

SUSPENSION LEARNING PACKET #4:

SMOKING

INTRODUCTION

This is a Suspension Learning Packet. It consists of several pages of text and a Response sheet. Your assignment is to read the text and answer the questions on the Response sheet. The text includes three stories about students who broke a school rule. The Response sheet asks questions about what the people in the stories did that got them into trouble. Reading the text and answering the questions on the Response sheet will help you understand what you have done wrong and how to avoid doing it again. Read the text first and try to remember what you've read. Then read the Response Sheet and write answers to the questions.

WHAT YOU DID

You have been suspended because you were smoking on school property. Smoking is not permitted on school property at any time, so you were in violation of one of your school's most important rules. We'll talk about the reasons behind this rule in the next section of this Packet.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH SMOKING

We're living during a period of time when attitudes toward smoking are changing. At one time, adult smoking was allowed almost everywhere: in restaurants, in the workplace and in places of business, even on buses, trains and airplanes. Smoking was even thought of as a sign of sophistication and of adulthood. Many young people smoked in order to seem grown-up.

Today, smoking is not considered adult, sophisticated or "cool"-- far from it! Now public opinion has turned against smokers and smoking. According to recent surveys conducted by the American Lung Association, nine out of ten current smokers would like to quit if they could.

More and more office buildings, restaurants, theaters, airports and other public areas are declaring themselves "smoke-free" environments. Smoking creates unpleasant odors which can cling to clothing and hair--not to mention the ever-present dangers created by secondhand smoke.

So today, smoking is less and less tolerated by the general public. If you smoke, you may find yourself not in the "in" group but in the "out" group!

The major concern about smoking is the health risk it poses. Whether you smoke only a few cigarettes a day or a pack or two, smoking is harmful to your health.

Many teens feel that nothing can ever happen to them, so they ignore the facts about cigarettes. They tune out the negative information about the health risks of smoking and start this bad habit, despite all that is known to the contrary.

You may have heard adults say that "smoking puts nails in your coffin." During one period of time, cigarettes were even called "coffin nails." Those figures of speech suggest that smoking is like a death sentence. It can lead to lung disease, cancer, cardiovascular problems and respiratory diseases, including emphysema.

The best way to avoid these health problems is never to start smoking. The next best thing is to stop, right now. Then you won't find yourself constantly fighting the urge for a cigarette during school hours and having to sneak outside to find a "safe" place to smoke.

Smoking is not permitted in school because of the hazards it poses to the smoker's health, the health of other students and the general welfare and safety of the school. In addition to the health risks it poses for you, your smoking can expose others to the dangers of secondhand smoke. We now know that non-smoking people who grow up in households or other environments with smokers have an increased risk of lung cancer.

We also know that nonsmokers are more likely to develop cancer as a result of environmental tobacco smoke than from all other air pollutants. In buildings, ventilation systems carry smoke particles far from their source. Your smoke in

a washroom, for example, can end up in the classrooms of nonsmokers hundreds of feet away.

Keeping cigarettes out of school isn't just a whim or another school regulation: it's literally a matter of life and death!

There's yet another problem with smoking in school: the risk of fire. Cigarettes require matches and lighters and lighter fluid and other kinds of sources of fire. It's also easy to half-extinguish a cigarette and leave it burning to ignite other things.

Statistics show that cigarettes are the leading cause of death from fire in this country. Not only is smoking a health hazard; it also carries many safety risks as well!

THREE STORIES ABOUT SMOKING

CHUCK AND HIS CIGARETTE LIGHTER

Chuck started smoking when he was eleven. His older brother smokes and Chuck started stealing cigarettes from his brother's pack to impress the other kids in his neighborhood. Chuck admires his older brother and thinks it makes him look cool and grown-up to smoke.

Chuck smokes whenever he has a chance. He smokes in the restroom whenever he can sneak out of class or study hall. He smokes in the area outside the lunchroom, although it's against the rules. He smokes on the school grounds before and after school. "So let them stop me!" he says when his friends ask him if he doesn't fear being caught. "They haven't caught me yet!"

