

HVSSSC

Hudson Valley Student Support Services Center

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FACT SHEET

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Abbreviated/Alternative Interventions

If a school is not able to provide multi-session group programs for student tobacco policy violators, an abbreviated intervention could be instituted during an ISS or detention time. At the very least, an intervention could include a review and discussion of the items contained in the school policy's rationale section.

Basic points to convey that support the policy, such as:

- Health consequences for tobacco users
- Health consequences for others from secondhand smoke
- Tobacco use interferes with attendance, learning, and discipline
- Tobacco use has negative influence on peers and younger students
- Cigarettes are the #1 cause of fatal fires

Resources available at HVSSSC Tobacco Resource Center are:

Second Chance: A Self Directed Alternative to Suspension Program for Tobacco Free Schools Policy Violators. The primary goal of *Second Chance* is to increase student compliance with your tobacco-free school policy. Its secondary goals are to increase student awareness of the benefits of not using tobacco and increase interest in quitting or reducing tobacco use. Kit contains Level 1 and Level 2.

Videos (among several others):

- No Ifs and Or Butts (SA 121 D)
- Smoking: Truth or Dare (SA 140 A&B)
- How I Quit Smoking and Saved My Life (SA 121 F)
- Beyond Cold Turkey (SA 121 C)
- Spit Tobacco Exposed (SA 121 H)
- Search For a Safe Cigarette – NOVA (SA136)
- In the Mix: Smoking, the Unfiltered Truth (SA 149)
- Thangata: Social Bondage and Big Tobacco in Malawi (debt slavery of African tobacco farmers) (SA 176)

Go to Tobacco Resource Center link on this site to review the entire list of resources and read a brief description of these videos and other resources. Some videos come with Student Worksheets. There are resources that focus

on Media Literacy and raise awareness about tobacco ads that lure kids.

An intervention session could begin with a pretest to establish what the student knows regarding tobacco before watching the video or reading educational material. A posttest can then be administered after or during the time the material is presented to a student in order for the staff *and* student to determine increased awareness and what topics could use further review.

Tips for Staff Intervening with Students Using Tobacco

Stages of Change: Once you assess a student's current stage in the change process, engage at his/her current stage and work toward the next stage. There are strategies and techniques to support this stage by stage change. The Stages are:

- Pre-contemplation- person has not yet identified behavior (tobacco use) as a problem
- Contemplation- person is aware of problem and thinking about taking action
- Preparation- person is acquiring information and planning quit strategies
- Action- person takes specific steps to quit tobacco use or has quit and has been tobacco free for a day or more
- Maintenance- person has a period of tobacco abstinence and continues to practice alternative behaviors to support tobacco-free life style

A further assessment could determine a student's degree of nicotine dependence and at which stage of change a student is at in order to improve intervention strategies.

Degree of dependence: Determine if situational or chemical.

- Situational- use tobacco only in certain situations or occasions
- Chemical- use tobacco consistently regardless of situation
- Nicotine Replacement Therapy (patches, gums) with teens- only if chemical dependent and serious about stopping

Strengths and Goals: When discussing cessation and strategies it is useful to determine and review the student's strengths, talents, and goals. This can:

- Show interest in student's positive qualities and helps build constructive relationship
- Support ego, self esteem
- Reveal how life goals conflict with tobacco use
- Demonstrate how an acquired skill (talent) of his/her own was a *process* of improvement, just as getting free of tobacco

Cessation Strategies: Simple cessation strategies to support an intervention are:

The **5 D-s:**

- **Delay-** tell yourself, "not now, maybe later"
- **Drink water-** refreshing and cleansing
- **Do something else-** shift your focus to something else, keep busy
- **Deep breathing-** take several slow relaxing deep breaths
- **Discuss your feelings-** talk to reduce stress

Questions to ask: What's the truth? When intervening with student who is at the Pre-contemplation or Contemplation stage of change, the following two questions could be asked of the student:

1. *"Which is more true- that you don't want to quit (yet)*
OR

You don't want to go through the withdrawal, don't know how you'll cope without tobacco?"

If the latter is "true," (often is) then discuss what's the point of he/she saying "I don't want to quit," if it's not true. Point out that the brain only believes what it is told, so "why fool yourself." Since the issue is actually withdrawal and coping, those are areas for discussion. Knowledge and practice can develop new skills and can begin a process in a positive direction. This models any new skill development to build a successful life.

2. *"If by some miracle you woke up tomorrow morning and did not crave tobacco, would you 'start' smoking/chewing again and go out a buy a pack/tin?"*

If the student would not go and buy a pack/tin and "start" again, then reflect that he/she must not really want to use tobacco and that you are both on the "same team," really wanting the same goal.

Build on Success: Progress can be any positive change or new behavior. Willingness is an essential attitude to develop. For example, the process can begin with willingness to engage in more honest open conversation about their tobacco use.

For students only at the contemplation stage, "quitting" in the near future is not necessarily the focus. Focusing on "quitting" may only create anxiety, fear of failure, grief, and

resistance reaction. Increasing knowledge and awareness of how tobacco use impacts their present life and future goals could be discussed. Progress of any sort or degree *forward* while receiving enthusiastic acknowledgement encourages the tobacco user, gives them a good feeling, and builds on success. Nicotine (drug) users are generally seeking an elevated mood and stress relief.

Active progress can be paying more attention to "triggers," writing down their reasons to quit and reading list before using, initiating the use of substitute items or behaviors (5Ds), and moving on to designated periods of abstinence.

Preparation and Practice are good parts of any plan or new skill development. If "not ready to quit yet," than they can do what they *are* ready or able to do. Building on success, having efforts recognized, and generating positive feelings helps to keep students engaged in the process. After all, caring attention and achievement recognition are strong motivators for adolescents, even when they act as if they "couldn't care less."