



# The Preparation Connection

## Lesson Plans





## Session 6

# The Preparation Connection

### 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*

## 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 1.9) Attendance Sheet
- (Resource 1.30) Reminder Notices
- (Resource 6.8) Effective Communication
- (Resource 6.9) Getting Support
- (Resource 6.10) Think Quick Choices
- (Resource 6.11) Making Decisions
- (Resource 6.13) It's Your Loss Scenarios
- (Resource 6.14) What If Cards
- (Resource 6.16) What If Scenarios

### Handouts

---

- (Handout 6.12) It's Your Loss

### Personal Plan Processing Pages

---

- (Page 1) My Personal Goal-Setting Plan

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 1.9)

---

1. Ask the participants specific questions about their nicotine use.
2. Record participants' answers on the **Attendance Sheet (Resource 1.9)**.

#### Facilitation Question

- 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? 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 his 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 6.8)

1. Ask participants to describe what it means to be an effective communicator.
2. Using the **Effective Communication document (Resource 6.8)**, 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. Read the following scenario aloud:

**Communication Scenario**

It is Friday morning, and you are picking up your best friend on the way to school. You have just recently quit using nicotine. It has been only about a week since the last time you used any nicotine product. Your friend gets in the car. As you are about to drive away, your friend takes out a cigarette and is about to light it. You spent last weekend cleaning out your car so there would be nothing that triggered you to want to use. Driving in a car itself has always been a major trigger for you, and having your car completely nicotine free for the past week has really helped. Your best friend knows that you quit using and that you are committed to keeping it that way. What will you do?

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 drive to school and say nothing) 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 the car) 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 one, 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 6.9)

1. Using the **Getting Support document (Resource 6.9)**, discuss the importance of support networks.