



Implicit and Explicit Attitudes Predict Smoking Cessation: Moderating Effects of Experienced Failure to Control Smoking and Plans to Quit

Laurie Chassin PhD¹, Clark C. Presson PhD¹, Steven J. Sherman PhD², Dong-Chul Seo PhD², & Jonathan T. Macy PhD, MPH²
¹Arizona State University, ²Indiana University



OBJECTIVES

- Extend prior work by testing whether implicit measures of attitudes toward smoking would prospectively predict smoking cessation over a long time interval among a community sample of smokers.
- Test whether plans to quit and experienced failures to control smoking (and their interaction) would moderate the effects of explicit and implicit attitudes on later smoking cessation.

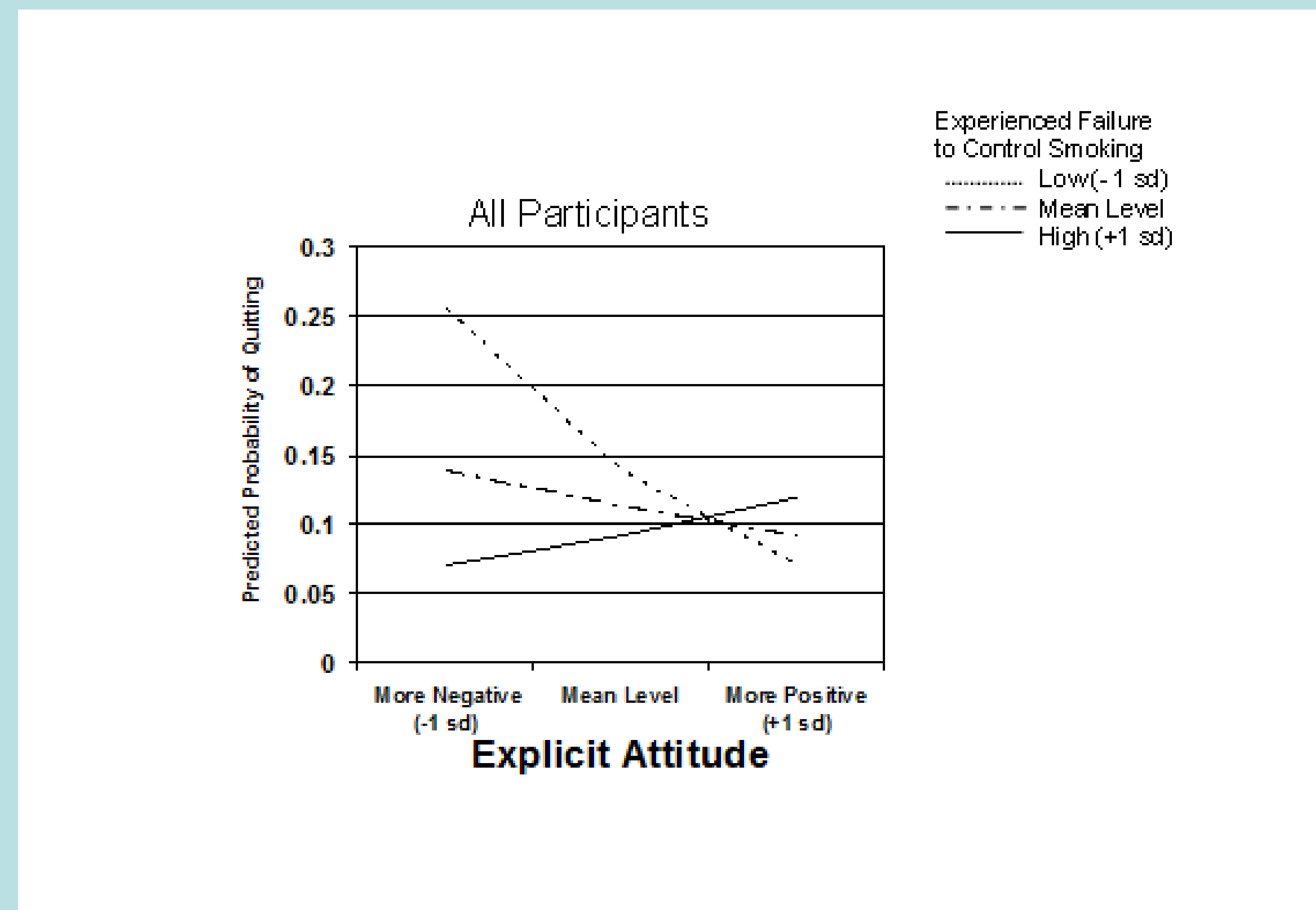
METHODS

Participants were 449 adults who were recruited to a longitudinal web-based study and reported current cigarette smoking. Data were obtained from two 15-minute web-based sessions, 18-months apart. Logistic regression models predicted cessation at 18-month follow-up from baseline covariates (educational attainment and amount smoked per day), baseline predictors (plans to quit, experienced failure to control smoking, and implicit and explicit attitudes toward smoking), and the interactions among them. We used the methods of Aiken & West to probe significant interactions.

