

Understanding Substance Use and Creating Change for Healthy Living

Education Booklet



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Introduction

The *Understanding Substance Use and Creating Change for Healthy Living Education Booklet* is a resource for persons struggling with substances. By completing this booklet, you will understand your readiness for change, assess the impact of your substance use and learn strategies for you to quit using. This booklet should not be used as a substitute for professional assistance when a substance use problem exists.

Identifying Your Stage of Change

The stages-of-change model describes a sequence of stages through which individuals progress as they think about and change their behaviors. This model comprises the five stages outlined below. Individuals move back and forth between the stages and progress through the stages at different rates.

Characteristics of the Stages-of-Change Model (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1982)	
Stages	Characteristics
Precontemplation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is not currently considering change • Sees change as hypothetical or not a real possibility • Is unaware of adverse consequences of substance use, although others may believe problems exist
Contemplation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Becomes aware that problems exist • Recognizes causes for concern and reasons to change • Is ambivalent • Considers seeking information and reevaluating substance use behavior • Is not considering change this month • Has potential to remain in this stage for years
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commits to changing • Recognizes that advantages of changing outweigh benefits of not changing • Thinks about capabilities of success • Continues to use substances but intends to stop or cut back soon
Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begins to implement the solution or plan • Modifies habits • Takes steps toward change • Practices new behavior for 3–6 months
Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continues commitment to sustaining new behavior (6 weeks of success can reinforce behaviors that have real potential of becoming permanent) • Takes steps to prevent relapse (Requires prolonged behavior change and continued vigilance for 6 months to several years)

Substance Use Problem Scale

The following are different types of problems you may have experienced as a result of substance use. Please circle the number that indicates whether each item has been a problem for you in the past month.

Has substance use caused you . . .	No Problem	Minor Problem	Serious Problem
1. Problems between you and your partner	0	1	2
2. Problems in your family	0	1	2
3. To neglect your family	0	1	2
4. Problems between you and your friends	0	1	2
5. To miss days at work or miss classes	0	1	2
6. To lose a job	0	1	2
7. To have lower productivity	0	1	2
8. Medical problems	0	1	2
9. Withdrawal symptoms	0	1	2
10. Blackouts or flashbacks	0	1	2
11. Memory loss	0	1	2
12. Difficulty sleeping	0	1	2
13. Financial difficulties	0	1	2
14. Legal problems	0	1	2
15. To have lower energy	0	1	2
16. To feel bad about your use	0	1	2
17. Lowered self-esteem	0	1	2
18. To procrastinate	0	1	2
19. To lack self-confidence	0	1	2

Substance Use Problem Scale *continued*

To obtain the Substance Use Problem Score, add the number of items reported.

Total:

Low Range: 1-19

Moderate: 20-38

Severe: 39-57

The scores obtained on this scale suggest the extent to which you may have a substance use problem. They are not meant to be diagnostic and instead highlight needs for support. If you scored at a “1” or above, you are encouraged to seek professional services for further assessment of your substance use.

Reasons for Quitting Questionnaire

People who want to stop using substances may have several reasons for quitting. This questionnaire explores your reasons for quitting.

There are no right or wrong reasons. Any reason is a good one. Please read each statement below and circle the number that best describes how much this reason applies to you at this time.

I want to quit using at this time....	Not At All	A Little Bit	Moderately	Quite A Bit	Very Much
1. To show myself that I can quit if I want to	0	1	2	3	4
2. Because I will like myself better if I quit	0	1	2	3	4
3. Because I won't have to leave social functions or other people's houses to use	0	1	2	3	4
4. So that I can feel in control of my life	0	1	2	3	4
5. Because my family and friends will stop nagging me if I quit	0	1	2	3	4
6. To get praise from people I'm close to	0	1	2	3	4
7. Because using does not fit in with my self-image	0	1	2	3	4
8. Because using is becoming less socially acceptable	0	1	2	3	4
9. Because someone has told me to quit or else	0	1	2	3	4
10. Because I will receive a special gift if I quit	0	1	2	3	4
11. Because of potential health problems	0	1	2	3	4
12. Because people I am close to will be upset if I don't quit	0	1	2	3	4
13. So that I can get more things done	0	1	2	3	4
14. Because I have noticed that using is hurting my health	0	1	2	3	4
15. Because I want to save money I spend on substance use	0	1	2	3	4
16. To prove that I'm not addicted	0	1	2	3	4
17. Because there is a drug-testing policy at work	0	1	2	3	4
18. Because I know others with health problems caused by substance use	0	1	2	3	4
19. Because I am concerned that using will shorten my life	0	1	2	3	4

