Helping clients to stop smoking: a guide for staff working in community and social services

Quitline 13 7848

Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death and disease in Australia.[1]

The benefits of quitting are significant:
from increasing likelihood of achieving alcohol and other drug recovery goals,[2] immediately lowering risk of physical health problems,[3] improving mental health and wellbeing, [4,5] and less financial stress.

This guide provides information on how to deliver the most efficient and effective stop smoking intervention for your clients.

Brief advice combined with a behavioural intervention and stop smoking medications (such as nicotine replacement therapy), gives your client the best chance of stopping smoking.[6]

It is based on research evidence and is informed by consultations with health professionals and other experts in their field, including leaders in smoking cessation care.
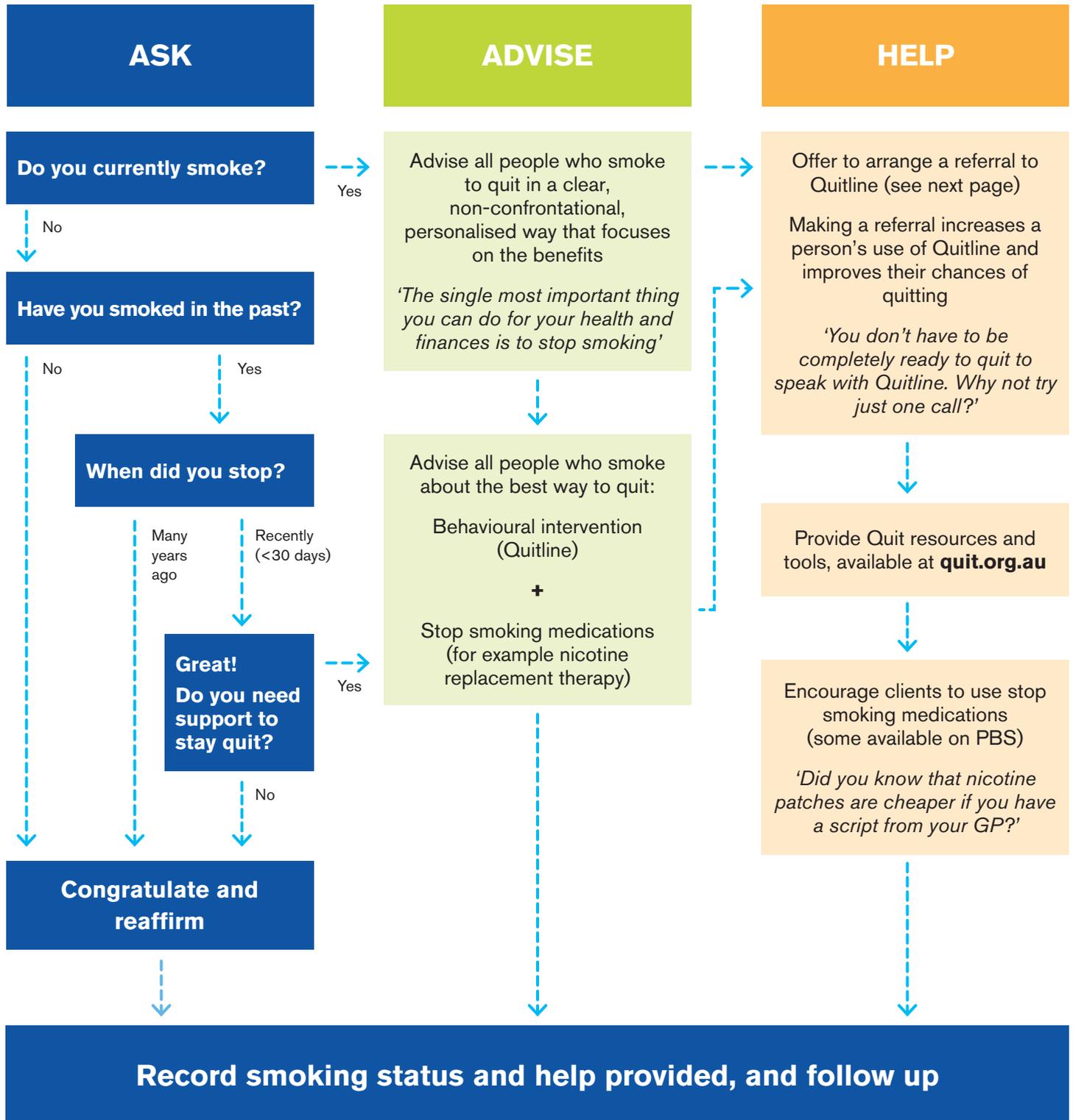
Embedding brief advice into routine practice

Most people who smoke want to quit, but only a small proportion use best practice interventions. Every conversation in which a staff member from a community and social service encourages a client to quit smoking, will increase the chances of that client making a successful quit attempt.

