

Chapter 3: Overview of QUIT 2 WIN

Successful Steps to Implement Youth Tobacco Cessation Programs in Schools

The following are important steps in setting up and running a school-based smoking cessation support group.

1. Obtain administrative approval
2. Identify appropriate staff to facilitate program
3. Discuss school consent policy and develop permission forms for participation in group
4. Determine best dates and time to run group
5. Communicate closely with teaching staff to gain their support
6. Initiate publicity and recruitment of students
7. Conduct tobacco assessment of potential participants
8. Conduct group sessions
9. Evaluate end of group/success or need for continued support
10. Follow-up with group participants

1. ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVAL

It is important to meet with the school principal and/or superintendent prior to the start of implementing the program. Working closely with the administration and gaining their support will make it easier for you to recruit students via other school staff and allow them to help you to reiterate the importance of your program when students will need to miss classes. Being prepared to present the program to the administration and utilizing a curriculum-based program will allow them to see that you are well organized to implement a successful program for the students. Prior to the meeting with the administration, obtain and review the school's policy on tobacco use and use the meeting to make any recommendations that might strengthen the policy and provide a supportive environment for the youth cessation program. A sample tobacco free school policy can be found at the end of this chapter.

2. IDENTIFY APPROPRIATE STAFF TO FACILITATE

Identifying the appropriate staff to facilitate the program is important to the programs success. We have found that the person conducting the program needs to have an interest, the ability and time for a successful program. In most cases, Student Assistance Counselors, School Nurses, Health Teachers, Guidance Counselors or other staff trained in working with teens who feel this is an important issue to address, make the best facilitators. Showing students your commitment to helping them quit smoking is necessary. Adolescents will see right through someone who is being forced to do "another job" instead of having their heart in the program. Most of the time commitment will be in the initial setup of the group and recruitment of students. Once the group has begun, it entails one period per week, and the additional time it takes to write out passes for students or give extra support to students in the group.

3. CONSENT POLICY AND PERMISSION FORMS

Knowing your district's policy on parental permission for students to participate in the program will be necessary. Some school districts provide a blanket permission form early in the school year, which covers students to participate in various groups throughout the year. Others may require you to have parents and students sign a permission slip, which acknowledges that parents are aware of the program and students participation. A sample permission form can be found in the addendum section of this manual.

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4. DETERMINING DATES & TIMES OF GROUP

An appropriate time within the school calendar year needs to be identified as early as possible. Avoiding holidays, lengthy school vacations and major school events as much as possible allows for continuity of the group. Recognizing how difficult the process of quitting smoking is and avoiding stressful times (i.e. exam periods, prom season) will allow to the student to focus on their quit goals. It also will allow other school personnel to be the most supportive to you. We have found that rotating the group period throughout the 8 weeks, but on the same day of the week, works best. This way students will miss the same class period only 1 or 2 times throughout the program.

5. COMMUNICATE WITH TEACHING STAFF

Communication with your colleagues is vital! First of all, it allows the teaching staff to feel that they are a part of the student's success. Whether it be that they help you by referring a student to your group, or them being aware of the group schedule, it encourages the staff to work in unison. Giving the students the message that this group is for students that are serious about quitting and not a place to go to "get out of class", holds the students responsible for their actions. The teachers should know that the students will be responsible for checking in with their teachers to receive necessary missed work assignments and then getting to group on time.

6. PUBLICITY AND RECRUITMENT OF STUDENTS

The QUIT 2 WIN Program will provide you with the necessary forms and publicity materials to market your quit group to students, though you are welcome to add to these. It will give you the approximate time lines to follow, as well as ways to utilize fellow coworkers to help with the process. This project recognizes that you are busy, and wants to make it as simple as possible to implement the program. Posters, forms, and brochures will be provided to you in a "Word Document" so that you can easily insert your specific details and print them up from any inexpensive computer system. The project will give you tips on how to utilize student groups within your school to help with the marketing/encouraging of students to join.

7. ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS

A brief assessment tool will help you decide if the student is serious about quitting smoking and appropriate for group. Unlike adults, adolescents are frequently reluctant to show how determined they are to quit and are sometimes unable to give a firm commitment to quitting. Letting them know that the group will set a definite "quit date" and that you will be there to help them obtain "their quit commitment" is important. If you feel that a student is really not serious about giving it their best shot, it is best not to include them. Remember the power is in the group! Helping them to unite together towards their quit will, in the long run, build energy within the group to deal with situations that will be difficult for them.

