



**Consumers Helping
Others Improve
Their Condition by
Ending Smoking**

CHOICES NEWSLETTER - June 2024

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CHOICES Program Testimonial

by Serena Zuppardo, CPRS, CRSP

A few years ago, I came across a vendor table at an event that the company I work for, Collaborative Support Programs of New Jersey, was hosting, where there were several peers who identified themselves as Consumer Tobacco Advocates from the CHOICES program. The Consumer Tobacco Advocates were sharing about how they provide information about options available that will help individuals with quitting smoking, and how their program especially places emphasis upon helping smokers who are New Jersey residents living with mental illness to successfully quit smoking. They mentioned that their primary mission is to increase awareness of the importance of addressing tobacco use and to create a strong peer network that encourages individuals living with mental illness to make this positive healthy lifestyle change. The Consumer Tobacco Advocates from CHOICES expressed that they additionally educate their peers about the consequences of smoking, issues regarding mental illness and smoking, and providing resources within New Jersey where smokers living with mental illness can receive tobacco dependence treatment. After meeting the Consumer Tobacco Advocates from the CHOICES program, I had invited them into the community (Continued on page 4)



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Mindfulness Technique for Cravings by Azeem Sitabkhan

Continuing on my series of articles about Mindfulness Meditation and its uses in tobacco addiction and cravings, I'd like to now present an actual technique one could use to help alleviate a craving. Just a quick refresh, the process of mindfulness involves 3 core skills, which are: 1.Awareness 2.Acceptance (of what one is aware of) and 3.An understanding that all feelings/thoughts/sensory objects are always changing (though it doesn't always seem so).

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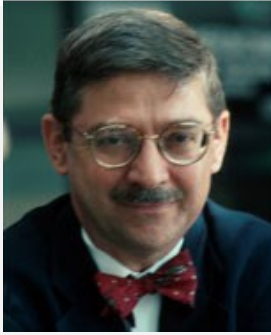
Be mindful of your quit.

Take a deep breath and practice meditation.



Trinkets & Trash

By Deidre Stenard



John Slade, MD (1949-2002)

Trinkets & Trash began as the personal collection of Dr. John Slade, a noted anti-tobacco activist who spoke out fervently about tobacco advertising and whose knack for collecting tobacco promotional items (from T-shirts to model cars) led to the creation of

one of the largest collections of its kind. He created the TrinketsandTrash.org website. It is a useful website that contains all kinds of images and marketing materials that tobacco companies put out in an effort to keep you addicted to cigarettes.

Following Dr. Slade's untimely passing in January of 2002, the site was taken over by Dr. M. Jane Lewis, one of his friends and colleagues at Rutgers School of Public Health.

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Quitting Smoking

By Hyejin Heo

The CHOICES Smoking Education meeting is meaningful, interesting and educational. During the CHOICES meeting, I was able to hear information that I had not known before, and I learned that there were many different ways and help in quitting smoking, I don't smoke, but I heard a lot of useful information to share with people who smoke around me. When I saw people around me, it was never easy to quit smoking and I saw many people struggling alone. I think it will be really useful information for those people. I work in behavioral health care and had this CHOICES meeting with patients. Some patients initially had no intention of quitting smoking, however after the CHOICES meeting, they expressed it was a time that made them think positively about quitting.

Whole Health Wellness Celebration

By Lisa Evans

The CHOICES team was honored to be invited to attend the Whole Health Learning Collaborative's Whole Health Wellness celebration on May 24. The event celebrated the success of the 29 state funded wellness centers that received a wellness dollars grant to promote Whole Health in Wellness and Recovery. Awards were based on wellness center needs, population density, membership, creativity, etc.

During lunch, each center showcased how they spent their wellness dollars.

Most centers ask their members for suggestions on how to use the money. During the presentations we learned that the centers purchased a pool table, picnic table, an outdoor gazebo, laptops and other items. I learned so much about each center and had the opportunity to meet many center managers.

