Quick guide to brief interventions

- Combining brief advice with other effective interventions such as pharmacotherapy can increase quit success.
- For smoking cessation, brief interventions typically take between 3 and 10 minutes.
- For more detailed guidance see: NSW Health. “Let’s take a moment” quit smoking brief intervention – a guide for all health professionals. NSW Department of Health; 2005.

Let’s take a moment
Quit smoking brief intervention – a guide for all health professionals

1. **ASK**
   - **Ask all clients**
     - Do you smoke tobacco? ■ Record smoking status (current smoker).
     - No: Continue
     - Yes: Continue
     - Ask all clients
     - Have you ever smoked?
     - Yes: Continue
     - No: Affirm choice not to smoke and record smoking status (never smoker).

2. **ADVISE**
   - **Advise**
     - All smokers should be advised to quit in a way that is clear but non-confrontational
     - eg. “The best thing you can do for your health is to quit smoking.”

3. **ASSESS**
   - **Assess**
     - Assess stage of change:
       - “How do you feel about your smoking at the moment?”
       - and “Are you ready to stop smoking now?”
       - Record stage of change.
       - Assess nicotine dependence.

4. **ASSIST**
   - **Assist – not ready**
     - Discuss the benefits of quitting and risks of continued smoking.
     - Provide information about not exposing others to passive smoking.
     - Advise that help is available when they’re ready.
   - **Assist – unsure**
     - Do motivational interviewing “What are the things you like and don’t like about your smoking?”
     - Explore their doubts.
     - Explore barriers to quitting.
     - Offer written information (eg Quit Kit) and referral to Quitline 13 7848.
   - **Assist – ready**
     - Affirm and encourage.
     - Provide a Quit Kit and discuss a quit plan (see over).
     - Recommend pharmacotherapy to nicotine dependent smokers (see Assess).
     - Discuss relapse prevention.
     - Offer referral to Quitline 13 7848.
   - **Assist – action and maintenance**
     - Congratulate.
     - Discuss relapse prevention.
     - Review and reinforce benefits of quitting.
     - Offer written information (eg Quit Kit) and referral to Quitline 13 7848.

5. **ARRANGE FOLLOW-UP**
   - **Successful quitter**
     - Congratulate and affirm decision to quit.
     - Discuss relapse prevention.
   - **Arrange follow-up**
     - For clients attempting to quit, arrange follow-up visit, if possible.
     - At these visits:
       - congratulate and affirm decision
       - review progress and problems
       - encourage continued use of pharmacotherapy
       - discuss relapse prevention
       - encourage use of support services.
     - OR
       - Refer to GP.
       - Refer to Quitline 13 7848.
   - **Relapse**
     - Offer support and reframe as a learning experience.
     - Explore reasons for relapse and lessons for future quit attempts.
     - Offer on-going support.
     - Ask again at future consultations.
Elements of a brief intervention:

- Feedback (risks, indicators, health status)
- Responsibility (communicate choice to change)
- Advice (importance of change, with permission)
- Menu (variety of change options - harm reduction)
- Empathy (warm, non-judgmental, non-confronting)
- Self-efficacy (optimism to attain chosen goals)