

Talking about drugs

Source: Stover, H., Trautmann, F. (2001). *Risk reduction for drug users in prisons*. Trimbos Institute, The Netherlands.

In prison, most staff members and inmates smoke tobacco. Is tobacco a drug?

Objectives:

1. Raising awareness about the fact that drugs and drug use are a widespread phenomenon in our society;
2. Raising awareness that tobacco is an addictive drug comparable to illegal substances like opiates.
3. Discussing tobacco as a common and widely accepted drug.

Duration: 45 - 60 minutes

No. of participants: Minimum 4, maximum 20

Material needed: Copies of cards (see next pages)

Exercise outline:

- Ask the participants which of them smokes
- Discuss briefly the facts about tobacco
- Split up in small groups of four (two staff members, two inmates). Half of the couples get a copy of card A ('My first cigarette') and the other half a copy of card B ('Running out of cigarettes/stopping').
- Couples with cards A are asked to recount the circumstances of 'My first cigarette', couples with cards B are asked for 'Running out of cigarettes/stopping'?
- After twenty minutes, the participants discuss their results: one member of each group will present the results.
- When discussing the results, compare them to the general perception of illegal substances. Use terms and concepts that apply to the use of illegal drugs (cold turkey, seduction into drug use by peers, just say no, addiction, relapse, moral weakness, etc.) Ask questions that are usually asked with regard to the use of illegal drugs. (Weren't you strong enough to stop? Have you been motivated enough?)



CARDS A

'My first cigarette' and how it went on ...

Give the reasons why you took your first cigarette?

Were there peers or other people involved who invited you to smoke that first cigarette?

What did you feel after your first cigarette?

Why did you go on smoking?

When did you feel you could not stop?

How do you feel, now you are confronted with more
and more areas where smoking is forbidden?

Is stopping smoking a voluntary decision? What does smoking mean to you?



CARDS B

Running out of cigarettes/stopping

What do you think or do when it's late at night, you are at home (or on holiday abroad) and you have no cigarettes available because the shops have closed?

Have you tried to stop and did you succeed?

How did it feel when you stopped?

Did you start again?

What made you start again?