We sat with representatives and managers from Riverbank SHC and A Way to Freedom. We said hello to Up Your Alley, Reach Out Speak Out, Donald Mays CWC, Passaic County CWC and met, for the first time, managers from ICE and Esperanza. All the center managers are dedicated to providing the best services for their members.

CHOICES applauds the managers for all they do for the mental health community in New Jersey. We appreciate being included in most center's wellness initiatives and appreciate the support we receive when we are onsite. Special thanks to Michael Leotis, Whole Health Learning Collaborative Coordinator for the Mental Health Association in New Jersey, for inviting us. He was the host for the event. We had a wonderful time meeting managers and staff and learning more about the individual centers' goals and culture. We look forward to utilizing our new knowledge to better serve their populations.

It's all about Intention

By Cleo Zifovski

According to research, cigarette smoking and addiction to tobacco are still the primary factors that result in early mortality on a worldwide scale [2]. However, in the past four decades, there has been a significant decline in smoking rates in developed countries like the United States and the United Kingdom. This achievement may be attributed to effective public health initiatives that have banned tobacco advertising and indoor smoking in public areas. Mounting data indicates that elements of spirituality are also associated with favorable lifestyle decisions, such as smoking cessation, stress management, and addiction recovery [2]. Studies on smoking cessation indicate that spirituality may have a role in enhancing recovery outcomes. In a survey of adult smokers, 78% expressed the belief that spiritual resources may be beneficial in their efforts to quit smoking, while 77% were open to receiving support from healthcare experts to use spiritual resources while attempting to quit [1]. This research supports Izu (2018), who found that psychological, social, and spiritual promotion and assessment models are better at understanding smoking habit than biological ones.

In order to stop smoking, individuals who smoke must possess determination. Intention is a driving force that influences determination. The level of intention directly influences

(Continued on page 6)



Cleo Zifovski, a peer specialist at CHOICES since January 2020, just earned a degree in counseling rehabilitation and mental health from the Rutgers School of Health Professions on May 12, 2024. CHOICES would like to congratulate her on reaching this significant milestone.

Lung Cancer Rates Increasing for Young Women

By Lisa Evans

I read an article in the New York Times that said lung cancer rates for women are higher than men in the 35-54 age group. Wow. I was stunned. I, like many people, assumed that lung cancer was diagnosed more among older men. There are a lot of statistics available that report how many new cancer cases there are per 100,000 people, by age group, by gender, and by race. These statistics are important to researchers and to doctors. To us, former and past smokers, the fact that we could be diagnosed with lung cancer at age 35 is significant for both women and men, but especially for younger women.

When a 35-year-old woman tells a doctor that she is experiencing a cough that has lasted for longer than six weeks, upper back pain, shortness of breath or an unexplained weight loss, all early symptoms of lung cancer, the woman is unlikely to be given any screening for lung cancer. The American Cancer Society (ACS) states that the average age of people diagnosed with lung cancer is 70, and that only a small number of people are diagnosed younger than age 45. This fact may be the reason why doctors may misdiagnose lung cancer in a younger woman. They do not expect to find the illness. More concerning is a woman who has never smoked seeking medical attention for the same symptoms. About 15- 20% of lung cancers diagnosed in women are in non-smokers. Lung cancer is more often diagnosed in a later stage. Delays in diagnosing the disease could contribute to a poor long-term survival rate for the patient.

If you exhibit any of the early signs of lung cancer, regardless of your age, let your doctor

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“ Given the increasing rates of lung cancer among young women, this situation isn't going to get better. It's only going to get worse. ”

Narjust Florez, MD



Lung Cancer *(Continued from page 3)*

know that you smoke and request appropriate lung cancer screening. If you are diagnosed with lung cancer, early intervention will improve your health outcome.

