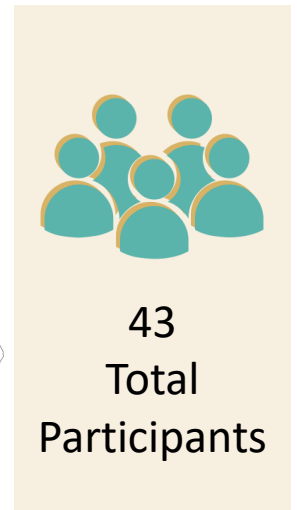
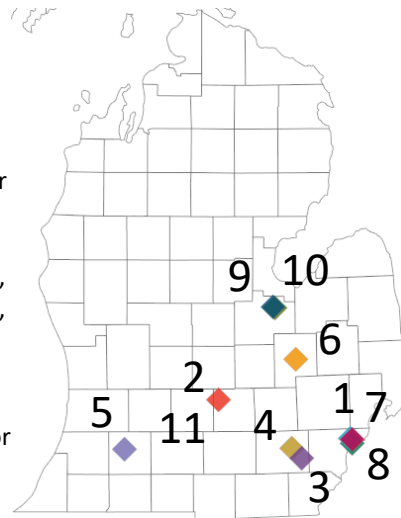


Focus Group Results: Tobacco Use & Behaviors for People Living with HIV

February 2020

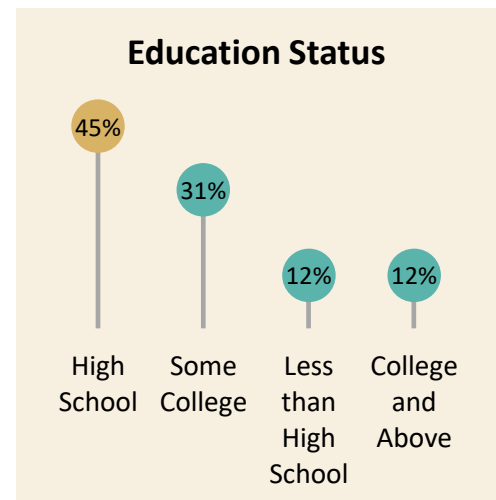
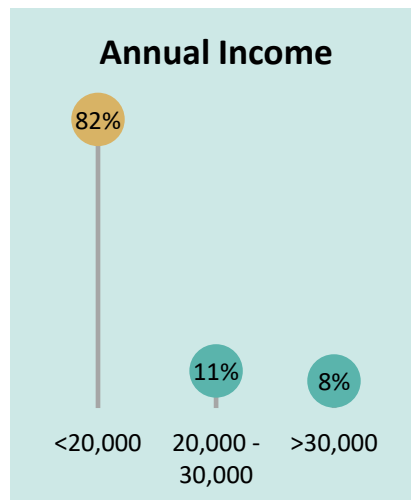
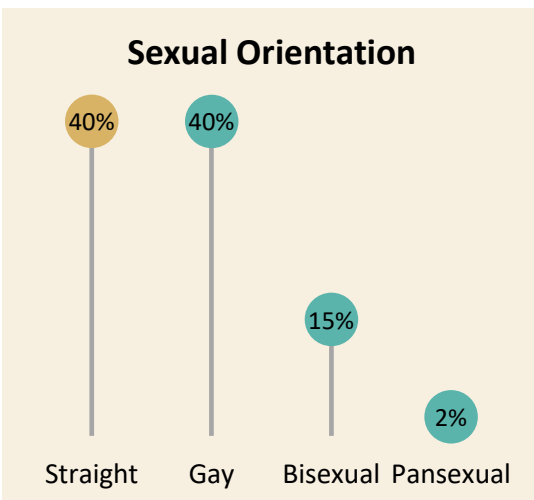
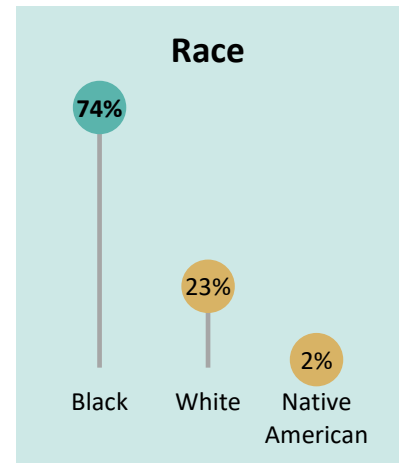
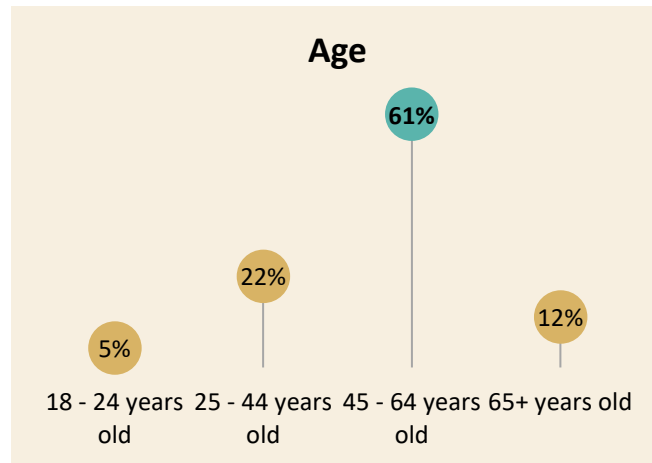
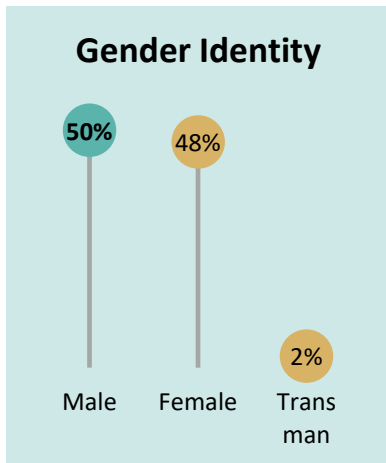
Focus Group Overview

