Avoidance of Risky Substances

It is well known that tobacco use and drinking too much alcohol increases the risk of many chronic diseases and death. People who are ready can and do quit smoking; there are more former smokers in the world now than there are current smokers. Some treatments work for alcohol abuse. Treatments often take time, different approaches and many attempts. Giving yourself patience as well as getting support from others is an important part of reaching your goals.

Effective Treatment Models

- Counseling
  - Individual, group, telephone
  - Many quick visits
  - Longer more intense visits
- Medications (anti-relapse)
- Counseling plus medication is more effective

Slips and relapses are normal and considered part of the change process. Goal setting, support and persistence is key!

Goals for Avoiding Risky Substances

Setting goals around substance use (tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs) is a great way to start making changes. An example of a goal is, “I will swap my morning cigarette with chewing gum at least 5 days this week for the next four weeks. I will ask my partner to help keep me on track and use the free texting service for more support.”

Specific - What are you going to do to decrease your substance use?

Measurable - How much will you reduce it by?

Attainable - Do you have what it takes to follow through?

Realistic - What can you actually do? (improvement over perfection)

Time-Connected - How frequent? How long will you commit?

Helpful Resources:

National Quit Link: 1-800-Quit-Now
SmokeFree.gov https://smokefree.gov/nami.org
NIAAA Alcohol Treatment Navigator alcoholtreatment.niaaa.nih.gov
American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry www.aap.org
American Psychological Association www.apa.org
American Society of Addiction Medicine www.asam.org
NAADAC Substance Abuse Professionals www.naadac.org
National Association of Social Workers www.helpstartshere.org

Substance Abuse Treatment Locator www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov
Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) www.aa.org
Moderation Management www.moderation.org
Secular Organizations for Sobriety www.sossoberity.org
SMART Recovery www.smartrecovery.org
Women for Sobriety www.womenforsobriety.org
Al-Anon Family Groups www.al-anon.alateen.org
Adult Children of Alcoholics www.adultchildren.org
www.psychologytoday.com/us

Guidelines:

Standard alcoholic drink in US:
- 12 oz beer
- 5 oz table wine
- 1.5 oz of 80-proof spirits

Typical Containers
- 750 mL wine = 5 drinks
- 750 mL spirits = 18 drinks
- 1 L spirits = 24 drinks

Low Risk Drinking Guides by National Institutes of Health

Men
- No more than 4 drinks on any day
- No more than 14 drinks in 7 days

Women
- No more than 3 drinks in any day
- No more than 7 drinks in 7 days

“Binge” Drinking is defined as:
- 5 drinks in 2 hours for men,
- 4 drinks in 2 hours for women.