Counseling Patients To Quit

Effective smoking cessation counseling can be divided into practical and supportive counseling advice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practical counseling advice (problemsolving/skills training)</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Recognize danger situations.** Identify events, internal states, or activities that increase the risk of smoking or relapse. | - Negative affect  
- Being around other smokers  
- Drinking alcohol  
- Experiencing urges  
- Being under time pressure |
| **Develop coping skills.** Identify and practice coping or problem-solving skills. Typically, these skills are intended to cope with danger situations. | - Learning to anticipate and avoid temptation  
- Learning cognitive strategies that will reduce negative moods  
- Accomplishing lifestyle changes that reduce stress, improve quality of life, or produce pleasure  
- Learning cognitive and behavioral activities to cope with smoking urges (e.g., distracting attention) |
| **Provide basic information.** Provide basic information about smoking and successful quitting. | - Any smoking (even a single puff) increases the likelihood of full relapse  
- Withdrawal typically peaks within 1-3 weeks after quitting  
- Withdrawal symptoms include negative mood, urges to smoke, and difficulty concentrating  
- Smoking is addictive |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supportive counseling advice</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Encourage the patient in the quit attempt.** | - Communicate belief in the patient's ability to quit  
- Note that effective tobacco dependence treatments are now available  
- Note that half of all people who have ever smoked have now quit |
| **Communicate caring and concern.** | - Ask how the patient feels about quitting  
- Directly express concern and willingness to help  
- Be open to the patient's expression of fears of quitting, difficulties experienced, and ambivalent feelings |
| **Encourage the patient to talk about the quitting process.** | Ask about:  
- Reasons the patient wants to quit  
- Concerns or worries about quitting  
- Success the patient has achieved  
- Difficulties encountered while quitting |