8. GROUP SESSIONS

Each session has a step-by-step agenda to follow. The session will be broken down into standard parts so that there is consistency to the group and expectations for the students to be aware of. Upon arrival of the group each student will meet with the facilitator to have his carbon monoxide (CO) reading taken (if equipment is available), as well as report his past week's tobacco use. At the start of each group, each student will report on how they fared during the past week. An educational topic will be addressed, with time for discussion. A skill will be taught to the student and a mini assignment will be given (example: during the next week, you will not smoke in your car). The group will end with each student making a commitment to return to group and having cut down (initially) or once at the quit date, not smoke. The group facilitator should be very clear with the group what the goal for the week is and everyone in the group will be asked to make a verbal commitment to it and return to the next session. Even if they were not successful in following the plan, students will be encouraged to return and renew their efforts.

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9. EVALUATION

Evaluating the students progress at the end of group or need for continued support is an important component. Reviewing all aspects of the program (i.e. time program was facilitated, other teacher's cooperativeness to allow students to attend, participants level of commitment, facilitator's commitment) to learn from the previous group helps to build a stronger program the next time the group is run. It may be necessary to provide additional ongoing support for some students.

10. FOLLOW-UP

We recommend that an 8-week and 6-month follow-up are done with each student after the target quit date. As a group facilitator, you want to know if the program you provided has longer term effects. When group is provided in a school setting, this is more easily done. It is important to get follow-up contact information from seniors who will be leaving the school.

QUIT 2 WIN: Win Independence from Nicotine

Running a Support Group for Young People Who Want to Quit Tobacco

QUIT 2 WIN is a youth tobacco cessation support program specifically for adolescents who want to quit smoking and desire help with the process. It is important to note that students who smoke and are not interested in quitting are not candidates for this program, simply because without the self-motivation, they are highly unlikely to attend or quit. Furthermore, having unmotivated people in a group may adversely affect the group effort, making it difficult to maintain the positive ethos so essential to students' success. Therefore, it is important to conduct individual assessments with each interested student prior to the start of group to determine if they are appropriate for the program. This will be discussed in further detail in the Assessment section.

QUIT 2 WIN is designed to be a school based cessation program, though it can be adapted to community settings as well. The program consists of 10 sessions over eight weeks, with the fifth session scheduled as the group's target Quit Date. Each session is intended to run the length of one class period (between 40 – 50 minutes), and has its own theme or focus. An outline of the program is as follows:

- Week 1: Session 1 – Welcome to Group
- Week 2: Session 2 – Smoking and Health
- Week 3: Session 3 – Exposing the Industry
- Week 4: Session 4 – Preparing for the Big Day!
- Week 4: Session 5 – Quit Day!
- Week 4: Session 6 – Getting Free of Tobacco!
- Week 5: Session 7 – Staying the Course
- Week 6: Session 8 – Thinking and Acting like a Non-smoker
- Week 7: Session 9 – Advertising and Images
- Week 8: Session 10 – Celebrations and Conclusions

Sessions one through four are in preparation for the Quit Day, and sessions six through ten are intended to support that quit. Only sessions four, five and six are designed to be run on consecutive days during the fourth week to “bookend” and support the quit day (session five). All other sessions are weekly. We have found that Tuesdays and Wednesdays are often the best days for the regular group meetings. This schedule will be explained more thoroughly in the Rationale and the “Step by Step” section of this chapter.

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As a school based program, attendance in youth cessation groups is generally highest when group meetings are conducted during school hours. As mentioned above, sessions last one school period, and the meeting times typically are staggered week by week so that students do not consistently miss the same class.

In terms of group size, it is recommended to aim for scheduling about 10 to 12 students to attend group. Generally, some people will not turn up, and some will drop out along the way, resulting in a manageable group size of six to ten. Adolescents with marked emotional and behavioral problems generally should be in groups of no more than six. In all settings, youth who cannot function in a group should be screened and treated individually. Similarly, disruptive members should be removed from the group and counseled one on one.

It is helpful if two professionals attend each group meeting. This extra facilitator can be essential to help measure carbon monoxide (CO) levels, and deal with unexpected events. Having two facilitators also helps minimize any expectation that the group has a single leader or teacher who is going to do most of the talking. It is important that everyone understands that this is a participative active support group, and not a “class.” The CO is monitored at assessment (before quitting tobacco) and at the beginning of every session.

Although there are differences between working with adolescents and adults in tobacco cessation counseling, many of the basic issues pertaining to breaking the addiction are actually very similar. Like adults, some teens are more powerfully addicted to nicotine than others, and the issues of nicotine withdrawal, triggers, cravings, and outside support, among others, need to be addressed. But beyond the basics, results will be more favorable if adjustments are made to make the group style “youth friendly”.

