

A Moment to Mind Yourself

Quit Smoking Support at the IPC

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Are you thinking about quitting smoking, vaping, or becoming tobacco free in 2025?

When making changes in our lives, whether it's quitting a substance or behavior, starting an exercise program, or losing weight for example, people typically go through several stages in their readiness to make these changes.

Whether you're not motivated to quit but family or loved ones are putting pressure on you for medical or financial reasons, or you're thinking about quitting sometime in the future or you're ready to set a quit date in the next month, I'm available to provide support and coaching to help you on your journey. Having worked at the Massachusetts Smokers' Helpline as a tobacco treatment specialist for nearly 10 years, I saw firsthand how providing evidence-based guidance and support helped people quit smoking and other forms of tobacco use.

Studies show that you can double your chances of quitting tobacco using a combination of nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) or other quit smoking medications along with intensive support such as telephone coaching to help address triggers and cravings.

You are the expert on your situation and the approach used is a collaborative partnership where we work together to identify your physical, psychological, and social/environmental cues and triggers, creating a specific plan to help address these areas.

Physical triggers such as cravings, insomnia, and irritability can be managed using nicotine replacement such as the patch, and/or gum or lozenge or other quit smoking medications. It's important to review how to use these correctly and/or how to minimize any potential side effects.

Psychological and environmental triggers such as stress, anxiety, worry about weight gain or being around other smokers can be addressed using practical and effective cognitive and behavioral strategies.

An example of a cognitive strategy (changing *thinking around smoking*) would be: *Prepare for situations that might arise by envisioning how best to handle them. For example, imagine what would happen if offered a cigarette by a friend—mentally develop and rehearse a response, and perhaps even practice it by saying it aloud.*

An example of a behavioral strategy (specific *actions to reduce likelihood of smoking*): *Anticipate routines associated with tobacco use and develop an alternative plan. Examples:*

MORNING COFFEE: change morning routine, drink tea instead of coffee, take shower before drinking coffee, take a brisk walk shortly after awakening.

WHILE DRIVING: remove all tobacco from car, have car interior detailed, listen to a book on tape or talk radio, use oral substitute such as the gum or lozenge.

WHILE ON THE PHONE: stand while talking, limit call duration, change phone location, keep hands occupied by doodling or sketching.

AFTER MEALS: get up and immediately do dishes or take a brisk walk after eating, call supportive friend.

Lastly, quitting smoking is a process which can take time and multiple attempts. I encourage you to think of setbacks as opportunities for learning, not failures. Keep going, keep trying, it's worth it!

To schedule a 30–60-minute exploratory phone or video call, you can reach Gina at 857-303-9879 or ggallagher@ipcbboston.org

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