Stay Quit Coach Overview

Stay Quit Coach is a mobile phone app designed to help with quitting smoking. It is intended to serve as a source of readily available support and information for adults who are already in treatment to quit smoking - - to help them stay quit even after treatment ends. The app guides users in creating a tailored plan that takes into account their personal reasons for quitting. It provides information about smoking and quitting, interactive tools to help users cope with urges to smoke, and motivational messages and support contacts to help users stay smoke-free.

This app represents a collaborative effort between the Department of Veterans Affairs National Center for PTSD (NCPTSD), the Department of Veterans Affairs Sierra Pacific Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Center (VISN 21 MIRECC), the Department of Veterans Affairs Mid-Atlantic Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Center (VISN 6 MIRECC), the Department of Defense National Center for Telehealth & Technology (T2), and the Department of Veterans Affairs Tobacco & Health: Policy & Programs in the Clinical Public Health group (CPH).

Smoking is often the result of behavioral, psychological and physical factors: a habit with years of repetition, an emotional addiction by which the smoker has learned to cope with life stresses, and a physical addiction to the drug nicotine. While there are many different techniques that promote smoking cessation, few deal simultaneously with the different reasons for smoking, which can reduce their effectiveness. Stay Quit Coach addresses these issues and includes specific content that tailors the program to a user’s personal reasons for quitting. It also provides tools and education to address specific reasons for smoking that are often overlooked, such as coping with symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder.

Stay Quit Coach is based on the smoking treatment manual “Integrated Care for Smoking Cessation: Treatment for Veterans with PTSD,” which was written by Miles McFall and Andrew Saxon in collaboration with David Kalman and Timothy Carmody. This treatment is based on evidence-based clinical practices, and has been shown to double quit rates of military veterans with PTSD.

The features of Stay Quit Coach include:

- Educational materials about the benefits of quitting smoking, risks of smoking, medication and nicotine replacement and their efficacy in preventing relapse, and how to cope with urges and ‘stay quit’
- Tools and activities for coping with urges to smoke
- Perspectives and coping tools for those who smoke after their quit date
- Access to support contacts or hotlines for preventing relapse
- Motivational messages and personalized information about the benefits of staying quit
- Reminders to take any medications or nicotine replacement therapies

This app is meant to be used in conjunction with Integrated Care for Smoking Cessation. However, it provides instruction and information for those using it to provide additional support during a quit attempt to be able to do so with ease.

Stay Quit Coach is currently available for mobile Apple devices (iPhone, iPod Touch, iPad) and will be available for mobile Android devices in mid-2015.

For more information about Veterans, PTSD, and quitting smoking, see http://www.publichealth.va.gov/smoking/ or http://ptsd.va.gov.