

Smoking cessation

I smoked for decades. After 22 years of mental illness, in the process of recovery to mental health, I had a friend who encouraged me to quit. My family put up with the habit, as I would say “Cigarettes calmed me down.”...for the time being. When I finally decided to quit, I reduced my cigarette intake eventually to on average one a day, then finally after six months, took the leap to none. The first few months were touch and go. I’d just as soon have a cigarette than not have one, but reason would always win, “If you have one, you’ll just have another...and another” So it was none. It’s been 4 ¾ years now. I still have dreams when I’m smoking and wake up thinking “Why did I do that? I know my lungs are still in bad enough shape from the years of smoking” I’ve heard it said that a person always wants a cigarette after having the habit, it’s just a matter of not having one cigarette. I found after three years that just breathing in and out had about the same amount of relaxing power that I thought cigarette smoking did. For many smokers waiting three years for a purported same effect of relaxation could be worth the wait.

Nancy A Phillips

NAMINC Orange County member and mental health consumer