

# The Preparation Connection

Lesson Plans

## Session 6

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## Session Theme: Getting Ready

### Materials

- Pens
- Paper
- Yarn
- Large rubber band
- 10 Styrofoam or paper cups
- Index cards
- Personal Plans for Success

### General Resources

- (Resource 1.11) Attendance Sheet
- (Resource 1.31) Reminder Notices
- (Resource 6.9) Effective Communication
- (Resource 6.10) Getting Support
- (Resource 6.11) Think Quick Choices
- (Resource 6.12) Making Decisions
- (Resource 6.14) It's Your Loss Scenarios
- (Resource 6.15) What If Cards
- (Resource 6.17) What If Scenarios

### Handouts

- (Handout 6.13) It's Your Loss

### Personal Plan Processing Pages

- (Page 1) My Personal Goal-Setting Plan

## Overview

Session 6 of Project CONNECT® emphasizes the importance of planning and preparation in making a change. It examines the role that effective communication plays in the decisions to change one's nicotine habits. The session assists participants in identifying difficult situations and effective problem-solving techniques. Finally, Session 6 explores the importance of identifying and utilizing a support network throughout the quitting process.

## Session Goals

- Help participants prepare to make a change
- Discuss the importance of effective communication throughout the process
- Help participants identify a support network
- Discuss the importance that support people play in helping participants through the process
- Discuss the concept of decision making
- Identify difficult situations and understand problem-solving techniques
- Establish goals for upcoming week

## Participant Performance Objectives

During Session 6 participants will:

- become more prepared to make a change;
- learn the components of effective communication;
- learn to identify a support network;
- practice assertiveness and refusal skills in specific social situations; and
- establish goals for the upcoming week.

## Preparation

For "A Little Help from My Friend" activity, cut string into 2-foot pieces. Tie six pieces of string to a rubber band, spacing them as evenly apart as possible. You will finish with a rubber band with six pieces of string attached to it. (It should look like a sun with six sun rays going out in all directions). Cut out the *What If Cards*.

## Introduction

*“Today we are going to begin Session 6 of Project CONNECT®. During our last session, we discussed the importance of making healthy lifestyle choices that include healthy eating and physical activity. We also explored ways you can become more resistant to stress. Today’s session will focus on a few additional skills that will help you manage and even prevent stress, including good decision-making and communication skills, as well as building support networks and asking for help when you need it. All of these skills will also help better prepare you to make a change in your nicotine use.”*

### ACTIVITY 1: Your Information (3 minutes)

Materials Needed: Attendance Sheet (Resource 1.11)

1. Ask the participants specific questions about their nicotine use.
2. Record participants’ answers on the **Attendance Sheet (Resource 1.11)**.

## Facilitation Questions

- Has anyone in the group made changes in their nicotine use since last session?
- Has anyone used their nicotine tracking sheets?
- Did you notice anything about the people, places, or times you were using?
- Did anyone try a stress management technique or a mindfulness practice? If so, how did it work?
- If you set a goal last week, were you able to achieve it? Why or why not?

### ACTIVITY 2: You’re Making a Connection: A Little Help from My Friends

(10 minutes) Materials Needed: Large rubber band, Pieces of string or twine (one piece for each group member), 10 to 20 Styrofoam or paper cups (10 cups per team)

1. Divide your group into smaller groups of six (or as close to this as possible). Give each group a stack of 10 Styrofoam or paper cups and one of the rubber band/string implements that you have prepared.
2. Place the cups on the table, spread out and upside down.
3. Challenge the group to build a pyramid out of the cups (four on the bottom, three on the next row, then two and finally one on the top). Group members may not touch the cups with their hands, or any other part of their bodies for that matter, even if a cup falls on the floor.
4. Each person should hold on to one of the strings attached to the rubber band, and the group then uses this device to pick up the cups and place them on top of each other by pulling the rubber band apart and then bringing it back together over the cups. If there are fewer than six people on any team, some team members may have to hold more than one string.

### Facilitation Questions

- Was anyone frustrated at all during this activity? If so, how was it handled?
- Why was communication so important for this activity?
- Did you feel that the group communicated well? Why or why not?
- Could you have completed this activity on your own? Why or why not?
- Are you ever in a situation where you have to look for others for help?
- Did your team do any planning before they started this activity?
- How would planning have impacted the way you solved this problem?

