

**UIC Solutions Suite Webinar Series**  
**Transcript for webinar on Journeys to Quitting Smoking**  
**Recorded by Matthew Crilley**

Slide 1 (announcer)

Thank you for visiting the University of Illinois Chicago's Health & Recovery Solutions Suite. The following recording comes to you from the UIC Center on Integrated Health Care and Self-Directed Recovery. Visit our online Solutions Suite to obtain free tools that promote health, self-direction, and employment for the behavioral health field.

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Hello. My name is Matthew Crilley, and I work for the Collaborative Support Programs of New Jersey, and in collaboration with the UIC Center on Integrated Health Care and Self-Directed Recovery. This Center offers a Solutions Suite of free tools on health, self-direction, and employment for the behavioral health field. You can visit the Solutions Suite on the web site where you found this webinar at [www.center4healthandsdc.org](http://www.center4healthandsdc.org).

In this webinar, I'll discuss a manual called "Journeys to Quitting Smoking, Cutting Down, and Remaining Smoke-Free." This manual is one of the health tools that we offer in our Solutions Suite.

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I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge our sponsors. The contents of this manual were developed with funding from the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research, Administration for Community Living. The contents of this manual do not represent the policy of any federal agency, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal government.

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Additionally, I'd like to give a special thanks to Jeannine Baldomero for her assistance in developing this guide.

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There are several learning objectives for this webinar. First, we will explore the common factors for tobacco use among those with lived experience. Next, we will take a look at the purpose of the *Journeys to Quitting Smoking, Cutting Down, and Remaining Smoke-Free* guide. Additionally, we will break the guide down and take a look at its format and content. And finally, we will explore how the guide works and how to use it.

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Let's start by taking a look at the common reasons for smoking among those with behavioral health disorders. Individuals smoke for the following reasons: To manage troubling feelings, such as poor concentration, anxiety, low mood, and stress; to fit in or to facilitate socializing, which was especially true when faced with pressure from family or peers; to accompany drinking alcohol or going to bars, or when using drugs or other stimulants like caffeine; to control one's weight; and finally, to experience tactile benefits, such as the comfort or feel of holding a cigarette (which promoted cognitive focus) or using a cigarette as a sort of "fidget toy" for its calming effects.

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Here we include some other common factors among those who smoke. First, many smokers also deal with chronic physical conditions. Next, people can feel both better and worse during or after quitting. An additional factor is how common smoking cessation relapse can be, and how difficult it might be to try again for individuals. Finally, people can successfully cut back without quitting or before quitting.

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Next, let's look at what the smoking cessation guide actually is. This guide is a resource for both providers and people with behavioral health challenges who want to quit or reduce smoking, or for those interested in supporting others who are looking to quit or reduce smoking.

The guide features real-life examples of common issues among those with lived experience when trying to quit, cut down, or remain smoke-free.

Also included in this guide are effective strategies for reducing or quitting smoking.

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So, how does the guide work? In our guide, storytellers share examples from their own lives that illustrate research findings on smoking among people with behavioral health conditions. Each person's journey is highlighted and covered in detail, and includes what led them to start smoking and what helped them to reduce or quit smoking.

A "What's Next?" section helps people take steps towards reducing or quitting smoking if they choose to do so.

Also included is information for providers on using the Guide to help others that they're working with on their smoking cessation journey.

Finally, included is a list of smoking cessation resources.

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Now let's look at what we learned from our storytellers. We'll start with the factors that they associated with their desire to reduce smoking. These included: the potential for health risks, especially over time, or other long-term damage; the worsening of existing medical conditions; declining energy and stamina; becoming mindful or aware of the impact of smoking on others, including loved ones and the effect of smoke on pets; and finally, concerns about addictiveness.

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Now let's take a look at the strategies that storytellers shared to reduce their smoking habits.

First off, we have "start small." Participants had shared buying single cigarettes instead of whole packs or deciding to smoke weaker brands. Next on the list, we have using a nicotine patch or nicotine gum. Another strategy shared was to avoid situations or stressors that would be associated with smoking for the individual. Finding new and meaningful activities to distract from cravings was also a method shared. Additionally, storytellers shared the idea of structuring smoking breaks in order to limit their nicotine intake. And finally, giving yourself grace during set-backs and being willing to try again.

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Let's look at some of the direct quotes from our storytellers.

Mira shares: You shouldn't put pressure on yourself in those first few weeks. It's more like, I have to do what I have to do to get by, and then, improvements will come later when you stop looking for them.

