

Motivational Enhancement and Cannabis Use: Implementing a Brief Cannabis Cessation Protocol

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Background

- In 2020, in the US, 14.2 million individuals were diagnosed with a Cannabis Use Disorder (CUD)¹
- Few seeking treatment for CUD are able to achieve a substantial reduction or abstain from cannabis use²
- Individual and group psychotherapeutic modalities are standard in treating CUD.³ A combination of motivational enhancement therapy (MET) and cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) may be the most efficacious approaches for treating CUD with improved treatment engagement and outcomes^{3,4}

Cannabis Cessation Protocol

- Effects of cannabis (i.e. decreased learning, attention, memory, motivation)⁵, even problematic use, can negatively impact treatment retention, engagement and outcomes⁶
- Social beliefs suggest cannabis is non-addictive and thus easy to discontinue at will⁷
 - Without medications to reduce cravings or impact of use like with other substances, stopping use for any reason can be difficult without therapeutic intervention
- Goal of brief, MI & CBT-based pre-treatment protocol with clients planning to engage in a period of abstinence is to:
 1. Deepen understanding of use and motivation for cessation;
 2. Increase awareness of coping skills and strategies; and
 3. Enhance self-efficacy in client's ability to successfully stop using cannabis
- Preliminary findings of implementation demonstrate increased LOS and treatment engagement following program completion

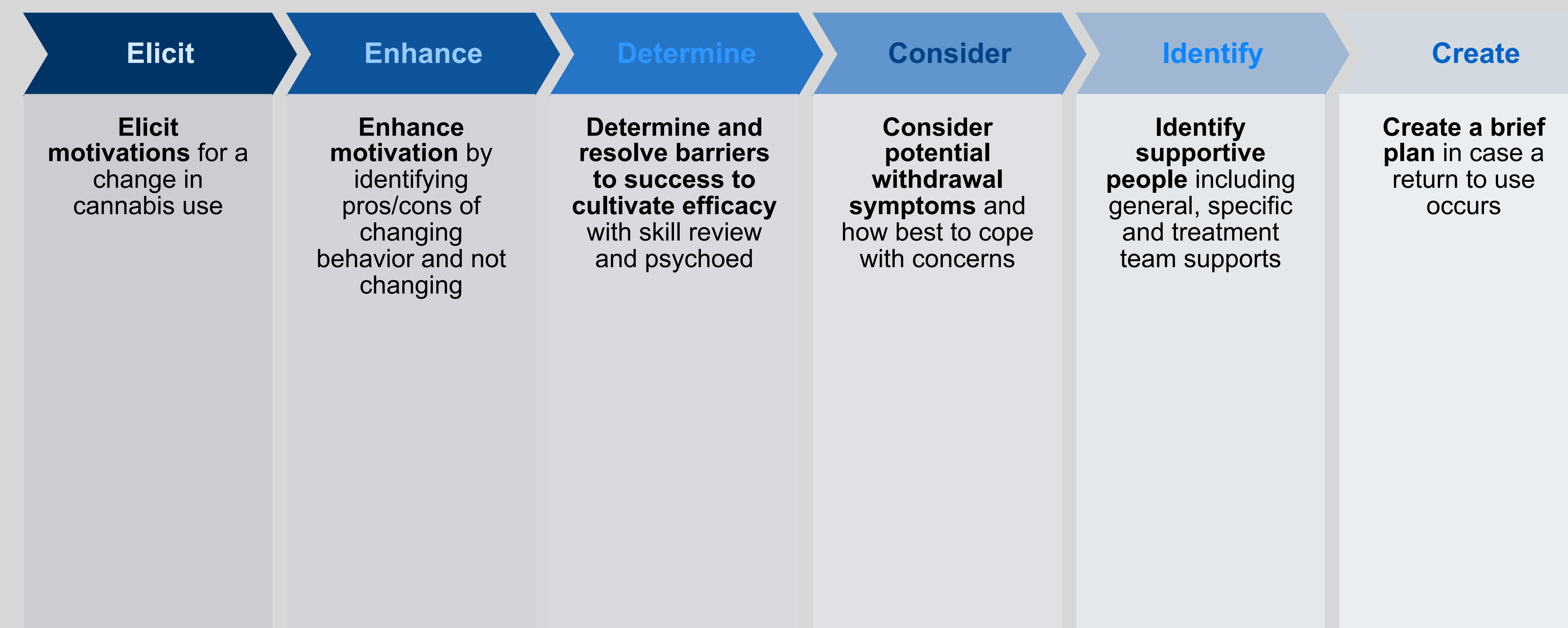
Applications

- This protocol:
 - Was created specifically for those diagnosed with a moderate or severe CUD;
 - Is based on MI principles with six steps to reinforce motivation and enhance commitment to abstinence and treatment; and
 - Is provided to patients to utilize as a living document to aid in early change efforts and update relevant information as needed to support goals.

