

Behavioral Health

Behavioral health populations consume 40% of all cigarettes sold in this country

Mental Health and Tobacco

Persons with mental illness and/or substance abuse disorder smoke 40% of all cigarettes produced, but they are only 40% as likely to quit as other smokers. More than 44% of adults with serious mental illness are smokers, compared with about 14% for society at large. Half of related deaths (240,000) are among people with mental illnesses. Persons with mental or substance use disorders die, on average, about 5 years prematurely than persons without these disorders. At the same time, this population experiences higher rates of disease, premature death, and reduced quality of life. Recognizing the importance of addressing this underserved population, SCLC is working with an array of partners to achieve norm change regarding smoking intervention for those with behavioral health issues, including mental illnesses and addictions.

Other Addictions and Tobacco

Addictions afflict approximately 9% of Americans (age 12 or older, according to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health [1]), and tobacco use is rampant in this population, compounding health and wellness woes. An array of studies indicates that alcohol abusers smoke at rates between 34 and 80%; people with other drug addictions smoke at between 49 and 98% prevalence. Tobacco use is a major cause of premature death. Studies show that participation in smoking cessation efforts while engaged in addiction treatment has been associated with a 25% greater likelihood of long-term abstinence. In addition, cessation in conjunction with other mental health or addictions treatment does not negatively affect abstinence from other substances. The benefits of smoking cessation may extend to opiate addiction as well.

SCLC is working with a growing list of partners in the addictions field to begin changing norms regarding tobacco cessation.

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<https://smokingcessationleadership.ucsf.edu>

Source URL: <https://smokingcessationleadership.ucsf.edu/behavioral-health>

Links

[1] <http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/nhsda.htm>