For his birthday, Chuck's brother gave him a great new lighter. Chuck thought it was really cool and wanted to show it off. The next day, Chuck went out for his after-lunch smoke on the school grounds. He talked three of his friends into having a cigarette with him. Now Chuck and his friends have been suspended and the principal has Chuck's cool new lighter locked in his desk drawer.

FRAN SETS A FIRE

Fran started smoking almost by accident. She started hanging out with a group of girls who all smoked. She had just moved to a new school and wanted to be accepted, so she did whatever her new crowd did.

Fran really didn't like the taste of cigarettes or the way they smelled. She almost got sick whenever she smoked. But she felt that she needed to do it to be accepted. Besides, she was on a diet and the cigarettes helped her stay on the diet. They kept her from getting hungry.

One morning, Fran was having her usual before-school cigarette. She was smoking in the restroom with two of her friends when the bell rang. Fran was late to class, so she didn't put out the cigarette very carefully. She just stubbed it out and threw it in the wastebasket. Then she ran up the steps to class.

About an hour later, the fire alarm sounded. A fire had started in the wastebasket in the girls' restroom on the first floor. Everyone had to leave the building. Fire trucks came and everybody missed most of the first period class. Several people inhaled smoke and had to be taken to the hospital. There was fire and water damage on the first floor--and all because of the fire Fran had started!

SAM AND SALLY MAKE THEIR FAMILY SICK

Sam and Sally are twins. They go everywhere together. They sometimes dress alike. They do the same things and have the same friends. Sam and Sally started smoking when Sam's friend Ted brought a pack of cigarettes to a party one night. They both smoked cigarettes that night. The next day, they each went out and bought a pack to take home. Their parents asked them not to smoke at home because their younger sister, Betsy, has asthma. But Sally and Sam didn't listen; they were having too much fun with their new habit.

During the Christmas holidays, everyone in the family came down with flu. Sam and Sally both were sick, but they continued smoking just the same. Their grandmother came to visit them during the holidays and ended up in the hospital with pneumonia. Then little Betsy had a severe asthma attack and she also had to go to the hospital. Their father missed three days at work and their mother, four. But Sam and Sally kept smoking. They were too addicted to their habit to stop. The smoke in their house made everyone's illness worse.

REASONS FOR SMOKING

Adults have always thought that teens were too young to smoke. And teens have always tried to convince adults that they were old enough. Now we know that age doesn't matter. Smart people know that no one, teenager or adult, should smoke. In fact, many teens are now trying to convince parents or older brothers/sisters not to smoke.

But there's always a small minority of teens who think smoking is being mature, sophisticated, cool and "with it." Some even think that it puts them on an equal footing with adults. Quite to the contrary! The television actor Tony Randall put it this way: "Smoking does not make teenagers look grown-up; it makes them look stupid."

As more teens learn about the hazards of smoking, they admit that they consider smoking a turn-off. A recent poll from the National Institute on Drug Abuse shows that teenagers prefer to date a nonsmoker and in fact, dislike being around anyone who smokes. According to recent statistics, the majority of U. S. teenagers do not smoke. Clearly, cigarette smoking is not considered cool by most teenagers. Smoking is on the way OUT!

CONSEQUENCES OF SMOKING: SMOKING STATISTICS

Did you know that:

- Cigarette smoking is a cause of cancer, heart disease, emphysema, cardiovascular illnesses, respiratory problems, fetal injury,

premature birth, low birth weight in babies and other health problems?

- cigarette smokers die at an earlier age than nonsmokers?
- cigarette smoking affects your ability to breathe and thus, your strength and stamina?
- nicotine speeds up a resting heartbeat by 15 to 25 beats per minute?
- cigarette smokers have to spend an extra 2.5 days per year in bed because of illness, as compared to nonsmokers?
- cigarette companies can afford the best market research in the country?
- cigarettes are the nation's most heavily-advertised consumer product?
- nicotine in its purest form is poisonous?
- cigarette smoke is composed of tar, nicotine and carbon monoxide, plus over 100 other different poisons?
- carbon monoxide is a deadly gas that kills cells?
- severe carbon monoxide poisoning can lead to asphyxia and even to death?
- cigarette smoke has the same amount of carbon monoxide as in automobile exhaust?
- damage from cigarette smoking is reversible if only you stop soon enough? 24 hours after your last cigarette, all of the carbon monoxide is gone from your body.

