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FAMILY-CENTERED AAC SUPPORT

Insights from the field

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Key Takeaways — Confidence • Cues • Cycle of Change

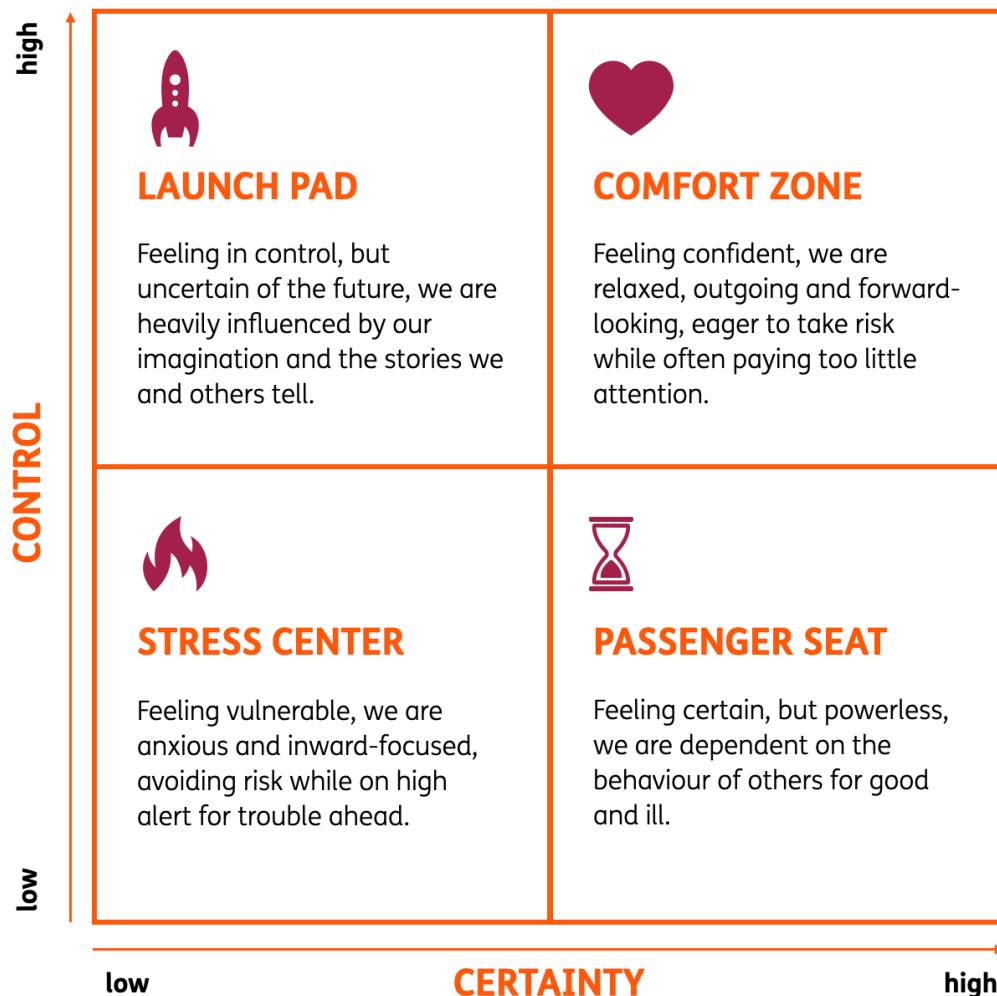
The Confidence Map (Peter Atwater, *The Confidence Map: Charting a Path from Chaos to Clarity*)

Confidence depends on two factors:

- **Control** – feeling prepared, capable, and equipped with skills and resources.
- **Certainty** – feeling that things are predictable and understandable.

Four states of confidence:

- **Comfort Zone**: high control + high certainty → confidence, openness, ease.
- **Launch Pad**: high control + low certainty → innovation, imagination, readiness to act.
- **Passenger Seat**: low control + high certainty → dependence, waiting for others to act.
- **Stress Center**: low control + low certainty → vulnerability, anxiety, withdrawal.

