

Tales from the Network

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Prevention is the key to much of what Vic Perri does in his work. As a qualified Quit educator, he facilitates regular sessions for people with HIV who want to stop smoking.

According to a recent review of the most preferred smoking interventions, positive smokers tend to like doing group therapy sessions with other people living with HIV. That's why Vic Perri provides the Quit Fresh Start course at [PLWHA](#) [1] Person (or People) Living with HIV/AIDS. Victoria and has done for the last three years.

The course follows a step-by-step process that begins by determining what type of smoker you are and the nature of your habit. There are three types of addiction: psychological, chemical and habitual, and you may have any one of these but are most likely to have a little of each.

It is important to identify this behaviour at the beginning as it will help determine what type of strategy you use to quit. Another crucial aspect is developing a plan so that you 'stay quit' and this can include how you deal with those typical situations that trigger the lighting up of a cigarette.

While there are many long-term health benefits to be gained from quitting smoking, there are immediate ones as well – cost being a big one. After quitting and saving over \$100 a week, one of Vic's course participants was able to take his daughter on a holiday to Northern Queensland – something he had never been able to afford as a smoker.

Others report gaining enormous amounts of energy – particularly important when you consider that fatigue is a common issue for many people with HIV.

Another of Vic's participants had been going to the gym off and on but never fully committed because he couldn't find the energy to sustain regular visits. After quitting, he suddenly found the energy and is now able to complete a comprehensive work-out three days a week.

Participants often claim that their biggest motivation to quitting is the support and encouragement they receive from other positive people doing the course.

Vic Perri is a Health Promotion Officer with People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) Victoria in Melbourne. In addition to facilitating Quit courses, he also runs Phoenix weekend workshops for those recently diagnosed and assists people with treatment information.

If you would like to get in touch with Vic or wish to find out about any of the services PLWHA Victoria have to offer, call him on (03) 9865 6772

- [healthy living](#)
- [smoking](#)

Links:

[1] <http://www.napwa.org.au/glossary/term/119>