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Grace Peterson Nursing Research Colloquium

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## Benefits of Exercise in Severe Mental Illness

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## Background

- Mental illness in the US is a significant cause for morbidity and mortality.
- Patients with a severe mental illness are at a significantly higher risk of physical health concerns and complications, physical exercise can help decrease many of those complications.
- Evidence supports the benefits of exercise in offering protection from depression and as an intervention in the treatment of mental illness.



## Nursing Implications

- This topic is worthy of attention due to its positive outcomes that are seen in those with severe mental illness both mentally and physically. These findings will help educate healthcare professionals, and families about the potential benefits of exercise in severe mental illness.

## Methods

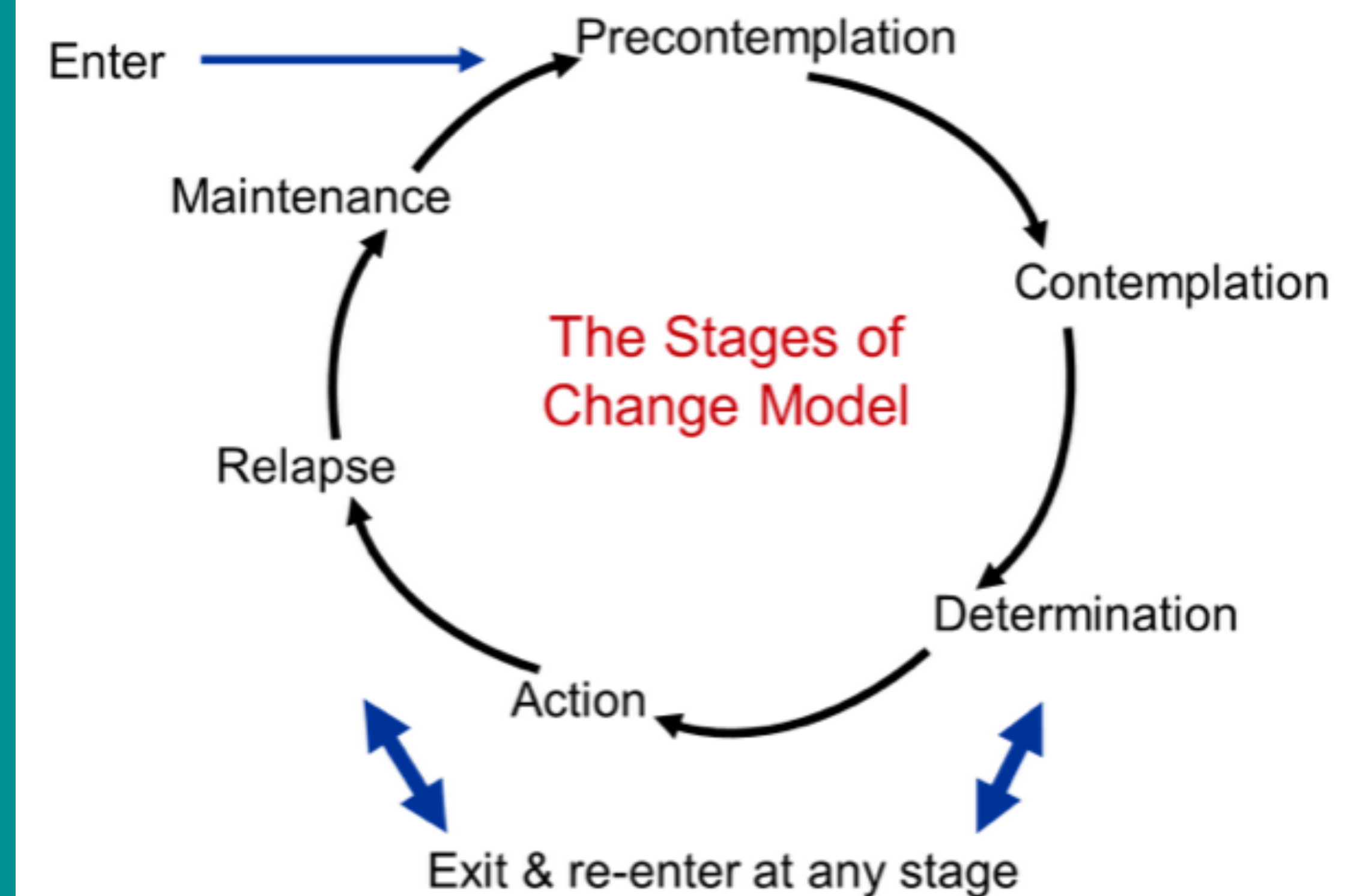
- An integrative review guided by Whittemore and Knafl was conducted using literature found through the Cumulative Index of Nursing and Allied Health (CINAHL) Complete, PsycINFO, and ProQuest Nursing & Allied Health Source. The search was conducted using multiple keywords that consisted of: *Exercise, Benefits, Severe Mental Illness, and Physical Activity*. A total of 9 articles were selected, and were reviewed independently. The relevant data collected in the selected articles was displayed in the data matrix.

## Findings

- The study indicated that exercise has the potential to help reduce patients' perceptions of auditory hallucinations, raise self-esteem, and improve sleep patterns and general behavior
- Effective strategies for ways of using exercise with patients with SMI were likely those that incorporate the understanding and those that value a good therapeutic relationship between the patients and staff
- Patients had positive experiences and views regarding exercise as a mandatory part of their treatment
- The participation in the physical conditioning program assisted participants to set and work towards achieving their goals and to maintain a certain degree of fitness

## The Stages of Change Model

- The topic of this literature review is based on the "Stages of Change or Transtheoretical Model" (TTM)
- The TTM posits that individuals move through six stages of change: pre-contemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, maintenance, and termination.
- This specific model is relevant to this integrative literature review due to the fact that it acknowledges the importance of a developmental perspective of change, opposed to focusing on personality characteristics or behaviors as predictors of change.



## Conclusion

- The findings suggest that exercise used along with pharmacotherapy has many mental, emotional, and physical benefits.
- Further research is needed to explore the relationship between exercise in mental illness to clarify its effects on mental outcomes and the correlation between exercise and physical improvements severe mental illness.

## Acknowledgements

Dr. Barbra Harris PhD,RN & Dr. Kim Amer PhD, RN



## Purpose

- The purpose of this literature review is to explore and identify current research that has been conducted in regard to the benefits and barriers of exercise in patients suffering from serious mental illness.

## Research Questions

1. What are the health outcomes of integrating an exercise program with patients diagnosed with severe mental illness?
2. What are the essential components or barriers of an effective exercise program for patients diagnosed with a severe mental illness?