

NWT HEALTHY COMMUNITIES Toolkit

Deadly Tobacco Use

Many of the original stories spoke of the illness, suffering and death that would result if people misused tobacco.

Did you know tobacco misuse is the leading cause of preventable illness and premature death in Canada?

FACT: Commercial tobacco use kills four times more people than motor vehicle accidents, suicide, homicide, and AIDS combined.

Did you know your smoking can hurt the people you love the most?

FACT: Second hand smoke is the third major cause of preventable death.



Culturally Safe

COUNSELLING SERVICES FOR PEOPLE QUITTING SMOKING



Community Goal:

To engage the community in the creation of health promotion strategies to decrease and prevent the misuse of tobacco.

How can communities reach this goal:

Programs, policies and bylaws all have a role to play in ensuring youth do not start to smoke, helping smokers to quit and protecting people from exposure to second-hand smoke.

Communities can offer culturally appropriate stop smoking support programs. Activities offered through this program may include weekly support groups, Elder support, cultural teachings, one-on-one support, physical activities, as well as teachings and managing the stop smoking program through arts and crafts.

Aboriginal health, addiction and recovery needs to be addressed in a holistic way. Incorporating aboriginal perspectives and teachings. Acknowledge the history of tobacco use and the differences between sacred and commercial tobacco use.

“.....And then he talked about how tobacco has a spirit and that if you want to change the relationship with the spirit of tobacco ask it for help. He said to me, that one must go into the bush in the silence and make an offering to the tobacco spirit and ask for help to quit using tobacco in a non- traditional way. Offerings are good and they do help” – Elder Elsie Sanderson

Did you know that the First Nations youth smoking rate is three times higher than the average Canadian youth?

FACT: First Nations girls, 15-17 years old, have a smoking rate of 61%. The rate for Canadian girls in the same age range is 15%.

FACT: First Nations boys, 15-17 years old have a smoking rate of 47%. The rate for Canadian boys in the same age range is 13%.

Never underestimate the power you have to make changes for your health and the future of your community!



Sacred Tobacco Use:

Traditional or Sacred Tobacco is a gift that was given to Aboriginal people by the Creator. It has a spiritual place within many of our communities. There are several stories and teachings of how the Creator taught Aboriginal people to grow, prepare and use the plant for spiritual purposes.

Some Traditional Uses:

- The smoke from tobacco burned on sacred fires rises to the sky, carrying prayers to the spirit world.
- When traditional medicines are picked, tobacco is put down as an offering of thanks to Mother Earth.
- Tobacco is given as an offering when guidance is requested from the Elders.

The Seven Teachings...

to help guide you towards a healthy, tobacco wise future:

1. Honesty: Being truthful with yourself. Be truthful with yourself about the risk you are taking with your health by smoking. Recognize that you have the power to protect your family and friends from second-hand smoke.

2. Humility: Consider the needs of other people. If you are currently smoking, consider your loved ones who want you to lead a long, healthy life. They also need your help to protect them from second-hand smoke.

3. Truth: Using your strength to do the right thing. If you know the difference between Traditional Tobacco and commercial tobacco, share your knowledge with someone. It could change their life.

4. Wisdom: Knowing what is true and right combined with good action. If you are currently smoking and would like to quit, identify the strengths or supports in your life that you can rely on to help keep you strong. You do not have to be alone on your journey.

5. Love: Treating yourself and others with respect and kindness. Love yourself, your health and the health of your family and community – choose to quit smoking.

6. Respect: Honouring yourself and others. The Elders tell us that Traditional Tobacco has honour and purpose. It is intended to be used for prayer and to give thanks – respect the original purpose of tobacco.

7. Bravery: Doing what needs to be done, even when it is really hard. Recognize the destructive effect smoking has on your body and the health of others who are exposed to it. Be brave and take a stand against the harmful effects of commercial tobacco.

Quitting is Easier if you Have Help! The NWT Quitline is a toll-free confidential help line for people who want to quit smoking. Services offered are:

- trained cessation counsellors;
- personalized call back programs;
- quit smoking reading materials;
- translation services for all NWT languages;
- telephone service 24/7.

For more information on the NWT Quit Line please contact:

Phone: 1-866-286-5099

Website: www.hss.gov.nt.ca/health/tobacco-and-your-health/nwt-quitline/