### Notes for the facilitator:

The key to this activity is getting participants to realize that all members of a team need to work together and communicate effectively for this to work correctly. If each member of the team pulls their string at the same time, it will allow the rubber band to be pulled open wide enough to fit around the cup. As members release the tension on their string, the rubber band will be taut around the cup, and they should be able to move it easily. If you notice that groups are struggling, feel free to assist them in what they will need to do to complete this successfully. If the group is still struggling, feel free to stop the activity and process.

*“In the last session, we discussed the role that stress plays in the quitting process. If one of your major stressors is communicating with your family, teachers or friends, chances are if you improve your communication skills, you will be able to improve these relationships and reduce your stress.”*

### Connection point:

Communication is much more than just the exchange of words. It is what we say, how we say it, why we say it when we say it and even what we don't say.

## ACTIVITY 3: The Communication Connection (10 minutes)

Materials Needed: Index cards, Effective Communication (Resource 6.9)

1. Ask participants to describe what it means to be an effective communicator.
2. Using the **Effective Communication document (Resource 6.9)**, discuss the skills that make communication effective, including eye contact, nonverbal cues and listening.
3. Explain that people often react in one of three ways—passively, assertively, or aggressively. Discuss the three categories of communication.
4. Tell them that you are going to read them a situation and you want them to think about how they would react if the situation happened to them.
5. Choose one of the two scenarios and read it aloud to the group. If you don't think either scenario would work for your group, allow them to come up with one of their own.

### Communication Scenario 1

It is Friday morning, and you are meeting one of your friends before school. You have just recently quit using nicotine. It has been only about a week since the last time you used any nicotine product. Before you quit, you always met in this same spot to light up one more time before school. When you get there, your friend takes out a cigarette/cigar and starts to light up. Seeing someone else use has always been a major trigger for you. Your friend knows that you quit using and that you are committed to keeping it that way. What will you do/say?

### Communication Scenario 2

You've been nicotine-free for a few weeks. It's been really hard, but you are proud of yourself and starting to feel better. You think you can handle being at a party where you know people will be vaping. Shortly after arriving you are standing around with some people and the vapor is starting to trigger you. You decide you need to walk away and let the group know you are trying to quit and all that vapor is making it hard. Someone comments, "Oh please, you vape more than any of us. You know you can't quit." What will you do/say?

6. Ask participants to quietly write a few sentences on their index card describing what they would do. Allow about three minutes. Then ask participants to form three groups based on the following criteria:

#### Group 1

*"Anyone who wrote something that reflects a belief that they would be passive (for example, just stand there while your friend is smoking and say nothing or ignore the comment) please move to this end of the room."*

#### Group 2

*"Anyone who wrote something that reflects an aggressive approach (for example, get angry and yell at your friend for being so insensitive) stand over this side of the room."*

#### Group 3

*"Anyone who wrote something that reflects a belief that they would react assertively (for example, speak calmly and ask the friend not to use the product in front of you or respond to your friend who doubted your ability to quit by saying: I know it is hard to believe that I really quit, but I finally found something that worked. I will still need all the support that I can get) form a group in the middle."*

7. Allow five minutes for discussion in the three groups. Now ask everyone to return to the large group.
8. Explain how each of these styles would be expressed in terms of nonverbal and verbal communication.
9. Explain that teens often feel pressured to use nicotine with certain individuals or in certain situations even when they are trying to quit or cut down. Practicing refusal skills has proven helpful to teens when dealing with these situations.
10. Have participants practice assertive responses to this situation. Emphasize that they should try to respond using an assertive voice and consistent body language.
11. If time permits, have participants practice assertive responses to various pressure lines.
12. Process with the group.

### Sample Pressure Phrases

- "Hey, do you want a smoke/vape/dip?"
- "What's the big deal? You can use just once, can't you?"
- "Just have it. You'll never be able to quit anyway."
- "You looked stressed out. Maybe you should start using again."

### Facilitation Questions

- Can you think of circumstances where passive or aggressive communication may be in your best interest?
- Have you behaved aggressively in some situation? How did it work out? How would things have been different if you had chosen an assertive response?
- Have you behaved assertively in a situation? How did it work out?
- How will effective communication that includes assertiveness help you as you begin to change your nicotine habits?



