

Health Promotion / Wellness / Psychosocial

Smoking or Vaping Cessation Programs in the Workplace

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Should a workplace consider offering a smoking or vaping cessation program?

Workplaces may wish to offer or provide access to cessation programs as part of their overall workplace health program to help people who wish to stop smoking or vaping.

When considering a cessation program, what should an organization do?

As with most workplace policies, be sure to consider the following:

- Conduct an assessment, survey, or gather opinions from workers to determine interest and motivation to participate in a cessation program sponsored by the workplace.
- Collect opinions and suggestions about the type of cessation program attendees would like to take.
- Determine if there is any possible resistance.
- Distribute informational e-mails or brochures, publish articles in company newsletters, or give presentations. In any case, the goal is to inform all workers that the organization is offering a cessation program as part of the overall workplace health program.
- Address any concerns that are raised openly and honestly.

- Inform everyone that participation is optional.
- Determine when and where the cessation program should be offered, and attempt to prevent barriers to participation.
- Consider offering the cessation program to family members as well.

Quitting smoking or vaping requires the development of new habits and a new lifestyle. The most helpful programs will use evidence-based techniques to guide people through habit change. Long-term support is often needed.

What are some common elements of a cessation program?

Common elements of smoking or vapour cessation programs include:

- Self-service information
- Self-help
- Health coaches
- Professional medical assistance
- Individual counselling
- Nicotine replacement therapy (such as nicotine gum, inhalers, patches)
- Prescription medications
- Creating a supportive environment

How the workplace manages the program and how involved the workplace is up to the organization and attendees to decide. The organization may wish to include access to programs, healthcare professionals, or nicotine replacement therapy in their benefits, or hire an external company to conduct sessions.

What are the pros and cons of these approaches?

There are three basic approaches to cessation support in the workplace. The chart below compares the pros and cons of each approach. To achieve the highest success, all three approaches should be introduced with activities incorporated into a broader wellness initiative.

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Approach	Pros	Cons
Comprehensive: Offering programs and activities at the workplace	- More accessible. - More flexible (e.g., can be offered at various times to accommodate shift and other workers). - Can be tailored to target the workplace or hard-to-reach groups. - Supports ex-smokers. - Can provide follow-up and support. - Can integrate cessation supports into existing workplace wellness initiatives. - Can build on existing tobacco control policies.	- Costs, in terms of financial and human resources. - Group programs may not suit all workers. - Extensive training may be required. - Does not allow for anonymity. - May not accommodate different levels of addiction and readiness to quit.
Facilitated: Working with outside agencies to deliver programs and activities off-site, and providing self-help materials	- Offers anonymity. - Workers can select the options that work best for them. - Some communities have a variety of options to choose from and many resources (especially larger centres).	- Less easy to tailor to specific workplace needs. - Costs. - Finding acceptable options may be difficult.
Education and Information:	- Low cost. - Better than no support at all if this is all that can be done.	The quit rates are lower for self-help.

Approach	Pros	Cons
Providing workers with information including self-help materials	- Offers anonymity. - Good option for highly motivated persons.	- Education and information is not enough to change behaviour. - Lacks ongoing support. - Workers may not feel they are able to quit successfully on their own and this can be a barrier to action. - Follow-up is not possible.

Adapted from: Health Canada, 2008. [Smoking Cessation in the Workplace: A Guide to Helping Your Employees Quit Smoking](#).

What are some considerations when implementing the cessation program?

When implementing a cessation program, consider:

- Type of Support – Where possible, provide a range of supports to accommodate differing needs (such as a smokers' helpline, one-on-one counselling, group counselling, peer support, medications, self-help, nicotine replacement therapy, etc.). Also, consider the attendees' personalities and learning styles.
- Readiness to quit - Recognize that not all people who smoke are at the same stage of the stop smoking process. Provide at least one support option for each stage of readiness to quit.
- Location and time – Is the program offered at times and at a location that is convenient to those attending?
- Cost – Is the program provided free of charge, or is there a cost?
- Extended reach – Will the program be extended to include support for the attendees' immediate family members to support them in cessation?
- Other types of support – Is there a need to provide information about stress management, physical activity and nutrition?

- Monitor the program's progress and feedback - Is there a mechanism to collect feedback? How will the program be reviewed and improvements made as needed?
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