

# Scripting/Role-Playing Exercises

These scripts are intended to help staff become more comfortable discussing the tobacco-free environment policy with other staff, visitors, and patients in a respectful and supportive manner. You should take time during a staff meeting to share this information with your employees and conduct actual role-playing exercises.

**Encourage employees to:**

- Be empathetic. The three to five minutes you spend with a person struggling with their need for tobacco could help their craving dissipate.
- Use common sense in every situation.
- Remember that the encounter should be supportive, not punitive.
- Share information about the hospital policy in a non-judgmental way.

“Care Kits” that provide support materials like gum, mints, a stress stick, rubber band, and a coupon for a small beverage could be available when the policy goes into effect and can be offered to those visitors having a difficult time or undergoing a stressful situation.

## OUTDOOR ENCOUNTERS

If you see a person using tobacco products on hospital property, introduce yourself and say, “Excuse me Sir/Ma’am, I just wanted to let you know that for the health and safety of our patients, visitors, and employees, all of our grounds and parking areas are tobacco-free. If you wish to continue your tobacco use, you will have to leave the hospital grounds. Thank you.”

**Why are you making me leave hospital property?**

“For your health and the health of others, we are a tobacco-free campus. Many of our patients who come to this hospital have cancer or respiratory problems, and their health is affected by secondhand smoke. We feel we should be providing them an environment free from the impact of secondhand smoke.”

**Can I (staff) use tobacco in my vehicle?**

“The policy states no staff member is to use tobacco products in their vehicle on hospital property or on company time.”

**Can I (visitor) use tobacco in my vehicle?**

“We ask that you would respect our policy and not use tobacco products while on our property.”

**What are you going to do if I continue to smoke here?**

“Tobacco use is not permitted on the hospital property. Please extinguish your cigarette.” (Then walk away). If this behavior continues, notify Security.

**I have to have a cigarette! My loved one is very ill or just passed away.**

“I am sorry about your loved one. Is there something I can do to help? I can offer you a “Care Kit” to help you through this stressful time. Can I find someone who can assist you?”

**If you are a smoker, you may choose to show more empathy because you truly understand the impact of not being able to smoke.**

*"I understand your frustration. Our tobacco-free policy has required me to make some changes too. I'm sorry this is causing you additional stress. Although I must still ask you to extinguish and discard your cigarette, if you are interested I'd be happy to tell you about an option that is available to support you while you are on our campus."*

## **SCHEDULERS AND REGISTRATION**

These scripts can be used when patients call to schedule an appointment or when they arrive at Patient Registration.

*"I'd like to let you know that as of (date), ABC Hospital is now a tobacco-free campus. Tobacco products are not allowed on any property, grounds or parking areas. If during your hospital stay you need support, a "Care Kit" and Nicotine Replacement Therapy and other quit aids are available to all patients with physician approval."*

## **UNIT SITUATIONS**

**Where am I (patient) allowed to smoke (use tobacco)?**

*"Nowhere on our hospital grounds. We have implemented a tobacco-free campus policy as of (date). If you feel that following this policy will be too difficult, we can discuss this with your doctor who can order a Nicotine Replacement Therapy or other quit aid to help you during your hospital stay. This may help the cravings."*

If appropriate, you can also add, *"We also have information about smoking cessation classes available for you if you are interested."*

**Someone from the hospital took me out to use tobacco when I was here last time, why can't I go outside now?**

*"Since your last visit, we have become a tobacco-free environment. In an effort to promote the health and safety of our patients, visitors and employees, we no longer permit the use of tobacco products on our property."*

**Staff believes that patient is using tobacco in the bathroom.**

*"For the health and safety of our patients and visitors, we are a tobacco-free environment inside and outside. I can place your cigarettes in safe keeping until you are discharged. I can also contact your physician for nicotine replacement therapy or other quit aids that may help with cravings."*

**The patient insists on using tobacco and wants to leave.**

*"The use of tobacco is prohibited throughout our campus, and you will likely be approached while using tobacco outside and asked to stop. Also, I will need to notify your physician that you left the unit to use tobacco against policy and medical advice."*

**I have heard that you can get really sick after quitting tobacco.**

*"It sounds like you have heard different things about quitting tobacco. This is what I know about nicotine withdrawal: you can become irritable, become tired, begin to cough, have an increase in your appetite, and crave tobacco. We have nicotine replacement products or other quit aids to help you control nicotine cravings."*

## HOSPITAL STAFF/CO-WORKER

A co-worker tells you he or she cannot refrain from using tobacco products during the work day and is going to leave the campus to smoke.

*"When you choose to leave for an extended period of time to smoke, it impacts all of us, and has a negative effect on patient care. Why don't you try getting one of those "Care Kits" that are available for employees through Employee Health. Nicotine Replacement Therapy or other pharmacological aids may also work to control your cravings."*

## SURGERY WAITING ROOM

Family member or visitor wants to go outside to use tobacco products while waiting for a person in surgery.

*"I am sorry but our property, grounds, and parking areas are tobacco-free. If you choose to leave the campus, you may miss the opportunity to speak to the physician regarding your loved one's condition. We can provide you with a "Care Kit" to make your visit more comfortable. If you decide to leave the campus to smoke, we will notify you on your cell phone or pager when he/she is out of surgery."*

## PHYSICIAN OFFICE

*"I'd like to let you know that as of (date), ABC Hospital and Physician Clinics does not allow use of tobacco products on any properties, including buildings, grounds, or parking areas. We can provide you with a "Care Kit" to make you more comfortable while you are here."*