While some clients may be asked about smoking, few receive practical help. Quit worked with health professionals to develop the 3-step model (Ask, Advise, Help) overleaf. It can take as little as 3–5 minutes to deliver.

Smoking is one of the major contributors to social disadvantage and financial stress. People accessing community and social services experience a larger and unjust share of the financial, health and social consequences of tobacco use.[7,8,9]

Learn more at: quit.org.au/css

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3-step brief advice for smoking cessation

ASK	ADVISE	HELP

Do you currently smoke? — Yes →

Advise all people who smoke to quit in a clear, non-confrontational, personalised way that focuses on the benefits

'The single most important thing you can do for your health and finances is to stop smoking'

→ Offer to arrange a referral to Quitline (see next page)

Making a referral increases a person's use of Quitline and improves their chances of quitting

'You don't have to be completely ready to quit to speak with Quitline. Why not try just one call?'

No ↓

Have you smoked in the past?

No / Yes

When did you stop?

Many years ago / Recently (<30 days)

Great! Do you need support to stay quit? — Yes →

No ↓

Advise all people who smoke about the best way to quit:

Behavioural intervention (Quitline)

+

Stop smoking medications (for example nicotine replacement therapy)

Provide Quit resources and tools, available at **quit.org.au**

Encourage clients to use stop smoking medications (some available on PBS)

'Did you know that nicotine patches are cheaper if you have a script from your GP?'

Congratulate and reaffirm

Record smoking status and help provided, and follow up

Behavioural intervention

Refer to Quitline 13 7848

Quitline is a welcoming, confidential and effective telephone counselling service.[10] It provides ongoing tailored counselling to help people plan, make and sustain a quit attempt. Quitline will assess your client's smoking history, provide motivational interviewing and help your client develop a plan to stop smoking. Return calls are scheduled to encourage your client to set a quit date and to develop skills to manage the nicotine withdrawal period (day 1, day 3, day 7) and to maintain a smokefree lifestyle (approximately 14 days and 30 days quit). Quitline has tailored programs for people who are dependent on alcohol and other drugs, people living with a mental illness, pregnant women, and young people. Quitline also has Aboriginal Quitline counsellors available.

Making a referral to Quitline has a number of benefits:

☑ **Improves access to treatment** – one study found a 13-fold increase in the proportion of people enrolling in treatment compared to a health professional simply recommending that clients call Quitline.[11] Quitline will make multiple attempts to contact your client.

☑ **Reduces costs for your client** – it is a totally free service as Quitline calls the client.

☑ **Increases the chance of your client quitting.**[12,13]

☑ **You receive feedback** from Quitline on the outcome of your referral.

How to refer to Quitline

Referral is quick and easy. Use one of the following options:
- Download the Quitline referral form from **quit.org.au/referral** and fax to **1800 931 739**.
- Submit a secure online referral at **quit.org.au/referral**.

Encourage use of behavioural strategies

If the client declines the offer of a referral to Quitline, provide self-help material and encourage use of other evidence-based behavioural strategies, such as:

- **Customised self-help:**
  QuitCoach (web-based personalised program), **QuitTxt** (phone messaging help) and other client education tools and resources are available from **quit.org.au**

- **Self-help material:**
  This should be offered as a minimum during all brief advice conversations and includes:

- client resources, available from the **Quit website**

- the **Quit Because You Can booklet**, which guides a person to set a quit date, identify triggers and develop a quit plan

- an **appointment card** with the Quitline phone number and strategies to manage cravings, which is useful if the person has declined your offer of help.

Quit resources and training

Resources for your service

Quit has a range of resources developed in consultation with clients and service providers.

Resources include posters for display in services, reference cards for staff and brochures and wallet cards for clients.

Examples include:

- 4Ds Appointment Card
- My Quit Plan
- Quit Because You Can
- Stress Cycle of Smoking

Quit resources are available to download or order from: **quit.org.au/resource-order-form**

Brief advice training

Quit offers online training to support staff working in community and social services to deliver smoking cessation brief advice using Quit's 3-step **Ask, Advise, Help** model.

Visit
education.quit.org.au
to access Quit's training.

References

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Learn more at: quit.org.au/ccs