

A New You

As fall approaches, gain encouragement from a fellow behavior-changer.

Everyone wants to live a long, healthy life, yet our own behaviors can be obstacles. It can help to examine your goals and motivations, and why the “new you” you’re trying to achieve is important. Consider what barriers are keeping you in the same behavior patterns, then identify one small action you can take to get you closer to your goals. Working with a health coach can help you identify goals and create an action plan.

“Health coaches are not the same as fitness trainers,” says Christie Lanasa, ED.S., RN, NBC-HWC, NCTTP, Health and Wellness Coach with BeneFIT Corporate Wellness.

“We are specially trained in motivation and behavior change strategies that work with a person’s unique goals, not in a prescriptive manner. We offer the support people need to be able to adopt new behaviors. The people we work with have time-and-time again demonstrated success in moving to healthier patterns.”



Health coaches are trained in behavior change and can be instrumental in moving to a healthier lifestyle.

An excellent example of successful behavior change is to quit tobacco use, a particularly difficult habit to break. Jessica Bergen, who works for a local fitness center, was able to do it with the help of a BeneFIT health coach trained in tobacco cessation. After smoking four cigarettes a day in college, she switched to vaping about five years ago. Vaping seemed to relieve her oral fixation habit and the anxiety with which she was diagnosed. However, it wasn’t long before she started to have side effects including shortness of breath, dizziness, and a sore throat. She signed up for BeneQUIT, BeneFIT’s tobacco cessation program offered by her employer, when she realized her body was telling her to “knock it off.”

In addition to valuing the education she received about the harmful effects of vaping and smoking Jessica liked her coach’s approach to quitting. “She never pushed, she just educated with no judgement. She created a very safe place,” says Jessica. “Most importantly, my coach provided positive reinforcement. She was always saying, ‘You can do this,’ and ‘You deserve to be healthy.’ It helped me reach a whole new level of thinking – that I am worth it and am capable. When you hear it all the time, you begin to believe it.”

Overall, the process took three weeks from the time Jessica started with BeneQUIT. She cut her nicotine intake from 20 mg to 12, then to 6, and then zero. At this writing, Jessica has been vape- and nicotine-free for several months. She feels better physically and mentally and is now working with her coach on stress management in a second phase of exchanging her “old” habits for a healthier lifestyle.

Best of all, the chances of Jessica's quitting long-term are good. As many as 71% of BeneQUIT participants reported being tobacco-free 30 days after the program's completion, a statistic that highlights the importance of structured support in facilitating lasting behavioral change.