

Be a Friend: Supporting Loved Ones in Quitting Tobacco

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If they are not ready yet:

- Start gentle conversations. Look for natural openings.
- Ask open-ended, curious questions instead of giving advice.
- Avoid lecturing or judging. It leads to hiding smoking, not quitting.

If they are preparing to quit:

- Reflect on your relationship dynamic. Do you tend to criticize or fight about smoking? Try to increase compassion.
- Ask how you can best support them.
- Clear the places you go of smoking cues: ashtrays, lighters, etc.
- Encourage them to pursue nicotine replacement therapy along with counseling, which can improve success rates.

If they have recently quit:

- Remember that quitting is hard; the first few weeks will be the hardest.
- Be prepared to help them tackle irritability and cravings.
- Reinforce their new identity: They're a nonsmoker now.
- Help them to keep busy and distract them from cravings.
- Remember the 5 Ds: distract, delay, deep breathe, drink water, and dose (taking a dose of a nicotine replacement).

If they have a slip:

- Lead with compassion, not criticism or judgment.
- Normalize slips. They're part of the process.
- Encourage them to find what they can learn from it.

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