Reasons for Quitting Questionnaire *continued*

20. Because of legal problems related to my use	0	1	2	3	4
21. Because I don't want to be a bad example for children	0	1	2	3	4
22. Because I want to have more energy	0	1	2	3	4
23. Because my memory will improve	0	1	2	3	4
24. So that I will be able to think more clearly	0	1	2	3	4
25. Quitting will improve my hygiene and physical appearance	0	1	2	3	4

Use the spaces below to list the 3 most important reasons for wanting to quit.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

A Guide to Quit Using

The Decision

Designate a day as Quit Day. Remember that the decision is yours and the commitment you make to quit using is with yourself. Sign and date a contract with yourself now. You might want to consider making other complementary changes at this time, such as also quitting cigarettes.

Quit Strategies

The following strategies may prove useful in quitting:

- Set a date and stick to it.
- Replace substance use with new activities and interests.
- Avoid situations where you used to use.
- Ask a friend for support. You do not have to go it alone.
- Say to others, “I don’t use anymore.”

Identify several strategies that will help you quit and write them down.

Three Things I Can Do To Give Up Substance Use

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Quit Agreement

I, _____, am quitting _____

because (fill in reasons for quitting):

As of _____, I intend to stop _____

and to refrain from use in the future by (fill in strategies to be used):

Signatures: _____

Supporter

Participant

Learning New Coping Strategies

Some Alternatives to Substance Use

What follows are coping strategies to stop using substances. Some strategies may work better than others. They can help you resist the urges to use, avoid tempting situations or even satisfy your needs in more constructive ways than using a substance. Expect to try several and add any that may be helpful. Think about what worked when you gave up the substance before or when you made other changes in your life.

Be kind to yourself as you begin this change process. You're doing something to take care of yourself, and you deserve all the comfort and self-acceptance you can get! Remind yourself that learning and changing inevitably mean giving up old ways and that, in time, you will feel more comfortable.



Actions

Avoid or escape from situations that make you want to use a substance. Sometimes this is the easiest and most effective way to resist temptation, especially at the beginning.

Delay decisions to give in to temptation. For example, you could wait 15 minutes. Take several deep breaths. Focus on the fresh air entering your lungs, cleansing and nourishing your body. Let out tension with each exhalation.

Change your physical position. Stand up and stretch, walk around the room, or step outside.

Carry things to put in your mouth: toothpicks, gum, mints, plastic straws, low-calorie snacks.

Carry objects to fiddle with: a rubber ball to squeeze, a small puzzle, a pebble, worry beads.

Keep a distracting activity with you, such as a crossword puzzle, magazine, book or a postcard to write.

Thoughts

Self-Talk. Give yourself a pep talk. Remind yourself of your reasons for quitting. Remind yourself of the consequences of using. Challenge any wavering in your commitment to quit.

Imagery and visualization. Visualize yourself as a nonuser — happy, healthy and in control. Or consider the damaging effects on your health as a result of substance use.

Thought-stopping. Tell yourself loudly to STOP; get up and do something else.

Distraction. Focus on something different: the task at hand, a daydream, a fantasy, counting backwards from 150.



Lifestyle

Exercise or take a brisk daily walk. Get your body used to moving. Take stairs instead of elevators. Park farther away from your destination. Walk instead of drive.

Learning New Coping Strategies *continued*

Practice relaxation or meditation techniques regularly.

Take up a hobby or pick up an old hobby you used to enjoy.

Drink less coffee. Switch to decaf or drink herbal teas.