The Tobacco Use Reduction in People Living with HIV (TURP) program conducted 6 focus groups for people living with HIV (PLWH) who also used tobacco products in 2019 from August - September. The focus groups were conducted to learn more about tobacco use behaviors for PLWH, the barriers to quitting, and what resources/services would be helpful for quitting. *Individuals representing eleven organizations participated in the focus groups: ¹Health Emergency Lifeline Programs, ²Ingham County Health Department, ³UNIFIED HIV Health and Beyond, ⁴University of Michigan, ⁵Community AIDS Resources and Education Services, ⁶Wellness Services Inc, ⁷Henry Ford Health System, ⁸Wayne State University Horizon's Project, ⁹Great Lakes Bay Health Center, ¹⁰Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Center Inc, & ¹¹Lansing Area AIDS Network (LAAN)



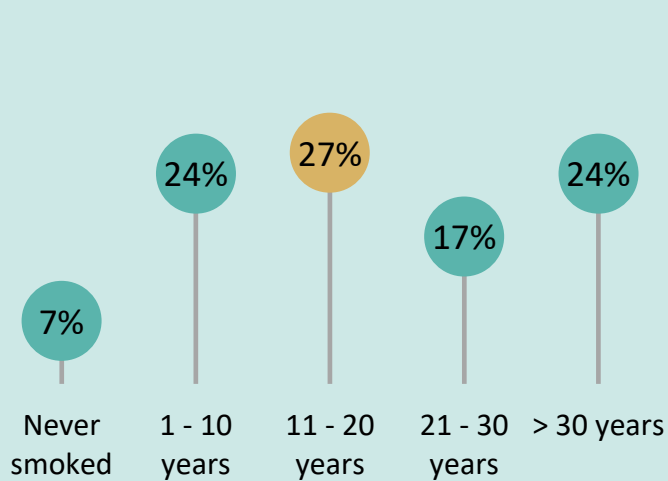
*UNIFIED and UofM held a combined focus group. WSU, Henry Ford and HELP held a combined focus group. Sacred Heart and Great Lakes Bay held a combined focus group.