RESULTS

The effects of attitudes significantly varied with levels of experienced failure to control smoking and plans to quit. Explicit attitudes significantly predicted later cessation among those with low (but not high or average) levels of experienced failure to control smoking. Conversely, however, implicit attitudes significantly predicted later cessation among those with high levels of experienced failure to control smoking, but only if they had a plan to quit.

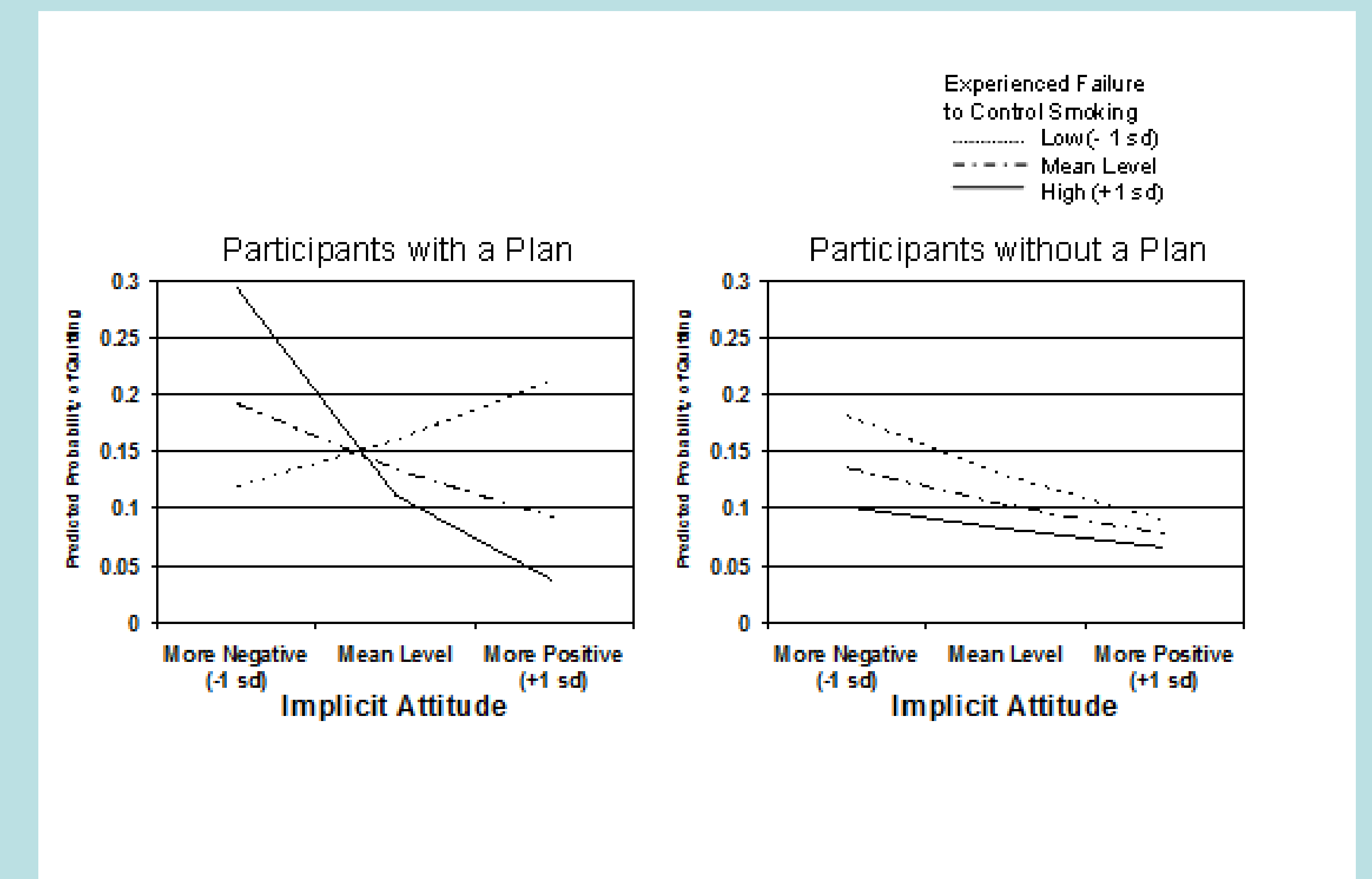
Figure 1. Probability of quitting at follow-up predicted by explicit attitudes toward smoking across levels of experienced failure to control smoking



CONCLUSIONS & IMPLICATIONS

Because smoking cessation involves both controlled and automatic processes, tobacco control programs may need to consider attitude change interventions that focus on both implicit and explicit attitudes.

Figure 2. Probability of quitting at follow-up predicted by implicit attitudes toward smoking across levels of experienced failure to control smoking for participants with and without a pre-existing plan to quit



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