

Tobacco Cessation Program

Session 5

“Making a Plan”

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Objectives:

- Learn ways to identify your personal hurdles to success.
- Learn ways to identify stress before it leads to tobacco use.
- Learn ways to cope with your personal triggers.

Planning for Success

Quitting tobacco use is like any other military mission and it requires planning. You are trying to get from point A to point B and there is a logical progression of steps you must take to do so.

- First, you need to map out your route – you need to think about where you are, where you want to be, and how to get there.
- Next, you identify potential hazards along your route and assess both their likelihood and severity.
- Next, you develop and implement controls that either minimize the likelihood or reduce the effect of potential hazards that you may encounter.
- Finally, you evaluate your controls to see how effective they have been – if necessary, you modify your controls or even create new ones.

If you do this, then you will get where you're going safely – even if your vehicle breaks down along the way. Why? Because you planned for it, you anticipated problems, and you were ready to respond.

Preparing for Hurdles

Review your Tobacco Cessation logs.

Do you see any patterns of behavior that encouraged tobacco use? Can you identify certain types of thoughts or feelings that preceded tobacco use?

Behaviors:
Thoughts:
Feelings:

Stress – The Sneaky Hurdle

If you ask people who are trying to stop using tobacco products what are the hardest times, stressful situations are sure to be at the top of the list. Having a cigarette or taking a dip is a common coping mechanism for tobacco users. But knowing that isn't enough. **The problem with stress is that it can sneak up on you.** It builds up over time like water behind a dam until the floodgates open and you find yourself using tobacco as a way of dealing with the pent-up stress.

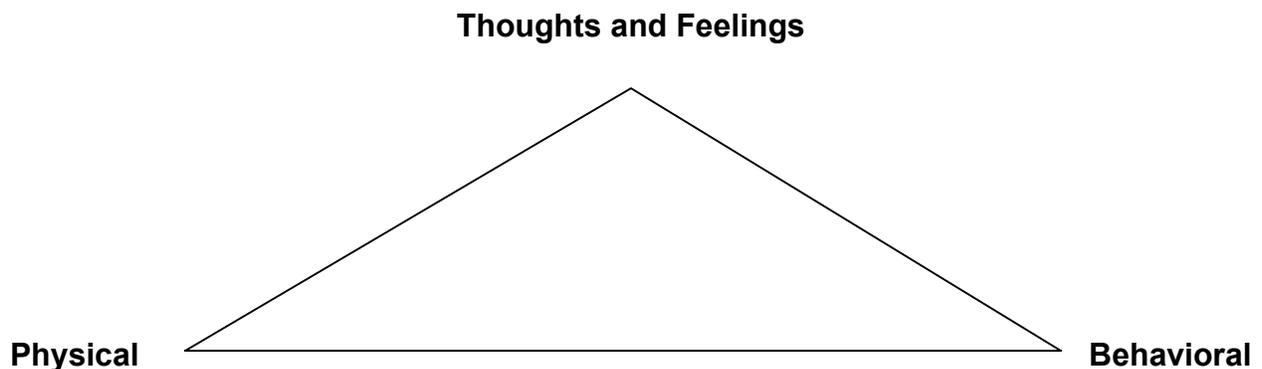
Spotting Stress BEFORE You Lose Control

How do you feel when you are stressed?

Stress usually shows itself this way:

Physical → Behavioral → Thoughts and Feelings

Thoughts and feelings are usually the LAST to show up.



Physical and Behavioral Signs of Stress

Physical and behavioral signs show up first in the stress reaction, even before thoughts and feelings. Some common behavioral signs of stress include:

Physical Symptoms of Stress

Physical symptoms are generally the first signs of stress, making them a good "early warning" system. Some of the most common physical signs of stress are listed below. Circle your most common stress symptoms.

- Tingling in your fingertips or toes
- Arms and legs feel cold
- Increased heart rate
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Butterflies in your stomach
- Muscle tension
- Upset stomach
- Shallow breathing
- Diarrhea
- Feeling tired or listless
- Watery or irritated eyes

List other physical stress symptoms, below.

Catch the Stress → Break the Pattern

Small Changes = Big Results

Another strategy is make **small** changes in your lifestyle. Small changes can often get big results.

Ideas for small lifestyle changes:

Stress Busters

- Take a warm bath.
- Count backwards from 100.
- Take a breather – 4 or 5 deep, cleansing breaths.
- Read a good book.
- Take a walk.
- Go to see a movie.
- Turn on some good music.
- Zone out – watch a silly cartoon or sitcom.
- Put it in writing: write a nasty letter, then rip it up and throw it away.
- Meditate for 15 minutes.
- Take a nap.
- Do gentle stretches for 15 minutes.
- Close your eyes and daydream.
- Call a friend.
- Go somewhere quiet, close the door, ignore the phone and relax.
- Find a hobby you enjoy.
- Play with a pet – unconditional love.
- Keep your sense of humor – laughter is the best medicine.
- Rehearse how you will handle a stressful situation.