Participant Demographics

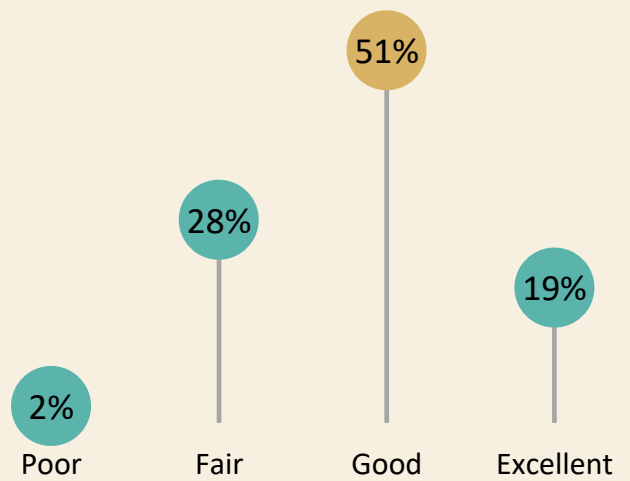


Participant Demographics Continued

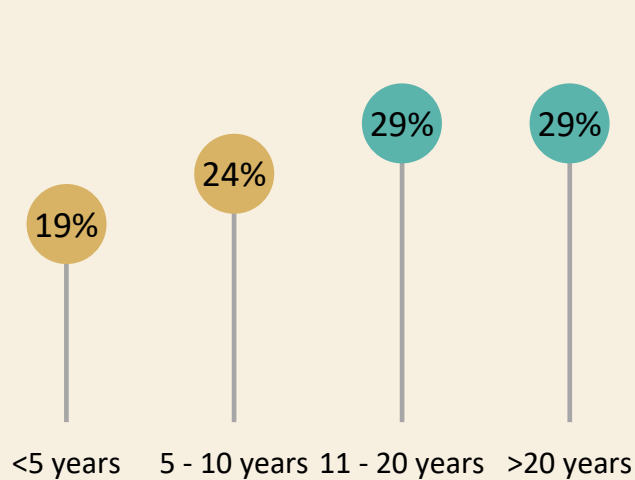
Years Using Tobacco



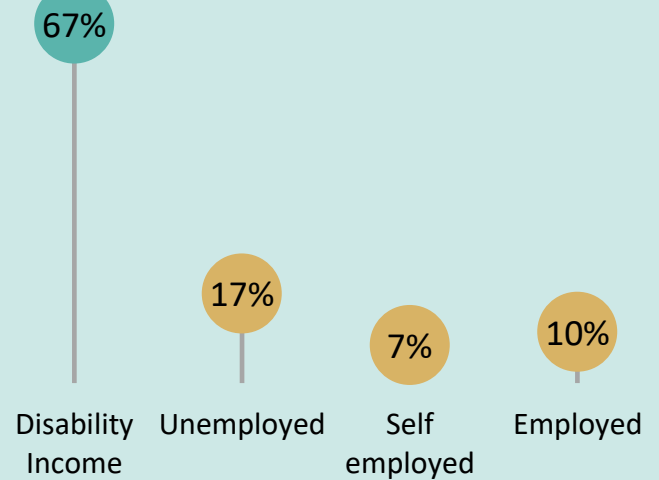
Overall Health



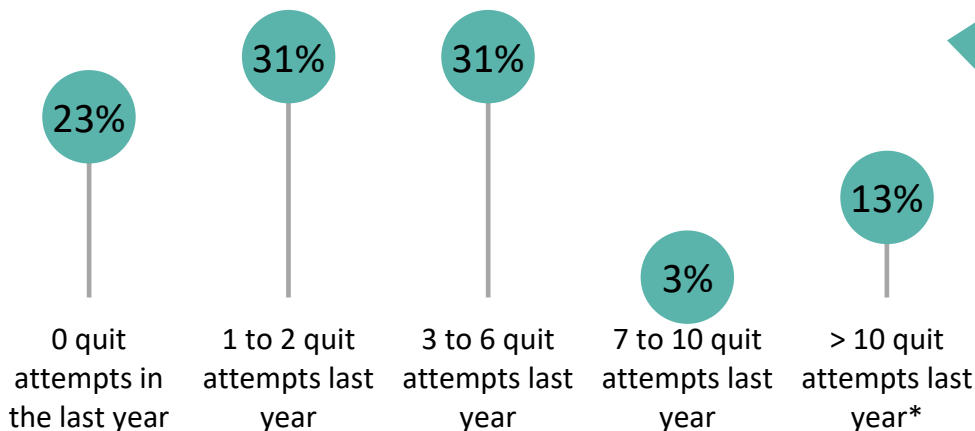
Years Living with HIV



Employment Status



Number of Quit Attempts in the Last Year



*Participants who responded with non-numeric answers were assigned to this group (E.G. "too many times" and "Hundreds")


The American Cancer Society estimates that on average it takes **8 – 10 quit attempts to successfully quit smoking.**

*American Cancer Society. (2015, November). GUIDE TO QUITTING SMOKING. Retrieved February 7, 2020, from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26817073>

Participant Responses & Major Themes

- Tobacco is used as a reaction to stress in one's life, it provides small sense of relief/enjoyment amongst daily challenges life. Stress is major contributor to tobacco use.
- Quit attempts often increase the stress in a person's life, so individuals need to learn to manage stress without tobacco.

Most participants indicated that having the **support** of an individual(s) or group(s) **with similar life experience** is crucial to their **success**.



"A puff of a cigarette just took the stress right out of me"

"When something goes wrong and I can't do anything to correct it I just can't handle it, so I need my cigarettes."

Stress


- Participants overwhelmingly prefer in-person support to other methods such as telephone or online communities.
- Participants want someone who can relate to their unique experiences as a person living with HIV.
- The need for support does not stop with their group/specialist, participants also need support from family/friends.
 - Many report needing to change their environment for non-supportive family/friends.



"Having a former smoker to talk to helps a lot! I need someone who can relate to the struggle I am going through"