(The material above is from THE JOY OF QUITTING by Dee Burton and Gary Wohl)

OTHER FACTS TO CONSIDER

- If three jumbo jets crashed every day of the year in America with no survivors from any of the crashes, about 390,000 people would die. This is about the number of people who die yearly as a result of cigarette smoking.
- Smoking is responsible for more than one out of every six deaths in the United States.
- Even if smokers don't inhale, they are at increased risk for lip, mouth and tongue cancers.
- Nicotine reaches the brain only seven seconds after you take a puff of a cigarette--faster than heroin can reach the brain.
- Menthol cigarettes are not safer than other brands of cigarettes and in fact, may be even more dangerous.
- Among high school seniors, girls now smoke more than boys.
- Men who smoke less than one half pack a day have a death rate that is 60% higher than nonsmokers.
- Smokeless tobacco is not a safe alternative to smoking. We have strong evidence that the use of snuff causes cancer, particularly cancer of the oral cavity.

(The material above was taken from brochures distributed by the American Cancer Society)

HOW TO SOLVE PROBLEMS WITHOUT SMOKING: SOME ALTERNATIVES

People smoke for many reasons. They also quit for many reasons. So there is no single way to go about quitting. There is no "right" or "wrong" way to quit. The most important thing is that you quit.

The key to quitting is your personal desire to quit--for yourself, not for someone else. If you are quitting because of school pressure or pressure from someone else, such as your parents, teachers or friends, you probably won't succeed.

You have to want to quit for YOU. If you don't really want to stop smoking but are doing it to please someone else, you won't be very successful. More than likely, you'll go back to your habit.

Once you've made the decision to quit and are sure that it's YOUR decision, you are already on the way to a healthier body. Remember that the longer you smoke, the harder it is to quit. Teens usually have not been smoking long, so it's an easier habit to break. Long-time adult smokers have a harder time quitting. So quit while you are young!

When you decide to quit, write down all your reasons for not smoking on a piece of paper. Keep that piece of paper with you at all times while you are in the process of quitting. It will help you to remember the reasons why you are quitting. It will help you when you really want to have a cigarette. Look at your paper often; it will help keep you motivated.

Experts on smoking suggest that during the first weeks or months without smoking, you have something to keep in your mouth. You can use a cinnamon stick from the spice section of the grocery store, raw vegetables, breath mints or chewing gum--even hard candy. Just remember not to take the candy and gum to school!

Drinking water also helps you feel better during your first smoke-free days. Water helps your body get rid of the poisons left by cigarette smoke. So reach for a healthful glass of water instead of a cigarette!

Some people find it easier to break a bad habit if they have a support group--a group of people with similar habits who are also trying to quit. Many groups today offer help to people who want to stop smoking and can't do it alone. The American Cancer Society is one such organization.

There are other self-help groups organized by churches and community centers. Some are especially for teens. Ask your school nurse or counselor about a support group if you find that you need help to stop smoking.

This packet is the first step in the process of stopping smoking. It will help you sort out the reasons why you smoke. Do you smoke for social acceptance by your peers--to be "one of the crowd"? Are all of your friends smokers? Do you smoke to feel glamorous, sophisticated, adult or "macho"? Do you think you look older and more adult if you smoke? Do you use smoking to help you fight boredom or frustration, or to help you lose weight?

By the time you have finished answering all the questions in the Response section of this packet, you will better understand your reasons for smoking, and why smoking is not permitted at school. Then use that knowledge to help yourself stop smoking. Remember: no one can do it for you. You have to do it for yourself!

STUDENT RESPONSE PACKET # 4.1

SMOKING

NAME _____

DATE _____

GRADE __ HOMEROOM _____

WHAT TO DO

Below are some questions about what you just read. These questions will help you learn why what you did was wrong and how you can avoid such problems in the future. Your teacher, a counselor, the principal, or your parents may read your answers. Your answers will not be graded.