*“One of the keys to finding success in the quitting process is identifying and utilizing a support network. By improving your communication skills, you can find ways to let your friends and family know that you are changing your use of nicotine and may need their support and encouragement. Let’s look at who is in your support network and how they can assist you through this process.”*

## ACTIVITY 4: Your Support Network (5 minutes)

Materials Needed: Getting Support (Resource 6.10)

1. Using the **Getting Support document (Resource 6.10)**, discuss the importance of support networks.
2. Ask participants to think of a time when they faced a challenging situation and when they felt supported by a friend, family member or trusted adult. Ask them to think to about what that person did that made them feel supported.
3. Have participants identify people who are part of their support network. If they struggle to find enough supportive people in their life, remind them that you and the others in the group are there to help—that is the whole point of the group! Also point out other adults and counselors at the school who might be good options.

### Facilitation Questions

- How can the people in your support network help you through this process?
- Would you feel comfortable asking them for help? Why or why not?
- What would you do if someone asked for your help to quit using nicotine?
- Besides knowing who will support you, do you know the people who won’t be as supportive? How will you handle that?

*“Although you have now identified a support network who can be there to provide support, encouragement and guidance through this process, there will be times when you will have to problem solve and make some decisions on your own.”*

## ACTIVITY 5: Think Quick (5 minutes)

Materials Needed: Think Quick Choices (Resource 6.11)

1. Explain to participants that they will be presented with a series of choices.
2. Depending on what they choose and where you point, they should either stand up or remain seated.
3. Demonstrate how this will work by saying, *“For example, I will ask if you would rather have X (point up, meaning stand up) or Y (point down, meaning remain seated).”*
4. Read the **Think Quick Choices (Resource 6.11)**. Participants must make decisions immediately.
5. Process with group.

### Facilitation Questions

- Did the choices become more difficult toward the end? Why?
- Do you always have to make decisions this quickly?
- What types of decisions require more thought?

*“We make decisions every day. Some are very easy to make, but others are more involved and require more thought. The decision to change your use of nicotine can be a difficult one. Let’s look at some of the decisions you may have to make when it comes to using nicotine and quitting.”*

### Notes to the facilitator:

Knowing what to do and actually doing it are two different things. Although planning for challenging situations is critical, it is also important to put some of these plans into practice. Both of the following activities will allow participants to examine the decision-making process firsthand. The first activity emphasizes how addiction impacts decision making for nicotine users. The second activity allows participants to practice refusal, assertiveness and problem-solving skills related to real-life situations that they may face during the quitting process. If time permits, you may want to have participants complete both activities.

## ACTIVITY 6: It’s Your Loss (10 minutes)

Materials Needed: It’s Your Loss (Handout 6.13), It’s Your Loss Scenarios (Resource 6.14)

1. Distribute **It’s Your Loss (Handout 6.13)**.
2. Explain to participants that they will fill in the 12 squares with a word or two to identify the following:
  - Three important people in their lives
  - Three favorite activities
  - Three goals for the future
  - Three favorite possessions
3. Explain to participants that you are going to read them some scenarios. After you complete each **It’s Your Loss Scenarios (Resource 6.14)**, they will be asked to make a decision. They will have 10 seconds to make the decision, and all decisions are final.
4. Once they make a decision, the participants must cross out that particular square. Read the scenarios out loud to participants. After each part, pause for 10 seconds before announcing that time is up. Then continue to read the story. Remind participants that nothing bad happens to these people, places, or things. They are simply removed from their life temporarily.
5. If they have followed the directions correctly, participants will be left with four squares (one goal for the future, one important person, one possession and one activity). Go around the room and randomly cross out three squares from each participant. Do not let the participants choose which square will be left over.
6. Process with group.

### Facilitation Questions

- How did you feel when I asked you to cross out things from each category?
- How did you feel about the decisions you made? Why?
- Which were the most difficult for you to make?
- How did it feel to have three of the four things you had left crossed out? Were you surprised by the square you had left at the end?
- If you were to do this activity again, would you choose to have different squares at the end?
- How can an activity like this help you when you are making decisions about changing your use of nicotine?
- What does this activity say about addiction and how it affects the decision-making process?

