

# Tobacco and You: Weekly Quit-Tobacco Support

## Summary

**The Tobacco and You program successfully offered community members a non-judgmental atmosphere to share struggles and successes, while moving toward becoming tobacco-free. Tobacco and You uses research-based curriculum and weekly CO Monitoring. Facilitation was conducted by Peer Support Specialists.**

**One participant asked if we wanted him to quit on the first session. Our answer was no, maybe within one year. After group, he suggested we call it: Talking About-Thinking About-Quitting. This no-pressure catch-phrase is now shared with many prospective clients!**

## Challenge

The current tobacco-using population is more addicted, has more complicated health concerns and is lower educated than the general population. About half of all callers to the Michigan Quit-Tobacco Line report a history of mental health symptoms.

Tobacco and You is a weekly support program that was designed by Rutgers University to support people that have a mental health diagnosis to live a more healthy life. The program provides weekly support, low level reader materials and a focus on making small healthy changes each week. The full program title is, Learning About Healthy Living: Tobacco and You.

The current smoking population has a harder time quitting and has more life challenges. National agencies view with alarm the death rate of people with a mental health diagnosis, who die 25-years too soon. These years lost could be gained through improved diet, exercise, stress management and quitting tobacco use.

*"We give support and encouragement to those who are trying to quit smoking or are thinking about quitting smoking. I think having someone to talk to while trying to quit is important."*

**- Carol Pierre, BA, CPSS, Certified Peer Support Specialist,  
Community Mental Health Authority**

## Solution

The solution for this project was to accept concerns and create a stable community support group at two locations. Peer Support Specialists were recruited and trained and clinics were trained to refer clients to the program. Both host sites serve those with a mental health diagnosis. Staff and clients at these locations have high smoking rates.

The Rutgers curriculum uses the CO Monitor weekly and delivers a simple lesson about doing one thing to live a more health-filled life. The lessons relate to quitting tobacco, healthy food selection, eating on a budget, stress management, increasing exercise, daily activity, improved coping and replacing unhealthy activities with healthy choices.

## Success Stories

<http://nccd.cdc.gov/nccdsuccessstories/>

## Results

There were several benefits of offering two weekly Tobacco and You groups. Participants felt relief that the group had a focus of providing help and support. Staff liked the program focus of improving healthy choices, simple behavior-change and cutting down. Medical providers were delighted to have a local option that accepted all clients. Weekly sessions provide CO assessment, lesson education, optional resources and compassion in a relaxed setting.

Both sites received referrals from medical clinics, neighborhood centers and CMH Case Managers.

## Sustainable Success

In total there were 24 Peers trained in Learning About Healthy Living: Tobacco and You. It was helpful to identify the two supportive host sites that were comfortable locations for all smokers to find and attend group. Since the programs were offered each week at two locations, there was a benefit of an improved culture of health at both agencies. Staff at both locations are more engaged in quitting their own nicotine addiction, increased charting of client addiction and there are more referrals to community support.

One unexpected outcome was among a group of CMH staff and now six have quit-tobacco and make more referrals. Both sites have walking programs and participation increased. The Tobacco and You group at JIMHO hosted a cooking demonstration and utilized safe food preparation practices, provided a meal, recipes and cost per serving of the healthy food that was prepared.

## Your Involvement is Key

As part of this demonstration project we made it easier to replicate this program in your community, or to support the continuation of the Tobacco and You program in the Capital Area of Lansing Michigan.

Tobacco and You support documents such as client logs that graph CO scores, and weekly lessons that include supplements are posted at Ingham County Health Department website:

<http://hd.ingham.org/Home/EnvironmentalHealth/TobaccoYouLearningaboutHealthyLiving.aspx>

Ingham County Health Department staff are willing to spend time sharing more lessons- learned and mentoring other communities that are interested in this successful program.

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## Success Stories

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