Jamila states: I don't want my smoking to jeopardize the health of my cats and dogs.

John affirms: It's very difficult, but don't give up trying.

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Moving on, let's take another look at what we learned from our storytellers. This time, we're going to focus on the factors associated with their desire to quit smoking. These factors included: the high cost or price of cigarettes; the development of smoking-related illnesses; the inability to engage in desired physical activities such as exercising; the unpleasantness of smoking and the risks to others that could lead to reduced social interactions; and finally, the loss of loved ones to smoking-related illnesses.

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To go alongside this, we've included the strategies that storytellers shared to quit smoking. These included: Learning more about the possible health risks from smoking; using "quit smoking" medications or gum; either planning for or making enjoyable purchases with the money saved by quitting smoking; getting support from family, friends, peers, or religious community members; developing personal strategies or "quit plans" for managing cravings and stopping – and it's important to note that, for this particular strategy, what works for each person will differ.

We include some personal strategies that were shared, and those included: switching tasks frequently to manage cravings; listening to music or podcasts while performing tasks instead of smoking; walking outside to help release tension; and substituting smoking with activities that the person enjoys, which might be reading, playing an instrument, or watching or listening to something enjoyable. And one final strategy that storytellers shared to quit smoking was to remain persistent even when set-backs occurred.

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Let's take a look at some more direct quotes from our storytellers that help to highlight these ideas.

Anne reflects: Even though it's hard, don't give up. Because if I can do it, anyone can do it.

Joanne encourages: It's always possible to quit. And just because you cut down on Monday, but went back to a full pack on Wednesday, don't beat yourself up! You can always start again!

Miguel shares: It was a supportive environment and a commitment to my friend that made the difference. Talk to your doctor. Talk to anybody that can help you, because there is help out there.

Peggy advises: You can be successful if you just keep trying different strategies that work for you.

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Now, let's take a look at the "What's Next" section. This section offers guided questions to help individuals explore the following: their desire to cut back versus quitting smoking; their current stage of change, which may be "considering," "planning," or "acting;" one's personal reasons for

smoking; the unique challenges to quitting; the strengths or qualities to draw on for success; and finally, a feasible next step.

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If you're an individual with behavioral health challenges, you might consider using the guide in one of the following ways. You could read the stories for inspiration and new ideas. You can learn about the unique issues that people with behavioral health challenges face around smoking and realize that you are not alone. You could take the time to complete the "What's Next" section to identify your strengths, and potential next steps for reducing or quitting smoking. Finally, you can use the resources on the Conclusion page to support your own journey.

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If you're a service provider, or a supporter of someone who smokes, you might consider using the guide in one of the following ways. You could read the guide for inspiration and strategies to help others. You can use it to learn about the unique aspects of smoking and quitting for people with behavioral health disorders. You can identify quit-smoking referrals and resources in your community. You can make note of people who smoke among those you serve or support. And finally, you can explore who is, or who might be, interested in learning more about smoking cessation, reading this guide, and/or working on reducing or quitting smoking habits.

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Building on this, for those who express interest, support them in reading the guide at their own pace. Help the person to identify their own motivations for smoking and what they would like, their personal challenges or barriers to quitting, and the strengths that they have that they can draw upon for success. Consider assisting the person in completing the "What's Next" section. Connect them to helpful resources. And, finally, offer non-judgmental support, especially during set-backs.

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Here we include some tips and ideas for using our guide in a group setting. For starters, you could review the guide in a pre-existing health or wellness group. If you don't already have a health or wellness group, you could start a new smoking cessation group using the content from the guide. The outline for such a group may look like the following. Devoting 1-2 sessions to reviewing common reasons for smoking, and then, encouraging group discussion after. Using subsequent sessions to review personal stories and discussing what feels familiar or different. Taking time to complete the "What's Next" section together as a group. And lastly, you could suggest using a buddy system with group members for both accountability and support.

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We hope you've enjoyed hearing about our smoking cessation guide. If you're interested in trying this free resource, please visit the link below. If you still have questions after this webinar, you can ask for free technical assistance, which is offered on a time-limited basis through the UIC Center. To use this, click on the "Free Technical Assistance" button on the "Journeys to Quitting Smoking" page of our web site.

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(announcer) Thank you for listening. You can obtain additional Solutions Suite recordings, or download a transcript, by visiting the Center's web site.