

Talking to Tobacco Users on Campus



It can be intimidating to approach a stranger and begin a conversation about their tobacco use, but research shows that advising individuals to quit using tobacco increases their chances of a future quit attempt. Take comfort knowing that while they may not want to take action at that moment, a simple conversation with them will increase their likelihood of success in the future.

You can use motivational interviewing techniques such as asking open-ended questions and normalizing feelings and concerns together with a brief intervention called, “Ask, Advise, Refer” with anyone you encounter on campus or in your life. The following are some sample scripts you can use as you talk to people on campus about the Great American Smokeout and their own tobacco use.

Things You Can Say

Hello! Today is the Great American Smokeout; quit tobacco for just one day and increase your chance of quitting for good in the future!

Do you use tobacco such as cigarettes, vape, or hookah?

Would you like to take a quit kit?

How important do you think it is for you to quit using tobacco?

Have you tried quitting in the past?

I hear you saying you are not ready to quit smoking right now. The student health center will be here to help when you are ready.

Quitting is the best thing you can do for your health.

The Helpline can help you with a plan to quit using tobacco. It's free and can double your chances of quitting.

The California Smokers' Helpline is a free quitline where you can talk to a counselor on the phone about quitting tobacco. They can help you make a quit plan and provide support along the way. Their number is 1-800-NO-BUTTS. Would you like me to get you a brochure?

[If your campus has a smoke or tobacco-free policy] We want to change the norm of tobacco use and create a healthy environment so our whole campus is smoke and tobacco-free. Please do not use tobacco products while on campus.