

Counseling Patients

Scenario 1:

Natalie is a 16 year old that has come for a sports physical examination and yearly checkup. On review of systems, she admits to some shortness of breath on exertion. Direct questioning reveals that she smokes 5-6 cigarettes a day. She began smoking when her parents got divorced as it helped her cope with the depression she was feeling at that time. Since then, Natalie has continued to smoke as she has heard that stopping smoking could cause her to gain weight. She is concerned, however, as she knows that smoking is bad for her health and could cause respiratory problems. Natalie's living situation recently changed and she can no longer sneak out to smoke, so she started using e-cigarettes while at home, since the smell isn't as distinctive as combustible cigarettes. She continues to smoke combustible cigarettes at school because they relax her more than e-cigarettes.

What do you say to Natalie? How do you address the dual use aspect of her addiction?

Scenario 2:

Harvey is a 15 year old boy in the after-hours clinic for his third visit in two months for an upper respiratory tract infection. He is an otherwise healthy boy with no chronic medical problems. However, this time, he has developed a persistent cough and shortness of breath when he plays soccer. After asking his parents to leave the room, you discover that he has been smoking a pack of cigarettes a week for the past two years. He started smoking when he started attending a new high school, as he wanted to fit in with the popular boys. A spirometry is performed, and it is found that his tidal volume is decreased by 15% and he has some rhonchi. A chest X-ray is negative for pneumonia.

What do you say to Harvey? How would you ASK about tobacco use, ASSIST him in quitting, and REFER him out to external resources to ensure he can quit?

Scenario 3:

While rounding on inpatients, you see Derrick, a 12 year old boy who was hospitalized after falling off an ATV and sustaining a concussion. Derrick enjoys outdoor sports and nature-oriented activities. After school, Derrick and his friends enjoy riding ATVs and shooting BB guns. As part of this rugged, outdoorsy persona, Derrick and his friends use dip. Derrick has seen PSAs about the dangers of smoking but doesn't think the same rules apply to smokeless tobacco use, and says he experiences no side effects from using dip.

What do you say to Derrick? How can you help him understand that he is doing damage to himself even though he cannot feel it?