

## Top Tips

### *Talking to people about smoking - Questions to ask*

Talking to people about smoking can be a little tricky and what you talk about will depend on what stage they are in their quitting process. As a health professional it is important that you ask people about their smoking and, if they are smokers, to provide health information. Remember it is not your place to make them quit, rather to provide them with information and support for when they are ready to quit. Just by asking you are getting them to think about their smoking.

Ask:

- ✧ Do you smoke?
- ✧ How do you feel about your smoking?

Are they –

- ✧ A happy smoker and not ready to quit?
- ✧ Unsure about giving up?
- ✧ Ready to give up?
- ✧ Actively quitting or staying quit?
- ✧ Slip ups and relapse?

Once you have worked out what stage they are at, here are a few suggested questions you could ask to stimulate discussion –

#### **Happy smoker and not ready to quit**

Ask:

- ✧ How many cigarettes do you smoke each day?

Then:

- ✧ Share health information
- ✧ Discuss passive smoking
- ✧ Offer help when ready – Do not push
- ✧ Offer the 'Smoking Matters' and 'Clearing the Air on Passive Smoking' booklets
- ✧ Invite them to return for another chat

#### **Unsure about giving up**

Ask:

- ✧ How many cigarettes do you smoke each day?
- ✧ What do you see as the good things about smoking?
- ✧ What do you see as the not so good things about smoking?
- ✧ What do you see as the good things about giving up?

Then:

- ✧ Explore concerns and encourage the decision to change
- ✧ Share information
- ✧ Offer the 'Smoking Matters' and 'Clearing the Air on Passive Smoking' booklet
- ✧ Invite them to return for another chat

#### **Ready to give up**

Ask:

- ✧ What do you see as the good things about giving up smoking?
- ✧ What do you see as the not so good things about giving up?
- ✧ What is the main reason for changing?

Then:

- ✧ Help make a plan – set a date to quit and advise what sort of ongoing support is available; for instance local quitting groups, or the Quitline 13 7848
- ✧ Review past quit attempts – what helped and what didn't
- ✧ Explore concerns about giving up smoking and plan how to deal with them (including alcohol)
- ✧ Make suggestions about how family and friends can provide support



- ✧ Advise on nicotine patches (if appropriate)
- ✧ Invite them to return for another chat

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### Actively quitting or staying quit

Ask:

- ✧ What is going well about giving up smoking?
- ✧ What is not going so well about giving up?
- ✧ What do you do instead of smoking?
- ✧ How do you avoid triggers?

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Then:

- ✧ Reinforce changes – congratulate!
- ✧ Talk about exercise and healthy diet
- ✧ Ask about support
- ✧ Offer support
- ✧ If necessary, refer to quit program or other health staff
- ✧ Invite them to return for another chat.

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### Slip-ups and relapse

- ✧ How do you feel about your relapse?
- ✧ What was it that triggered your relapse?
- ✧ What will you do next time you are in that situation?
- ✧ Are you ready to try again?

Then:

- ✧ Reinforce changes - congratulate their effort!
- ✧ Offer support and encouragement
- ✧ If necessary, refer to quit program or other health staff
- ✧ Invite them to return for another chat and to set a new quit date if necessary

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### Supporting people who aren't ready

Making the decision to quit can be hard for smokers and some people will try to delay or avoid quitting by finding reasons not to quit. While we can't *make* people quit we *can* gently challenge their reasoning.

Write down some of the things people have said and what you could say in response.

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