For most of the questions, there are no "right" or "wrong" answers. The answers depend on you. Be honest with yourself as you write the answers. Take time to think before you write. The work you do on these Response Packets reflects your willingness to improve your behavior and attitude.

Write your answers in the spaces below the questions. If there is not enough room, write on the backs of these sheets. Be neat, spell correctly, use good grammar, and write in complete sentences.

1. Read the story of Chuck and his cigarette lighter again. Why do you think Chuck smoked?

2. Imagine that you're Chuck. You've been asked by your assistant principal to write a letter of apology to the principal who caught you smoking outside the school. The letter should have three paragraphs. The first paragraph tells something about you--your name, your grade in school, etc. The second paragraph tells why you were smoking on school property. The third paragraph is your apology. Write the letter on the next page in spaces provided.

First paragraph:

Second paragraph:

Third paragraph:

3. If you were the principal, what would you say to Chuck to convince him to quit smoking?

The next six questions involve statements made by teens themselves. They are among the 70% of America's current population who are non-smokers (smokers really ARE in the minority these days!). Each of the teens quoted give reasons why he or she doesn't smoke. Read what each one has to say and then write a response to each statement. You can agree or disagree; just be sure you give your reasons for doing either one.

4. Jeff (age 14): "I think smoking is a waste of time and money. I don't want to die and don't plan to ever smoke. When I see people I know smoke I wonder if they're even thinking."

5. Stephanie (age 13): "A lot of girls I know smoke at parties. I think they're just trying to keep up with each other. The more I see them, the more I realize I don't want to be a follower like them."

6. Alexander (age 14): "So many guys in the cool crowd smoke. I'm not in that crowd and I don't want to smoke just to get into it."

7. Sara (age 13): "I was overweight and started to smoke when I was twelve just to stop myself from eating. I got pneumonia and the smoking made it worse. I'm glad I quit and I don't miss it one bit. I went on a special diet to keep my weight under control."

8. Carolyn (age 14): "Smoking is a weakness like any other bad habit. I can't stand the way it looks or smells."

9. Ross (age 14): "I started smoking because it seemed like the thing to do. All the people around me who smoked seemed healthy. The more I smoked the more I convinced myself I couldn't live without cigarettes. After my father lost his entire left lung, I quit cold turkey. I realized I was abusing my body and just making excuses for a bad habit."

The rest of the questions in this packet are about cigarette advertising. Look through some magazines in the school library or at your home. Pick out two or three cigarette advertisements from the magazine(s). Look at them carefully. Choose one ad that appeals to you most. Then answer the following questions about the ad of your choice:

10. Describe the picture in the ad. How many people are in the picture? What does the background look like? What are the people doing? What do they look like? Are they young, old, middle-aged, or a mix of ages? Is the ad in color or in black and white?

11. What does the ad copy say? ("copy" is the industry term for the words used in the ad.) Do the words have anything to do with the picture? Do they make you want to buy the cigarette? Do they make you feel like smoking?

12. At what type of person do you think this ad is aimed? Are the advertisers trying to reach teenagers or adults? What age adults? What social class are they trying to reach? Why do you think it's that particular class and not another? Is the ad aimed at men or women or both? At black people or white people or both? Give reasons for each answer.

13. Describe the magazine where you found this ad. What kind of people might read this magazine? What kind of magazine is it--news, fashion, sports, etc.? Do you think the advertisers placed this cigarette ad in the appropriate magazine? Why or why not? Can you think of other magazines where this ad might have been placed.

14. Can you imagine yourself in the ad? When you look at the picture, can you see yourself in a similar situation? Would you like to be in the picture? Explain your answer.

15. Do you think the tobacco company and the advertisers created a successful ad? Why or why not?

16. Now it's your turn. You are a writer for a famous advertising agency. The American Cancer Society has asked you to create an ad urging people NOT to smoke. Write a headline and some ad copy to describe why a person should not smoke. You may want to include some of the facts you learned in your packet under "Smoking Statistics." Describe a photograph or picture you would want to include in the ad. You do not have to draw anything--just explain what the picture would look like. Use the back of this page to do your ad.