Stop smoking support groups work better if the facilitators have a clear, prepared structure but do not deliver it in such a way that this is *overly* apparent and the participants feel that they can influence the agenda. Certain regular components should be a part of every meeting: attendance, measurement of carbon monoxide and measurement of cigarettes smoked in the last week (CPW). All of these should be recorded weekly on the Student Sheet under the appropriate Session heading (form can be found at the end of Chapter 6-QUIT 2 WIN Group Sessions). Students should also have a chance to report on how they are doing at every meeting. Otherwise, the structure of each session as follows is a recommended guideline, but does not need to be followed rigidly as written here.

Facilitators should be familiar with the session recommendations and be prepared for each session, but the paramount rule is that if the group participants are discussing the issue (quitting tobacco) in a constructive and supportive manner, the facilitators should keep quiet and let it flow. Stop smoking groups generally work best (and are more enjoyable for participants) when the participants feel comfortable to discuss the issues among themselves rather than the facilitator always setting the agenda or feeling the need to answer most of the questions. Thus if questions or discussions are constantly being directed at a facilitator, he/she should deflect this and encourage group discussion by not returning eye contact (simply look away) or passing the question on to the group (“I wonder what other people think about that...”).

The number and the sequence of sessions as follows is recommended for QUIT 2 WIN. If the length of the program needs to be shortened, consider doubling up some of the sessions in a week, instead of having them a week apart. If it is not possible to meet for three consecutive days during the Quit Week (Sessions 4,5,6), it is most recommended to meet at least on the Quit Day itself. If you can also meet either the day before or the day after the Quit Day, ask the students which meeting they think would be most helpful to have. If missing class presents a conflict, ask students if they would be able to meet after school, or if they could come by to check in during their lunch break.

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Teen support groups such as QUIT 2 WIN most often are led by the student assistance counselor (SAC) within the school system and/or guidance counselors. School nurses, health teachers, or other interested teachers may also be appropriate facilitators. In addition, outside consultants with specialist experience in tobacco cessation support can help. The Tobacco Dependence Program at the UMDNJ – School of Public Health can provide assistance with setting up and running QUIT 2 WIN in New Jersey schools. The Tobacco Dependence Program will hold special trainings for school staff on implementing QUIT 2 WIN and on learning to help students quit the use of tobacco.

Rationale/ History of QUIT 2 WIN

Why Start another Youth Cessation Program?

In Chapter 4 (Treating youth for tobacco dependence: what does the literature say?), we mentioned that the field of youth treatment is still relatively new, and that there is no clear consensus yet on what interventions work best for young people. However, the largest comprehensive review of all youth cessation studies *did* suggest that providing smoking cessation support for young tobacco users increases the chance of quitting, although the most effective cessation support components are unclear²⁵. What is clear is that more research needs to be conducted, and that more programs need to be tried and evaluated to form a better picture of what effective youth cessation models should look like.

In New Jersey, we know that 55% of young people who smoke express a desire to quit smoking, and that 51% have made a quit attempt in the past year³. Yet, it appears that although many teenagers express a desire to quit smoking, few use any structured support to help them. According to the 1999 New Jersey Youth Tobacco Survey, only one out of four students had ever heard of a program to “help teens quit”, only six percent had attended a program to help them quit, and less than eight percent used a pharmacological aid to help them quit³. Based on the apparent need for more research and the seeming potential of cessation programs to help young people quit, the Tobacco Dependence Program (TDP) at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey decided to use its experience and success in treating adults to formulate a new cessation program appropriate for adolescents.

Changes and Lessons Learned

QUIT 2 WIN was originally adapted from the adult group cessation model used at our clinic, the Tobacco Dependence Clinic. It consisted of six total sessions, one session per week, with the Quit Date set for the second week. As with our adult clinic patients, each student was given an initial individual assessment before group, and carbon monoxide levels for each participant were recorded at each session. However, unlike the adult groups, which focus heavily on participants’ use and proper management of medications, medications were not a part of the school groups. The adolescent groups focused on behavioral support, providing advice on how to deal with difficult and trigger situations.

After piloting the original version of Pilot QUIT 2 WIN in five New Jersey schools, it was clear that the students wanted and needed more sessions. Students were not ready to quit by the second meeting, and needed more frequent support than adults. Therefore, QUIT 2 WIN was extended to eight sessions over seven weeks, with the quit date now in the third week, and with an extra “booster” support session two days after the quit date. But in the revised version, another aspect became clear during our new set of pilot groups. Although students had voluntarily signed up for the group, their level of motivation to quit did not match that of the adults seen in our clinic groups. It was evident that the students were interested in quitting, but that they still needed and wanted education and extra motivation to quit. Even though they were trying, they still needed to be provoked and challenged along the way. And as young people, they needed activities to keep their attention focused and interested. Therefore, relevant educational and more activity-oriented components were added during the second set of pilot groups. On the other hand, many students suffered from withdrawal symptoms. Medications available were explained, and several

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students did access NRT on their own and use medications with success. However, as most students would not access such medications, we began to emphasize the need to cut down the number of cigarettes from week to week prior to the quit date, in order to minimize the withdrawal effects of quitting “cold turkey” on the quit day. Overall, in the last several groups of our second set of pilot schools, we experienced more success in quitting with 29% of participating students being tobacco-free at the last group meeting and a further 29% had cut down to less than 2 cigarettes per day by the end of the program. Student evaluations of the program were very positive, but students still consistently recommended making the program longer, and pushing back the quit date.