"I like groups because everyone is struggling together"

- Some participants noted being scared by the negative media.
- Negative media had little influence on participants motivation to quit
- Many participant's reported disengaging when presented with negative media.




"Don't matter what people say, or what I see on TV. It just won't influence me."

Media

Participant Responses & Major Themes

- Participants indicated the need for NRTs to help increase their likelihood for success.
 - NRTs tended to be more widely accepted than medications due side effects associated with the medications
 - Several participants indicated using tobacco for pain relief. Alternative methods must be considered before beginning a quit attempt.



“I have no desire to go on any of those meds. When I was at my sickest, I was on 16 pills a day with all my health issues. I don’t want to have to worry about more meds added.”

“I do like the smoking aids; the cinnamon toothpicks & mints have helped me.”

When working with clients who have HIV and are interested in quitting tobacco, it is important to understand their **unique health needs** and the challenges they face. **Peer support programs** would better serve this need.

“My son said I can’t come to see my grandkids if I smoke.”

“I can tell the difference when I don’t smoke, I can breathe better.”

“I will even take cigarette butts and roll them up in paper to smoke if I can’t afford to buy them.”



Health

- Health concerns and a desire to be a part of family member’s lives are cited as the major reasons for wanting to quit.
 - Cost was noted as a frustration by many tobacco users, but not as a reason for them to quit.
- Difficulty with everyday activities & persistent coughs were noted by many as a motivating factor to quit.
- Participants mentioned instances of family members suffering from tobacco related disease (cancer, stroke, etc.) as motivating them to quit.
 - Others noted the desire to be around family who would not allow tobacco products.