Engage in an enjoyable activity that is not work related several times a week.

Change routines associated with substance use, at least temporarily. For example, don't turn on the TV when you get home from work. Don't spend time with friends who are still using substances.

Social Interactions and Environment

Remove substance use paraphernalia from your home and car.

Go to places where it's difficult to get high, such as a library, theater, swimming pool, sauna, restaurant or community gathering.

Spend time with friends who don't use substances. Enlist support from family and friends. Announce that you've quit. Ask people not to offer you any; to praise you for stopping; to provide emotional support; and not to use around you.

Learn to be appropriately assertive and handle frustration or anger directly instead of by using a substance.



Specific Suggestions for Some Common High-Risk Situations

Below are several high-risk situations that people who use substances confront, along with suggestions for coping without using.

Tension Relief and Negative Emotions (e.g., depression, anxiety, nervousness, irritability)

Develop relaxation techniques, exercise, write down your feelings or talk to a friend or counselor. Do something enjoyable that requires little effort. Figure out what you're feeling and whether you can do anything about it.

Anger, Frustration and Interpersonal Conflict

Try to handle the situation directly rather than hide your feelings. If appropriate, be assertive. Get some release by squeezing a rubber ball, pounding a pillow or doing some physical activity. Write down your feelings or tell them to someone. Take deep breaths.

Fatigue and Low Energy

Do muscle relaxations, take a brisk walk, eat properly and get enough sleep.

Insomnia

Don't fight being unable to sleep. Get up and do something constructive or relaxing. Read a book, watch TV or do muscle relaxations until you feel sleepy.



Learning New Coping Strategies *continued*

Timeout

Read, do a crossword puzzle, prepare a healthy snack, take up a hobby, knit or do other needlework (things you can carry with you for easy access).

Self-Image

Try a new image for yourself, such as a different hair style or new clothes.

Social Pressure

Be aware when others are using. Remember your commitment not to use. Be assertive and request that people not offer you any. If appropriate, ask that they not use around you for a while. Be prepared to leave the situation, especially when you've recently quit.

Cravings and Urges

The only way to interrupt cravings is to break the chain of responding to them. That is, don't give in and they will eventually decrease. Do something to distract yourself. Breathe deeply, call a friend, go for a walk or move around — then time the urge and you'll find that it disappears.

Substance Refusal Skills

When others compel you to use, keep the following in mind:

- Say no.
- Speak in a clear, firm and unhesitating voice.
- Make direct eye contact.
- Ask the person to stop offering you the substance and not to do so again.
- Avoid using vague answers or excuses.
- Don't feel guilty about refusing to use the substance.
- Leave if the situation persists.

Practice Exercise

Listed below are some people who might offer you substances in the future. Give some thought to how you will respond to them, and write your responses after each item.

Someone close to you who knows about your using problem:

Someone at a party with others present:

Relative at a family gathering:

Significant other:

Personal Emergency Plan: High-Risk Situation

If I encounter a high-risk situation:

- I will leave or change the situation or environment.
- I will put off the decision to use for 15 minutes, remembering that most cravings are temporary and I can wait them out.
- I will challenge my thoughts about using and remind myself that my most basic needs are for air, water, food and shelter.
- I will think of something unrelated to using.
- I will remind myself of my successes to this point.
- I will call people on my list of emergency numbers below.

Names

Phone Numbers

1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____
6. _____	_____

Remember: Riding out this crisis will strengthen my program.

Recovery is a journey that takes time and support. At Cleveland Clinic, you are not alone in this journey. Caring for Caregivers is here to help. We offer confidential assessment, counseling and referral services at no cost to caregivers and household dependents. Our independently licensed professionals are trained to provide expert guidance to optimize health and well-being.

There is hope and there is help. Please do not let shame or fear prevent you from reaching out. If you are contemplating the next step, contact Caring for Caregivers today.



Contact Us

1.800.989.8820 or 216.445.6970

<http://portals.ccf.org/caregivers>

Special thanks to SAMHSA for information contained in this booklet. For more information, visit www.samhsa.gov.