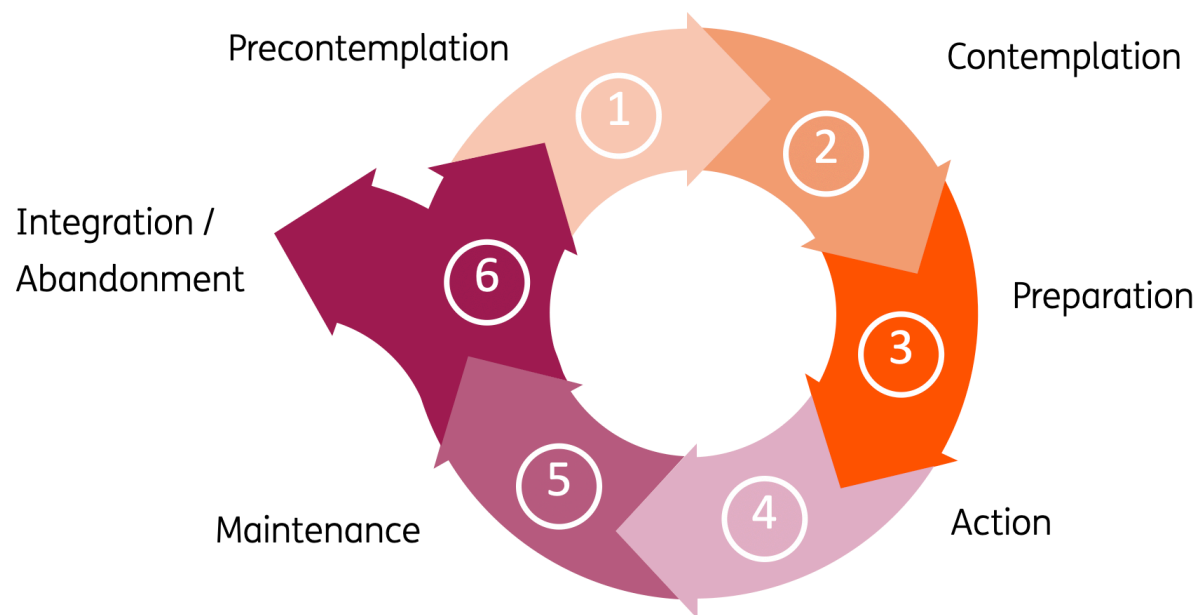


When we understand how feelings of control and certainty influence someone's readiness to accept and use AAC we can tailor our supports to meet emotional as well as practical needs. Matching strategies to each confidence state builds trust, motivation, and follow-through. In doing so, we help move them from confusion and hesitation toward confidence.

The Cycle of Change (Prochaska & DiClemente, *Transtheoretical Model of Change*)

Change happens through stages: Precontemplation → Contemplation → Preparation → Action → Maintenance → Integration/Abandonment.

The Cycle of Change helps us see that change isn't a single step but an ongoing process of learning, practicing, and adjusting. Families and teams often begin unaware that change is needed, then grow curious, start planning, take action, and work to maintain new habits. Over time, AAC either becomes a natural part of communication or fades without continued support. Each stage brings different feelings—from uncertainty to confidence—and calls for a different kind of help. When we meet people where they are in the cycle, we can guide them forward with empathy and confidence.



Putting It All Together

When we understand how feelings of control and certainty shape a person's readiness to accept and use AAC, we can tailor our support to meet both emotional and practical needs. Using the **confidence map** helps us recognize how partners feel, and the **cycle of change** shows what kind of support is needed next. Together, these frameworks build trust, motivation, and follow-through — helping partners move from confusion and hesitation toward confidence.

Use the **confidence map** to gauge how partners feel, and the **cycle of change** to guide what kind of support they need next. Together, these frameworks create confident, motivated partners who can sustain meaningful AAC growth.

References

- Atwater, P. (2023). *The Confidence Map: Charting a Path from Chaos to Clarity*. HarperCollins.
- Prochaska, J. O., & DiClemente, C. C. (1983). Stages and Processes of Self-Change in Smoking: Toward an Integrative Model of Change. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 51(3), 390–395.