



Facilitator's Guide

Coping With the Urge to Smoke: Week 2

Notes to Facilitator

Hopefully, at this point, all of the meeting's participants have set and met their quit dates. As recent quitters, they may be having withdrawal symptoms that are testing their willpower and may have even experienced a slip. The "coping with the urge to smoke" discussion is a good opportunity to allow a few minutes of guided discussion for participants to vent their frustrations and feelings. Sharing their stories with others who are going through similar challenges lets participants know that they are not alone and may act as a "safety net" to make them feel more understood. Whenever possible, establish the idea that quitting smoking is more than a change of routine, it's a change for the better.

To prepare for this meeting, review this agenda in advance as well as the corresponding PowerPoint presentation and speaker notes.

Your Tools

Agenda 2 Slide Presentation

The corresponding PowerPoint presentation is enclosed on the CD-ROM and includes speaker notes.

Meeting Handouts

- *Staying Motivated to Quit*
- *Personal Progress Tracker*
- Additional copies of the *31 Things to Do Instead of Smoke* calendar
(provided at Launch Meeting as well)

I. Welcome and introduction

Welcome. At this meeting, we will talk about:

- *How to deal with the urge to smoke and how to successfully cope with those urges*



II. “Coping with the urge to smoke” discussion

- *What makes you want to smoke?*

This is a great opportunity to allow a few minutes for participants to share their recent challenges and successes. This forum might provide the means for discussion on the difficulties of smoking withdrawal with others who could easily and currently relate.

Again, encouraging discussion and involvement gives participants a sense of ownership of the meeting, which makes them feel acknowledged and important.

- *Are there certain times of the day that are hardest for you?*
- *How have you changed your routine/lifestyle to make not smoking easier?*
- *Have you talked to your doctor? Always remember that you may be eligible for a variety of stop-smoking treatments under the current smoking cessation benefit. Talk to your doctor to see what's right for you*

III. Common triggers

As we discussed in the first meeting, nicotine addiction is one of the major reasons why quitting smoking is so hard. Even after withdrawal symptoms stop, you may still have the urge to smoke. Fortunately, an urge to smoke usually doesn't last long. But if you give in to the urge, you can end up going back to smoking and not meet your goal of quitting. Below are some things that may trigger the desire to smoke and that you should avoid¹:

- *Being around smoking*
- *Certain situations or people*
- *Alcohol or coffee*
- *Sweet or spicy foods²*
- *Stress³*

If you find that any of these things make you want to smoke, try to replace them with other things. You may not be able to get rid of all the stress in your life, but you can learn new ways to deal with it.³



IV. Ways to cope

There are many other things you can do that may help you cope if you feel like you want to smoke.² At the launch meeting, you were given a 31 Things to Do Instead of Smoke calendar, which has many suggestions. Refer to that often and try several of the suggestions until you find something that works for you.

- Use substitutes (see calendar for suggestions)
- Do something that helps you relax (eg, take 10 deep breaths)
- Do something you enjoy. Start a new hobby. Learn something new
- Call someone from your support group or anyone who will encourage you to not smoke. You can also call your state quit line. Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW to be directed to your state quit line. The quit line offers counseling and support
- Remind yourself of why you want to quit smoking. Read your Personal Progress Tracker again
- What else helps you get rid of the urge to smoke?

Studies show that exercise can help stop cigarette urges. The urge to smoke is reduced during and after exercise.⁴ A 15-minute brisk walk can reduce the urge for up to 50 minutes, even if you are faced with a trigger like a lit cigarette!⁴ Additionally, exercise can help to avoid unwanted weight gain, as your metabolism changes and you find that you want to eat more as a substitute for smoking.^{1,5} Urges may last a short time, so the goal is to distract yourself until the urge to smoke passes.

V. What to do if you slip

- Few people never slip at all.³ It is common when you are trying to quit to miss the habit of smoking. Smoking was a part of your life and routine and now you need to replace old habits with healthier new ones. You may think you can have just 1 cigarette, but even 1 puff will make it harder in the long run⁶
- If you slip up and have a cigarette, stop smoking again right away³
- Use your Personal Progress Tracker. Write down what made you slip, so you can try to avoid it next time. What made you slip? What can you do differently next time? Some situations can't be avoided
- Recommit to quit
- Reward yourself after you get back on track⁶
- You may also want to refer to the Staying Motivated to Quit handout. This handout lists ways to help you stay motivated as you continue on the path to quit smoking

VI. Next Steps

- Next group meeting: [DATE, TIME, PLACE]
- Incentives: [If you offer incentives for attendance or not smoking]
- Questions?
- Keep up the great work! People who quit smoking for at least 3 months have a greater chance of staying quit for good⁷



References:

1. US Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service. *You Can Quit Smoking: Consumer Guide*. <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/tobacco/smconsumr.pdf>. Accessed March 3, 2008.
2. American Cancer Society. Quitting smoking—help for cravings and tough situations. http://www.cancer.org/docroot/PED/content/PED_10_13X_Help_for_Cravings.asp?sitearea=PED. Accessed March 3, 2008.
3. American Cancer Society. Guide to quitting smoking. http://www.cancer.org/docroot/ped/content/ped_10_13x_guide_for_quitting_smoking.asp. Accessed February 27, 2008.
4. Taylor AH, Ussher MH, Faulkner G. The acute effects of exercise on cigarette cravings, withdrawal symptoms, affect and smoking behaviour: a systematic review. *Addiction*. 2007;102:534-543.
5. Mayo Clinic. Quit smoking, gain weight: is it inevitable? <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/quit-smoking/AN01437>. Accessed May 13, 2008.
6. Fiore MC, Jaén CR, Baker TB, et al. *Clinical Practice Guideline: Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence: 2008 Update*. Washington, DC: US Department of Health and Human Services. Public Health Service; 2008.
7. National Cancer Institute. Fact Sheet. Quitting smoking: why to quit and how to get help. http://www.cancer.gov/images/Documents/3b857cda-7feb-41e0-bef9-b02536844da5/fs10_19.pdf. Accessed March 26, 2008.