

# Snapshot



## Smoking and Mental Illness in Tasmania, April 2020

Tobacco smoking remains the single greatest preventable cause of death and disease in Australia.

People with severe mental illness are likely to die between 14 and 23 years earlier than the general population. This is largely due to smoking related illness.

This snapshot provides the mental health sector with information relevant to smoking and mental illness in Tasmania.

### KEY STATISTICS

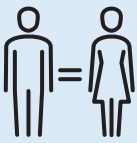


- Around 1 in 3 Tasmanians who smoke have a mental health disorder



x2

- Tasmanians who have a mental health disorder are almost 2 times more likely to smoke
- Nationally, people with a severe mental illness are 5 times more likely to smoke



45-64 YEARS

- For Tasmanians with a mental health disorder
- Similar numbers of men and women smoke
- Adults aged from 45–64 years are more likely to be smokers than other age groups
- Smokers are equally represented across all income groups

Quitline  
137848

- 13% of people who contact the Quitline report having a mental illness

TASMANIAN  
HEALTH  
SERVICE

- Less than 2% of referrals to the Statewide Smoking Cessation Program came from Statewide Mental Health Services (SMHS). 19% of referrals for people with mental illness came from non-SMHS services
- 91 staff from SMHS (excluding Alcohol and Drug Services) completed the online ABC for Smoking Cessation training

### TASMANIAN MENTAL HEALTH SECTOR STAFF



- 71% of staff are aware that people are more likely to die from tobacco-related diseases than from their mental illness
- 92% of staff agree that people with mental illness should be supported to stop smoking
- 74% of staff feel that addressing smoking is part of their job
- 46% of staff are unsure if people with mental illness want to be smoke free
- 87% of staff feel confident to start a conversation with their clients about smoking

### TASMANIAN MENTAL HEALTH SECTOR WORKPLACES



- 80% of services report having a smoke free workplace policy
- 53% of services report that they routinely record the smoking status of clients
- Some services report that up to 85% of their clients smoke
- While some services report low prevalence or no staff smoking at their service, others report that up to 80% of staff smoke

# Tasmanian Mental Health staff say...

"I have found a large percentage of patients are not interested or in the right frame of mind to consider giving up smoking"

"It is their only avenue of relief to go and have a cigarette"

"Many of these people will never get off the smokes. It is their life. In many cases they live to smoke"

Positive  
"The client brought up the topic of smoking themselves and wished to receive support to quit"

"Many of them find it difficult to fund smoking cessation products"

Positive  
"The clients are motivated for health and financial reasons"

"I believe we are causing huge issues such as an increase in physical aggression towards staff and others by limiting or taking this (cigarettes) away"

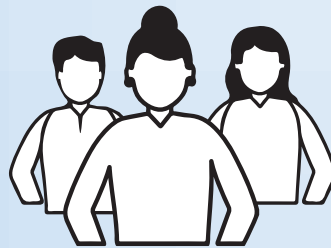
Positive  
"Most clients have been receptive to a brief non-judgemental supportive conversation"

"Patients who are anxious find smoking helps to settle them"

Positive  
"The main thing from my point of view is having the flexibility to respond promptly with resources when someone says they do want to stop smoking or at least find out more"

"It is his right to smoke"

"All the patients I work with are mentally unwell and giving up smoking is not on their radar of things to do"



## REFERENCES:

1. Tasmanian Population Health Survey, 2019
2. Equally Well Consensus Statement, 2018
3. Smoking and Mental Illness Survey, 2020
4. Quit Tasmania, 2019
5. Statewide Smoking Cessation Program, Tasmanian Health Service, 2019