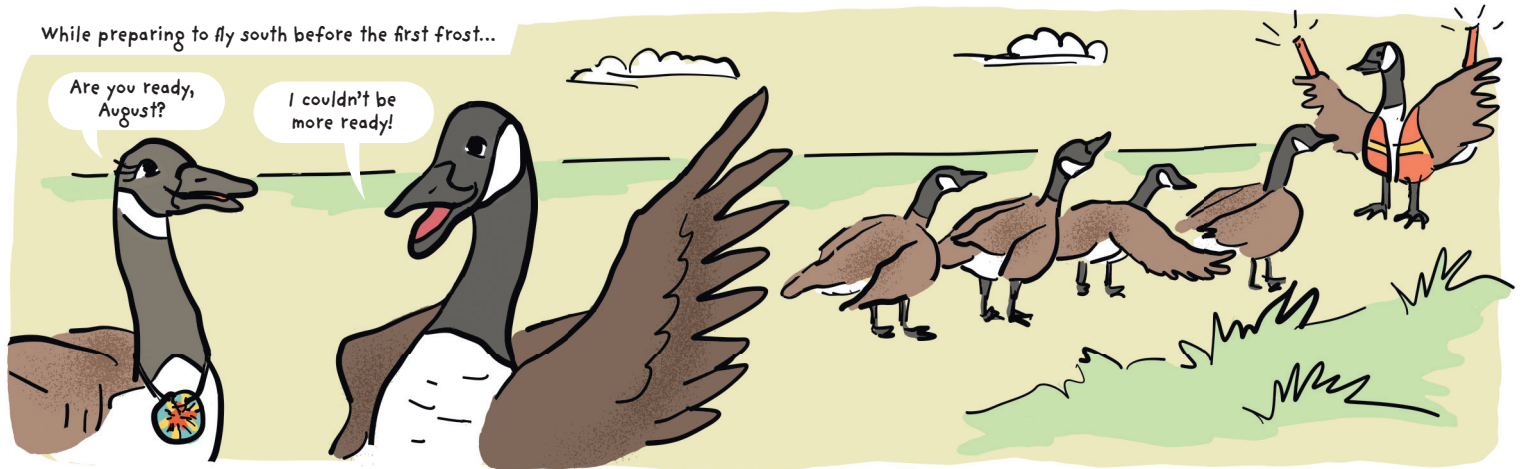


# Why is it so difficult to change substance use habits?

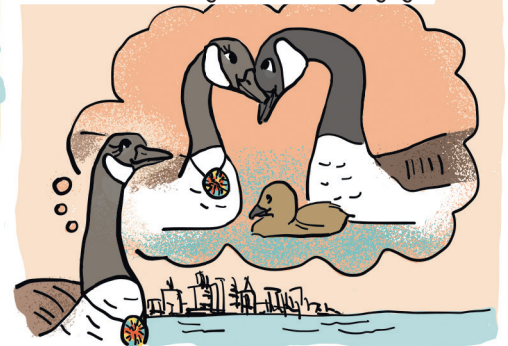
While preparing to fly south before the first frost...



Half way there...



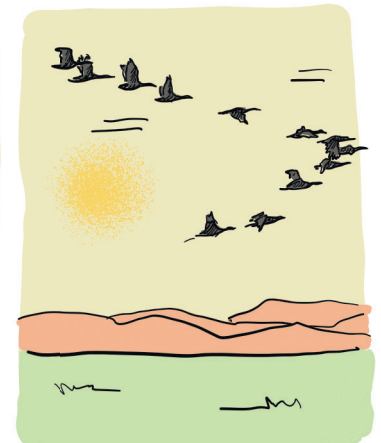
Goosy is tired of this cycle. She remembers how her life with August was not so long ago.



After arriving at their destination...



A few days later...