**Notes for the facilitator:**

Explain to participants that you do not know which of the last four remaining squares are most important to them. Addiction is not concerned about what matters most to you. With addiction, a person is no longer in control of his/her decisions, and it often robs people of what is most important to them.

**ACTIVITY 7: What If** (10 minutes)

Materials Needed: Making Decisions (Resource 6.12), What If Cards (Resource 6.15), What If Scenarios (Resource 6.17)

1. Using the **Making Decisions document (Resource 6.12)**, discuss the ways in which we make decisions.
2. Have participants discuss how they make decisions.
3. Split the participants into groups and distribute several **What If Cards (Resource 6.15)** to each.
4. The participants are to look at the consequences of each scenario and come up with the best solutions for each.
5. Each group will be given pencils and paper to write down their brainstorming sessions and each possible solution. After five minutes of group work, the participants will present their scenario and solution to the group.
6. The group presenting will conclude by fielding questions from the participants and facilitator.
7. If there is not enough time to complete the full activity, the facilitator can choose a few scenarios from the **What If Scenarios (Resource 6.17)**.

**ACTIVITY 8: Setting Your Goal** (2 minutes)

Materials Needed: My Personal Goal-Setting Plan (page 1)

1. Have participants go to page 1 of their Personal Plan for Success (**My Personal Goal-Setting Plan**).
2. Ask participants to take a step toward reaching their ultimate goal by setting a mini goal.
3. Participants will work on this mini goal over the course of the week and report back at the beginning of the next session.
4. Remind participants of the SMART model of goal setting. This should be a specific manageable goal that they will be able to achieve, is realistic and has a time limit.

**Possible Goal:** Build a support network. Let friends and family know that you are trying to quit or reduce your use. Tell them what you need from them and ask them to be patient with you if you are a bit moodier than usual.

**Cool Down Questions**

**“What” question** Would you describe your typical communication style with others as passive, assertive or aggressive?

**“So what” question** What are some decisions you might need to make when trying to quit where you will need to be assertive with others?

**“Now what” question** How will your communication style with those in your support network impact your success when trying to change your nicotine use?



## Activity 9: Mindfulness Practice – Lemon Imagery (3 minutes)

Materials Needed: None

For this practice, you can sit or you can stand. Get into a comfortable position with your back relatively straight, your body relaxed.

1. Imagine that you're in your kitchen, you're standing in front of a counter, and on the counter there is a cutting board, there is a lemon and there is a knife.
2. Pick up the lemon, walk over to the sink, turn on the water and wash the lemon.
3. The water is cool, and feel it against your hand, turn the water off, take a paper towel, dry the lemon, really feel the towel in your hand, feel the lemon and then walk back to where the cutting board is lying on the counter.
4. Put the lemon down on the cutting board, keep one hand on your lemon and pick up the knife in your other hand.
5. Feel the weight of the knife in your hand, it's a little heavy because it's a hefty knife, and now keeping one hand on the lemon take your knife and slice the lemon in half.
6. When you slice through that lemon, a little bit of lemon juice squirts out and you feel it on your hand, and it's cold.
7. Now you've got half of the lemon in one hand, I want you to put that half down on the counter on top of the cutting board and I want you to cut through it again.
8. A little more lemon juice squirts out and now you've got a wedge of lemon. Put your knife down on the counter, take the wedge of lemon and I want you to put it up just under your nose and take a deep breath in.
9. Now take a bit out of that lemon—did anything happen, did your mouth water or did it pucker up?
10. If like so many people your mouth watered or you puckered up just thinking about that lemon then you just had a mind-body response.

### Facilitation Questions

- If just thinking about a lemon can make your mouth pucker, can you imagine how thinking about other things affects our bodies too?
- Take a minute to reflect on other ways that your mind changes your body. When you're about to speak in public, do you get butterflies in your stomach? Or maybe your hands sweat a little bit? Or maybe your knees shake? When you're stressed out or upset, do you get a stomachache? Or a headache? See if you can make more connections like these and remember the importance of the mind-body connection. How can this help while you are making changes to your nicotine use? When you are having a craving for example, how can the way you think impact how your body reacts in that moment?