

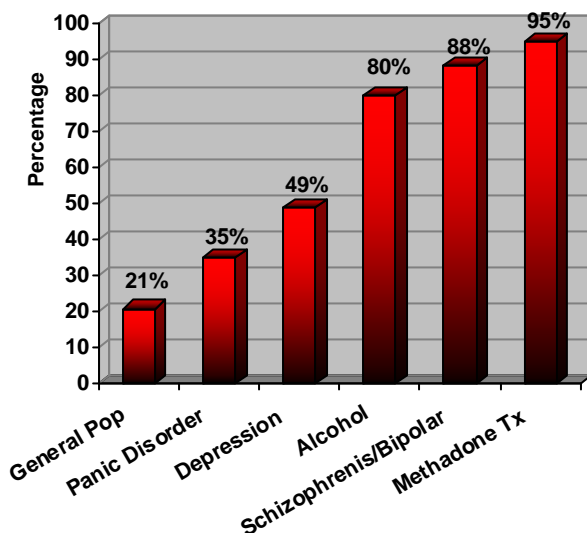
SMOKING CESSATION SAVES LIVES



We all know that smoking tobacco is a serious public health problem and a major contributor to illness and premature death. Widespread public education and effective smoking cessation approaches have significantly reduced smoking rates in the past decade and have proven to be a good economic and health investment. However, **smoking continues to be a serious health threat for individuals with mental illness and substance use disorders.**

The *Smoking Cessation Supports Initiative (SCSI)* is a collaborative that began three years ago in western CT to address this issue. The SCSI goal is to **achieve a system where wellness is paramount and where addressing nicotine dependence with supports is routine.** Persons in recovery from mental health and substance use disorders, their families, care providers and advocates collected research findings, sought out new and emerging best practices, and sponsored educational workshops on cessation supports. SCSI participants noted that, in order to achieve their goal, the culture of mental health and addiction services must change to one that values smoking cessation.

Smoking Rates



“We need to re-think the role tobacco plays in the lives of people that DMHAS serves.”

~ Member, Smoking Cessation Support Initiative.

The problem

- ✘ Individuals with mental illness buy approximately 44% of all cigarettes purchased in the U.S. *
- ✘ People with serious mental illness make up about 7% of the population, yet they comprise 31% of all adult smokers in CT. **
- ✘ About 13% of adults in CT have mental health and/or substance use disorders, but they represent 62% of all adult smokers. **
- ✘ Smoking cessation options available to the general public are viable for only a small percentage of people with serious mental illnesses due, in part, to the cost of nicotine replacement patches and medications and the need for medical supervision to adjust often complex psychiatric medication regimens. **

*Lesser et al, JAMA 11/2000 **2008 CT Tobacco & Health Trust Fund Report

Smoking isn't just a habit. *Smoking kills.*

More individuals who are alcohol dependent die from tobacco-related diseases than they do from alcoholism.

~ Journal of the American Medical Association, 1996

People with mental illness and/or substance use disorders die, on average, 20-30 years sooner than the general population. Smoking is a preventable cause.

~ National Assoc. of State Mental Health Program Directors report, “Tobacco Free Living,” July 2007

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Research shows that smokers are most successful in kicking the habit when they have **some means of support, such as nicotine replacement products, counseling, prescription medicine to lessen cravings, guide books, and the encouragement of friends and family members.** The SCSI is an important step in providing the support needed to help individuals with serious mental illness live healthier, smoke-free lives.

