

## **Group I: “Learning about Healthy Living” Goals, Objectives and Suggested Approaches**

Ideally, all smoking consumers with serious mental illness are potential candidates for this group treatment. The typical participant should be psychiatrically stable, not in a crisis, and not actively abusing substances other than tobacco. Many consumers will have persistent symptoms of depression, mood instability or psychosis (hallucinations or delusions) although they are considered stable. These stable symptoms should not be a barrier to attending the Learning about Healthy Living treatment groups. Typically consumers may be enrolled in Day Treatment Programs or general outpatient mental health services.

Unlike other groups, which rely on participants of the same motivation level, **“Group I: Learning about Healthy Living” accepts smokers of all motivational levels.** This means that the group may be mixed with members who are ambivalent about quitting and even some who may not even express a desire to quit. This is done for two reasons: first the treatment itself is motivating and expects to increase each client’s desire to quit smoking through successive sessions. Additionally, we have found that smokers with serious mental illness may not express a desire to quit. Some may in fact express ambivalence or even deny wanting to quit smoking and yet demonstrate some intent in their actions. It is not uncommon for these consumers to attend and participate in the group sessions. Some may even take further steps to actively reduce their smoking and/or use nicotine replacement.

Although the lessons follow a sequential series and move consumers towards making a quit plan and setting a quit date in Group II, some consumers may not attend every session, some may drop out, and others may join at a later date.

### **Introduction: Welcome to the Healthy Living Group (Consumer’s Handouts Section 5: Introduction)**

#### **Objectives for Introduction:**

- Welcome consumers to the Learning About Healthy Living Group.
- Educate the consumers about the overall content of the Learning About Healthy Living Group.
- Allow group members to begin to get to know the Facilitator and each other.

#### **After reading this section, individuals will be able to:**

- Think about what health issues will be important to them to consider during the course of the group.

- Describe guidelines that will make the group setting a safe place to learn about the “Learning About Healthy Living” program.

**Suggested Approach:**

- It will be important for the Facilitator to be warm and welcoming to group members upon arrival to create a non-threatening environment.
- Allow participants to introduce themselves to the group.
- Discuss rules for expected behavior during group sessions (See also Section 2).
- Although a good portion of this manual’s focus is on helping consumers look at their tobacco usage, this could be very threatening initially to the consumer who smokes. It will be important during the Healthy Living approach to emphasize tobacco but the manual also includes topics on healthy eating, increasing physical activity and dealing with stress. Throughout the group sessions, it may be helpful to discuss “unhealthy” ways that people may deal with other problems including stress and mental illness symptoms. (i.e. yelling, violence, alcohol, tobacco, food, etc.). In this way, this approach accurately discusses the relevant risks from smoking and also presents a hopeful and healthy alternative.

**Chapter 1:  
Starting on the Road to Healthy Living  
(Consumer’s Handouts Section 5: Chapter 1)**

**Objectives for this Chapter:**

- Help consumers understand that healthy living is an attainable goal that can help them to feel better in many ways.
- Educate the consumers about the importance of looking at their overall wellness and tobacco use as part of their recovery from mental illness.
- Identify ways to begin to take steps towards healthier living.

**After reading this section, individuals will be able to:**

- Identify the importance of attending the group and evaluating various parts of their general emotional and physical health.
- Describe what health issues will be important to them to address during the course of the Learning about Healthy Living group.
- Learn more about their overall health status.