

Ms. Dina Kaissi

First of all, I would like to start by saying that quitting smoking has been the best thing that ever happened to me and I owe it all to AUBMC, the program, Dr. Maya Romani, Dr. Umayya Musharafieh (she recommended the program when I was once on a regular checkup appointment), and Rana Shehab (who was my amazing support and 24 hour watch and mentor where she helped me in holding on in the hardest of all times during the stage of treatment, and to my family whom supported me in every step of the way.

As for the details of the program, it was very helpful to me in two areas, the medication I took (Champix) which helped me tremendously without any side effects or any disturbing happenings, and the day to day follow ups, regulars checks, and encouraging words from Rana. Even in the toughest of times when I had really horrible cravings, Rana was there for me and helped me to overcome them. She did not mind my calling to sending or visiting any time when I was in need of support or when I felt that I was on the verge of cheating and smoking a cigarette.

I am very serious when I say that I still have trouble believing that I have actually stopped smoking and I am really free of this ugly nightmare.

My whole life has changed to the better, from my breathing to my gym workouts to not feeling left out and a disturbance to my family and friends when I am out and all in all to a great and healthy sense of living.

I began the smoking cessation program on January 1, 2016 when I decided that it would be my New Year 2016 resolution after many frustrating trials on my own which only led to failure. I had been trying to stop smoking for around 10 years then but could never succeed more than 12 hours at most with outbursts of anger and tears.

The reason behind my decision to join the program and get some professional help with this issue was my mom's continuous worry about me and my little 6 year old niece (now she is 6 years old) who used to always cry when she saw me smoke on the balcony and kept crying till I got back in the house and promised not to smoke again.

As a smoker of 20 years, you can imagine how hard it was on me to actually make that decision, especially when we live in a society that is not supportive at all in this area of healthy lifestyles and wellbeing.

Unfortunately, ignorance still tags along and consumes quite a big part in our community's mentalities. There are some challenges that I faced and still face until today that proves my point above such as being asked if I miss smoking and whether it's possible that I don't crave it and the most amusing one is when some people insist that I smoke 1 or 2 a day just for the sake of it! Another disturbing challenge is when some friends who smoke got bothered that I do not join them while they are smoking in AUB smoking areas and really upset me even when I was still in the beginning and the most critical phase of the treatment because they believed that I should stand around smokers and smell it in order to prove to them

that I have quit and really have the will to quit. So, as you can see this is where the issue of very confusing ignorance comes in.

I have now been smoke free since January 2016 and have not tried to even think of going back to that disgustingly harmful habit, no matter what circumstances I faced (death of loved ones, sad times in personal issues and many others), which some others may believe them to be a good reason to go back to smoking as our community always finds excuses for unreasonable behaviors. I now love myself too much to even consider attempting to hurt myself and people around me again. I am very extremely happy and so very grateful to the smoking cessation program in AUBMC and I have been recommending it to all who wish to stop smoking. Furthermore, I say it loud and clear that I could not and never ever have been able to do this on my own and highly advise anyone who has the will to stop smoking to join this program.

Thank you very much for all your support and highly appreciated efforts.