

# The Tobacco Epidemic Among People with Behavioral Health Disorders

## Facts and Resources

### Compelling Statistics

- Cigarette smoking is responsible for more than 540,000 deaths per year in the United States<sup>1</sup>, including an estimated 41,000 deaths resulting from secondhand smoke exposure.<sup>2</sup>
- In 2015, the percentage of adults aged 18 and over who were current cigarette smokers was 15.1%.<sup>3</sup>
- It is estimated that secondhand smoke caused nearly 34,000 heart disease deaths and 7,300 each year during 2005–2009 among adult nonsmokers in the United States.<sup>2</sup>
- People with mental illness and/or substance use disorders smoke 40% of all cigarettes produced in the U.S., with 30.9% of all cigarettes smoked only by those with a mental illness.<sup>4,6</sup>
- Almost half (200,000) of annual deaths from smoking are among people with mental illness and/or substance use disorders.<sup>5</sup>
- Nearly 1 in 3 adults (31.6%) with mental illness smoke cigarettes, compared with around 1 in 5 adults (18.7%).<sup>6</sup>
- In addition to the high prevalence of smoking among those with mental illness, those persons also smoke more cigarettes per month and are less likely to stop smoking than those without mental illness.<sup>7</sup>
- Persons with mental illness and/or substance use disorders die, on average, about 5 years earlier than persons without these disorders.<sup>7</sup>
- Up to 75% of individuals with serious mental illnesses and/or substance use disorders smoke cigarettes.<sup>8</sup> And, 30–35% of treatment staff smoke.<sup>8</sup>
- About 1 in 3 mental health centers offer cessation services, 32.6%.<sup>10</sup>
- According to SAMHSA data, use of illicit drugs and alcohol was more common among current cigarette smokers than among nonsmokers in 2011, as in prior years since 2002. Among persons aged 12 or older, 26.1% of past month cigarette smokers reported current use of an illicit drug compared with 5% of persons who were not current cigarette smokers.<sup>11</sup>
- Current cigarette smokers in the past month were more likely than those who were not nicotine dependent to have engaged in alcohol use (65.2% vs. 48.7%), binge alcohol use (42.9% vs. 17.5%), and heavy alcohol use (15.7% vs. 3.8%) in the past month.<sup>11</sup>
- Individuals with drug problems who also smoke are four times more likely to die prematurely relative to individuals with drug problems who do not use tobacco.<sup>12</sup>
- Less than half of substance abuse treatment centers offer cessation services, 44.6%.<sup>13</sup>
- Despite popular opinion, persons with mental illness and/or substance use disorders want to quit smoking, want information on cessation services and resources, and most importantly they can successfully quit using tobacco. One study found that 52% of cocaine addicts, 50% of alcoholics, and 42% of heroin addicts were interested in quitting smoking at the time they started treatment for their other addictions.<sup>14</sup>
- Treating tobacco use during addiction treatment increases likelihood of abstinence from alcohol and illicit drugs by 25%.<sup>15</sup>
- More than 50% of patients with terminal cancer have at least one psychiatric disorder.<sup>16</sup>
- Individuals with a mental illness may develop cancer at a 2.6 times higher rate on account of late stage diagnosis and inadequate treatment and screenings.<sup>17</sup>
- Individuals with a mental illness have a higher rate of fatality due to cancer.<sup>18</sup>

### Tobacco Treatment is Part of Recovery

Asking, advising, and referring a client to smoking cessation resources can take as little as 30 seconds.

1. Ask all clients whether they smoke.
2. If they smoke, advise them to quit.
3. Refer them to resources for help, such as the national quitline, 1-800-QUIT-NOW, [BecomeanEx.org](http://BecomeanEx.org), [Smokefree.gov](http://Smokefree.gov), or a local Nicotine Anonymous, [www.nicotine-anonymous.org](http://www.nicotine-anonymous.org) meeting

### Resources

The Smoking Cessation Leadership Center (SCLC) offers a variety of webinars by national experts.

All live webinars and select recorded webinars offer CME/CE credit.

Visit [smokingcessationleadership.ucsf.edu/webinars/cme](http://smokingcessationleadership.ucsf.edu/webinars/cme) for the list of webinars with CME/CE credit.

National Behavioral Health Network for Tobacco and Cancer Control—[www.bhthechange.org](http://www.bhthechange.org)

The National Council for Behavioral Health, in collaboration with SCLC, the Behavioral Health and Wellness Program, and Centerstone Research Institute, has launched a program to provide organizations with information to help individuals with mental illness and addictions quit smoking.

Free tobacco cessation training

Clinician-Assisted Tobacco Cessation Curriculum—[www.rxforschange.ucsf.edu](http://www.rxforschange.ucsf.edu)

This online comprehensive tobacco cessation education tool provides the knowledge and skills necessary to offer tobacco cessation counseling to consumers who use tobacco.

The following versions are available:

- The 5 A's curriculum
- Ask-Advise-Refer curriculum
- Psychiatry curriculum
- Cardiology provider curriculum
- Mental Health peer counselor curriculum
- Respiratory care curriculum
- Surgical provider curriculum

Free guides and toolkits

- The following are available at <http://smokingcessationleadership.ucsf.edu>
  - DIMENSIONS: Tobacco Free Toolkit for Healthcare Providers, with Behavioral Health Supplement
  - Tobacco Treatment for Persons with Substance Use Disorders: A toolkit for Substance Abuse Treatment Providers
  - Tobacco Free Living in Psychiatric Settings, National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors
  - Tobacco Free Toolkit: For Community Health Facilities
- 2008 U.S. Public Health Service Guideline—Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence: visit <http://www.ahrq.gov/professionals/clinicians-providers/guidelines-recommendations/tobacco/index.html>

Consumer-run programs

- Behavioral Health and Wellness Program: DIMENSIONS: Tobacco Free Program, <https://www.bhwellness.org/programs/tobaccofree/>
- Choices, [www.njchoices.org](http://www.njchoices.org): Consumer-driven program for smokers with mental illness

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Visit <http://smokingcessationleadership.ucsf.edu>  
or call (877) 509-3786 for free technical assistance.

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