17. The same client (the American Cancer Society) has asked you to create a second ad urging the country to make cigarettes illegal. Follow the same format as the first ad. Write a headline and some ad copy explaining why cigarettes should be banned. You can use some of the material from your packet if you wish. You can also use magazines and your own information from other sources. You can include a description of the picture or you can omit it; this time it's optional.

18. You are scheduled to give a three-minute speech to the student chapter of Smokers Anonymous at a nearby junior high school (not your own). This is a group of junior high or middle school students who are trying to quit smoking or have already quit. You are to explain to the group how you are going to go about quitting. Introduce yourself at the beginning of the speech and give a short history of your smoking habit (when you began, how you started, how long you have smoked). Also indicate what you are going to do to quit. Tell the group, step by step, how you are going to break this habit. You may use the back of this page to finish your speech.

STUDENT RESPONSE PACKET # 4.2

SMOKING

NAME _____

DATE _____

GRADE __ HOMEROOM _____

WHAT TO DO

Below are some questions about what you just read. These questions will help you learn why what you did was wrong and how you can avoid such problems in the future. Your teacher, a counselor, the principal, or your parents may read your answers. Your answers will not be graded.

For most of the questions, there are no "right" or "wrong" answers. The answers depend on you. Be honest with yourself as you write the answers. Take time to think before you write. The work you do on these Response Packets reflects your willingness to improve your behavior and attitude.

Write your answers in the spaces below the questions. If there is not enough room, write on the backs of these sheets. Be neat, spell correctly, use good grammar, and write in complete sentences.

1. Test your memory! Without looking back at the packet you just read, write down four facts that immediately come to your mind when you think about cigarettes.

2. Look back at the story about Fran. How did the fire start? What careless behavior on Fran's part may have been involved in the fire?

3. How do you think Fran felt when she heard where the fire was?

4. In what way was Fran responsible for the students who were taken to the hospital because of smoke inhalation?

5. How should Fran be punished? Who should pay for the damage to the girls' washroom?

6. Why have attitudes toward smoking changed in recent years?

7. Agree or disagree with the following statement: "Smoking cigarettes is not only hazardous to your health; it's hazardous to your own and others' safety."

8. Now look at the second story. Why did Sam and Sally start smoking?

9. Why didn't they quit smoking when the whole family had flu?

10. Were Sam and Sally responsible in some way for their grandmother's and their sister's being hospitalized with respiratory problems? How?

11. Have you ever continued to smoke at home even though your parents asked you not to do so? Why?

12. Agree or disagree with this statement: "Secondhand smoke is a major cause of respiratory problems in nonsmokers."

Your school is starting a chapter of Smokers Anonymous, a support group for teens who smoke and would like to quit. You have been asked to lead the first meeting. Your sponsor would like to have three things before the meeting: a flyer advertising the group at school, a "Stop Smoking" ad to place in the school newspaper, and a sheet of facts about smoking and smokers to distribute at the first meeting. Use the space below to design these three things. You don't have to draw pictures or find photographs--if you want to use art work, just describe the picture or photo you would use. Use the back of the sheet to complete these three pieces.

13. A flyer (to be put up on bulletin boards at school):

14. A "Stop Smoking" ad for the school newspaper:

15. A fact sheet to distribute at the first meeting:

16. At the first meeting of the support group, each participant will have a chance to tell his/her story about smoking. What will yours be? Plan your story (each person has only two minutes) in terms of what you will say. Include your name and age, how you started smoking, how long you have smoked, how you feel when you smoke (and when you can't), and why you smoke.

17. At the next meeting, each person will be asked to make a detailed plan for quitting smoking. What will your plan be? Include when and how you plan to stop and what you will do when you want a cigarette (go for a walk, exercise, drink water, etc.).

18. As part of this support group, you'll also be asked to find a partner and help him or her stay motivated to stop smoking. How will you help motivate your partner? Can you help set some goals for both of you? (if it helps you answer this question, imagine that your partner is a friend or brother or sister who also smokes).