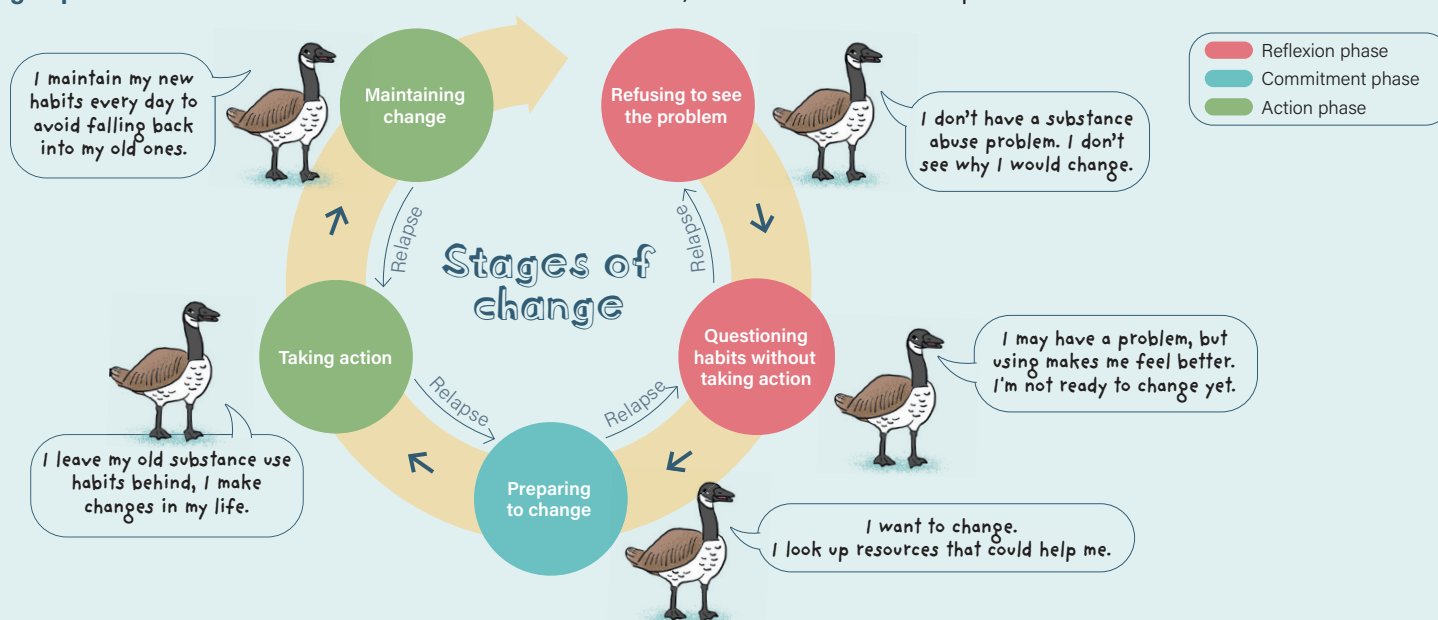
# Motivation



Reducing or stopping substance use is not easy. The reasons for deciding to make changes may be different for everyone. One thing is certain: the more motivation to change comes from within a person, the more they believe in their ability to change and feel ready to do so, and the more likely they are to achieve their goals. Here are the keys to change: having motivation that comes from within + believing in your ability to change + being ready to do so.

**Everyone knows that it's hard to change a bad habit (e.g., smoking, eating, physical inactivity). Sometimes, despite our will to change, old habits may come back and our motivation may go up and down.**

This also applies to a person who tries to change their substance use habits. Even when they are very motivated to change, they may return to their old habits despite their best efforts. When this happens, it's normal to feel discouraged. Although you might want to help them during such times, remember that it's their process.



## Do you feel powerless in the face of your loved one's substance use?

- Tell them about your concerns and how you feel about their behaviours.
- Communicate in a positive and encouraging way.
- Respect their pace, ambivalence and changes (no matter how small).
- Encourage them to be open about it to those around them – no more secrets!
- Encourage them to seek professional help.
- Offer to accompany them in their efforts.
- Suggest sober activities that you could do together.
- Celebrate their successes.
- Despire your fears, try to trust them.

## As for you:

- While you can offer your loved one your full support, you can't do the work for them.
- Focus on the things that you have power over.
- If needed, seek help for yourself.

This project is a work of co-construction involving several people from various Indigenous nations and organizations. The comic book format, the stories and the contents were chosen with the intention of supporting family and friends with compassion and empathy. Thanks to the family and friends of people experiencing addiction, to the students (Eden, Gloria, Kassandra and Marie-Pier), to the caregivers, to the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission, and to the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services.

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## Resources

**Hope for Wellness Helpline**  
1 855 242-3310  
hopeforwellness.ca

**Support group for the family and friends of people affected by addiction**  
al-anon.org/al-anon-meetings

**Youth Helpline**  
1 800 668-6868  
kidshelpphone.ca

**Referral line about substance use**  
1 800 265-2626  
aidedroque.ca/en

**Health or addiction rehabilitation center near you**