

"Looking GREAT and feeling...good?" Smoking & Health in the LGBTQQ Community

by Jose A. Cruz, MSW, LSW

Some of us use a daily checklist that reminds us to go to the gym, sun ourselves at a tanning salon before a public appearance, eat low carbs, get fabulous haircuts, and smell like success...all to look as toned and youthful as physically possible. Just as with various groups in a community, the LGBTQQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, & Questioning) has been impacted by certain trends, but smoking continues to take its toll. According to the American Cancer Society, tobacco use kills at least 30,000 gay and lesbian people each year in the United States.



Tobacco Companies reach the LGBTQQ community with direct and indirect advertisements, as well as through event sponsorship. Many of us still watch Carrie light up on reruns of "Sex and the City," and cigars are often used as a masculine symbol among gay men, especially in the leather community. Smoking is used as an ice-breaker, a social past-time that, with time, becomes itself a "best friend." It is that friend that is ever-present at various meeting

places and, though no longer permitted inside, right outside the front door of our favorite bars and clubs. What many of us don't realize, however, is that by increasing the number of wrinkles, staining our teeth and making us smell bad, smoking is undoing all our efforts to improve our appearances ... and killing us, one puff at a time.

As the LGBTQQ community has various groups and sub-groups, healthcare providers must meet the challenge of being culturally competent and humble when treating its members. We live in a time when being knowledgeable about challenges that groups face is a necessity to provide effective treatment. One way to do this may be to visit a local agency that provides support groups, such as Women's Social Support Group or Men Supporting Men Group, or by attending LGBTQQ community-sponsored social events.

At the Tobacco Dependence Program, there is an opportunity to get treatment to quit smoking, but there are also chances to enlist members of LGBTQQ groups to get involved and share information at community events. The Tobacco Dependence Program hopes to soon partner with the Pride Center of New Jersey in efforts to bring tobacco dependence education and treatment to members of this community that is in desperate need of anti-smoking intervention. The LBTQQ community is invincible, strong, fresh and full of style...we want to keep it that way.

Training and Education News

by Amy C. Schmelzer, MS

The Tobacco Dependence Program's Training and Education department has been extremely busy the last few months preparing and executing a number of trainings. The Certified Tobacco Treatment Specialist (CTTS) trainings of January and March were filled to capacity. A total of 84 health care providers and professionals completed the week-long tobacco program and, upon completion of the post-training coursework, are eligible for application directly to the certification board for CTTS certification. While two 5-Day trainings have been completed thus far this calendar year, June will prove to be an exceptionally busy month, as the CTTS training team will be traveling to Orlando, Florida to provide a 5-Day training to 50 healthcare professionals, then returning home to run another 5-Day training in New Brunswick, NJ.

Although the training team has been keeping busy with the CTTS training, numerous 1-Day trainings have been scheduled as well. In March, the Tobacco Dependence Program offered a comprehensive one-day training open to beginners in the tobacco field. This training covered numerous aspects of the tobacco industry, including: the public health ramifications of tobacco use, the tobacco industry's effective marketing strategies to promote tobacco sales and use, and medications available to help people quit. Participants were able to receive continuing education credits for attending. In May, the training staff offered an advanced training to those professionals that have completed the 5-day CTTS training. The scope of this training included the latest information on helping people quit smoking, updates on available cessation medications, and complex case presentations from both the participants and the Tobacco Dependence Program staff. Participants were eligible to receive continuing education credits for attending this 6-hour training.

The staff traveled to Trenton, New Jersey in May to train the Department of Corrections (DOC) staff in how to help their clients abstain from and quit tobacco. The training and education staff is also traveling offsite to Brooklyn, New York in June to perform additional one-day trainings. Healthcare professionals will be trained on various topics including but not limited to treatment planning, available cessation medications in, and the latest research on nicotine and tobacco. Keep checking the Training portion of the Tobacco Dependence Program website for more training updates!

2008 Training Schedule

Jun 2-6	Tobacco Treatment Specialist Training Orlando, FL
Jun 16-20	Tobacco Treatment Specialist Training New Brunswick, NJ
Oct 16-17	Youth Quit2Win Training New Brunswick, NJ
Oct 20-24	Tobacco Treatment Specialist Training New Brunswick, NJ