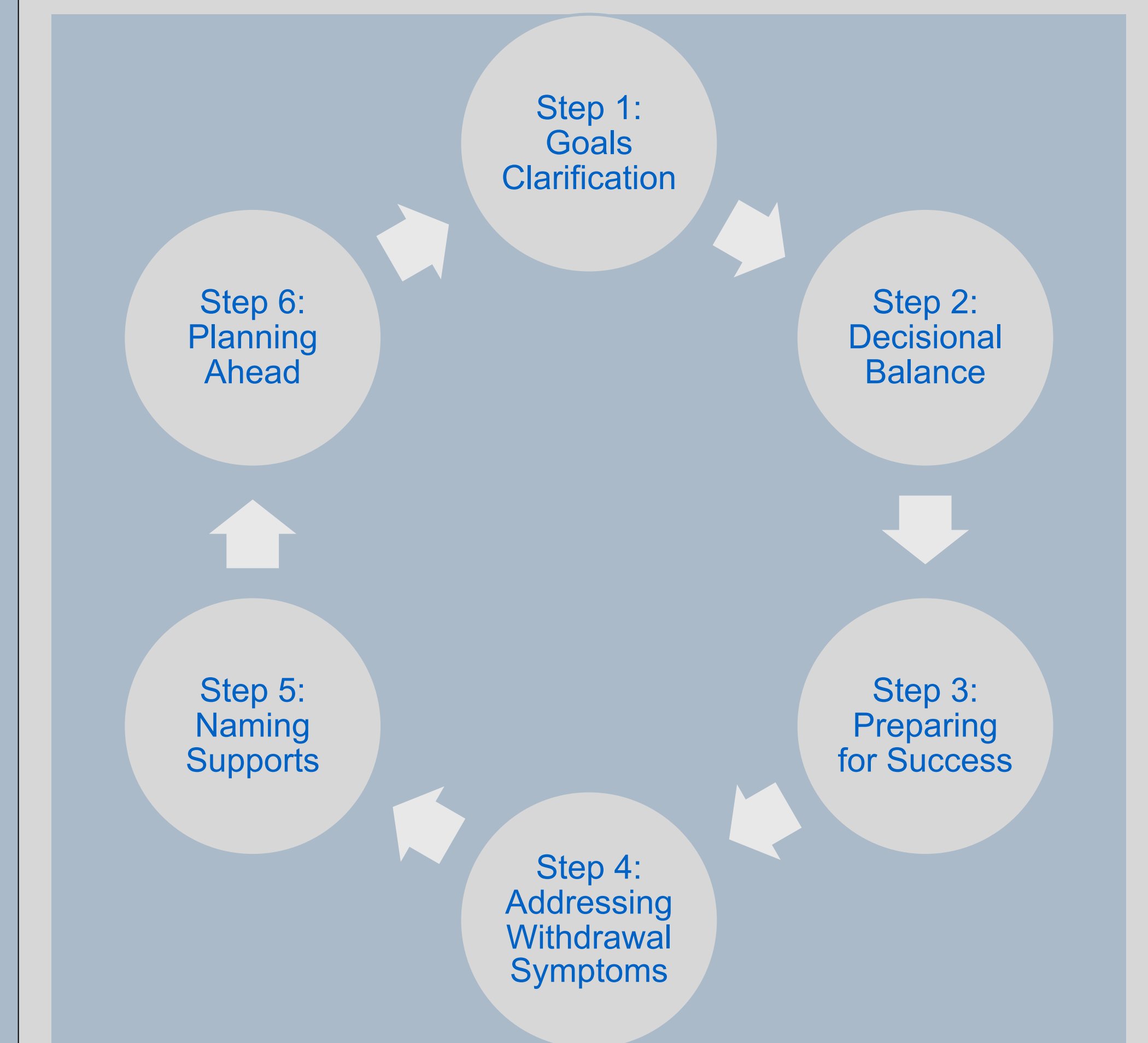
Steps of Cannabis Cessation Protocol

Step One	Step Two	Step Three	Step Four	Step Five	Step Six
<u>Goal Clarification</u>	<u>Decisional Balance</u>	<u>Preparing for Success</u>	<u>Addressing Withdrawal Symptoms</u>	<u>Naming Supports</u>	<u>Plan Ahead</u>
Tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify substance and treatment goals • Explore motivation for change 	Tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weigh benefits of consequences of changing and not changing 	Tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills Review: Breathing, Grounding, DEADS • Identify change areas: People, Places, Things • Assess Confidence 	Tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elicit withdrawal symptoms • Provide psychoed and reassurance • Identify coping strategies 	Tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List: Informed, Distracting and Treatment Supports 	Tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase awareness of need to cope ahead • Normalize change is a process • Identify steps to take if return to use occurs

Cannabis Cessation Protocol Overview



6 Step Protocol



Initial Findings

- The protocol was initiated at CUIMC to target treatment retention due to a pattern of premature termination for clients with CUD. We found positive initial signs that TAU+MET clients had a longer treatment length of stay and were more likely to follow-up with continuing care
- This adds to the literature on utility of pre-treatment commitment and enhancement work to increase treatment attendance and length of stay, two factors beneficial in SUDs treatment outcomes^{8,9}
- Future research should explore:
 - Changes in co-occurring mental health symptoms and quality of life with the addition of MET, while assessing longer-term outcome rates
 - Considering severity of CUD as a factor for premature termination and for selecting the type of treatment and type of treatment goals to pursue

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