Therefore, QUIT 2 WIN, as presented in this manual, is a revamped program that is a result of our knowledge of treating tobacco dependence, our literature reviews of existing youth cessation programs, and of lessons learned from our own experiences with students in the ten pilot high school groups we have conducted thus far.

QUIT 2 WIN - Revised

The revised version of QUIT 2 WIN is a program of ten sessions over eight weeks. We struggled with the idea of extending the program to ten sessions, recognizing some of the practical limitations of a longer school based program. In the end, however, we conceded that if the ultimate goal of the program was cessation, that a ten session program would likely be more effective than eight. Extending to ten sessions matched the students’ requests, and also seemed to make programmatic sense. One of the additional sessions was added before the Quit Date, now providing students *three* weeks of preparation before the quit date. This extra preparation time provides three benefits: 1) students have more time to cut down before the quit date, making abstinence on the quit date a more realistic goal, especially for heavier smokers 2) students have more time to learn about tobacco and about quitting, and have more time to build motivation, confidence and skills, also making abstinence by quit day a more realistic goal and 3) students have more time to get excited about the quit day, such that they perceive it as an important day coming up. An extra session (session 4) was added the day before the quit day. This session is to summarize the three weeks of preparation and to get them excited for their quit day on the following day, so that there is no reason that they should forget their quit date, and so that there is more reason to give it a serious try. The booster session (session 6) is now the day immediately *after* the quit day, instead of two days later. Overall, it was found that students need as much support around the quit date as possible, and therefore, these three sessions were placed as consecutive days during this important week.

Each session of QUIT 2 WIN now has a theme and focus with planned educational components, points for discussion, and/or activities. Having this kind of structure provides a format familiar to students. It also helps prepare them to quit, helps educate and motivate them, build a sense of unity with the group, and works to keep their interest and attention during the sessions.

The American Lung Association’s Not On Tobacco (NOT) program is one of the few school based tobacco cessation programs that have been evaluated. The following highlights some of the similarities and differences between QUIT 2 WIN and NOT:

Similarities – Both programs address:

- reasons for smoking, reasons for quitting
- myths about tobacco, giving the facts/realities
- facts about smoking and health effects, including unique effects for males and females
- identifying and dealing with trigger situations
- nicotine and addiction
- contents of cigarettes
- asking for support/ telling others that they are going to quit

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- preparing to quit, what to do
- deep breathing exercises
- benefits of quitting
- dealing with cravings
- quitting contracts
- cost of smoking
- withdrawal symptoms/what to expect
- dealing with family and friends that smoke
- the tobacco industry and industry marketing/advertising
- how everyone is doing from week to week

Differences:

- Schedule: both programs are ten sessions, but NOT is intended to meet one time per week, whereas QUIT 2 WIN is conducted over eight weeks. QUIT 2 WIN's quit date is in the fourth week (three weeks to quit date), with three consecutive sessions during the quit week (day before, day of, and day after quit date). NOT's quit date is in the fifth week (four weeks to quit date). NOT meets the day before the quit date and *does not meet on the quit date or until the following week's session*
- QUIT 2 WIN meets for four weeks post quit date; NOT meets for five weeks post quit date
- QUIT 2 WIN conducts individual assessments prior to group; NOT does not and collects individual information during Session 1
- NOT groups are gender specific – male/female only, including facilitator. Much of the educational content is gender specific. QUIT 2 WIN describes gender issues when appropriate, but groups are co-ed
- QUIT 2 WIN measures and records CO levels per session as well as self-reported cigarettes smoked in the last week. NOT asks students to keep “pack tracks” or logs of cigarettes smoked
- NOT does not recommend medication use, but addresses the issue if asked questions about medications. QUIT 2 WIN explains the medications available during one of the sessions, and recommends seeing a physician or NJ Quitcenter if interested in using medications
- NOT incorporates journal use, where students spend half of several sessions, including those post quit date, writing in their journal
- NOT spends significant session time on the importance of nutrition and exercise (such as session seven). QUIT 2 WIN recommends nutrition and exercise during the quitting process, but does not focus significant session time on nutrition and exercise
- QUIT 2 WIN dedicates a session to role-playing activities based on students' difficult/trigger situations. NOT has one role-playing activity