The most common symptoms of lung cancer are:

- A cough that does not go away or gets worse
- Coughing up blood or rust-colored sputum (spit or phlegm)
- Chest pain that is often worse with deep breathing, coughing, or laughing
- Hoarseness
- Loss of appetite
- Unexplained weight loss
- Shortness of breath
- Feeling tired or weak
- Infections such as bronchitis and pneumonia that don't go away or keep coming back
- New onset of wheezing

Overall, the incidence of lung cancer in the general population is declining. Americans are smoking less. The increase in diagnoses among younger women is puzzling researchers and so far there is no clear-cut explanation.

What we do know is that younger adults can develop lung cancer and the number of cases in younger adults is rising. The takeaway for all smokers is it is very important that they are aware that they can get lung cancer at any age. For additional information on lung cancer screening, call 844-CANCER-NJ.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/12/well/live/lung-cancer-women-screening.html>

<https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/lung-cancer/detection-diagnosis-staging/signs-symptoms.html>

Testimonial *(Continued from page 1)*

wellness center I was working at during that time, A Better Life CWC in Newark, NJ, where they came into our center on a monthly basis, and they made a tremendously positive impact upon many of our members who were interested in quitting smoking but could not seem to do it alone. CHOICES assured our members that they would help them every step of the way, and they did, in fact, keep their promises.

Currently, I work at one of our hospital wellness centers, Woody Guthrie HWC in Morris Plains, NJ, on the grounds of Greystone Park Psychiatric Hospital, where we have a population of members who have shared about their struggles with not being able to smoke at the hospital, and they have also expressed concerns that they will start smoking again once they are discharged, which they feel they have already gotten this far without smoking, so they would like to remain smoke-free once they reside in the community again. CHOICES has been doing monthly presentations for our members at Woody Guthrie HWC in which our members express their deepest gratitude for the CHOICES program.

Additionally, I also work as a Per Diem Wellness Associate for CSPNJ's Peer Wellness Respite Services, where we frequently connect guests who are interested in quitting smoking with the CHOICES program in which I have received only the most positive feedback from our guests that have utilized these resources. The Consumer Tobacco Advocates from the CHOICES program may have quit smoking, but they certainly do not quit when it comes to helping their fellow peers to become smoke-free.....There are no ifs, ands, or "butts" about it!

(Serena Zuppardo, Hospital Center Manager for Woody Guthrie HWC at Greystone Park Psychiatric Hospital / Per Diem Wellness Associate for CSPNJ's Peer Wellness Respite Services)

Mindfulness *(Continued from page 1)*

These 3 skills reinforce each other. For example, if you see that all feelings are in flux, you will be more accepting of that feeling which will then allow you to observe it longer (awareness). The reason we cultivate these skills is to ease suffering and make one less reactive to their thoughts and feelings. This, in turn, allows for more freedom and choice in one's decisions. If you get a craving, here's one technique you can use:

- ⇒ Take a few slow, deep breaths (this itself might help)
- ⇒ Now, notice where in your body the feeling of craving is most prominent. It might be in your chest, your stomach, your hands, wherever in your body you physically feel that craving.
- ⇒ Now, try to observe what shape that craving is. Is it roundish, square, jagged, etc and try to trace your awareness around this intense part, almost as if a doctor was examining the feeling. Observe it and try not to react it.
- ⇒ Try to notice what the sensation physically feels like, for example is it tight, painful, throbbing, pulsating, etc. You want to observe the craving sensations as objectively as possible, like a scientist almost.
- ⇒ Finally notice if you can witness the sensations changing at all, maybe subtly moving or changing in intensity.

These 5 steps will take practice. Ultimately what we hope to achieve by practicing these skills is a lessened reactivity to the feelings that make up your cravings. If you can do this, they won't immediately overpower you and you will get more time to make better decisions regarding your tobacco use.

Trinkets *(Continued from page 2)*

He worked at the Tobacco Dependence Program at the time. It is a coincidence that I came along just a couple of years later, in 2006, and quit smoking after 8 tries using the Tobacco Dependence Program in New Brunswick. I started working for CHOICES in 2008 and the Director of CHOICES was talking a lot about the Trinkets and Trash website.

For example, the following image was published in 2007 (I used to smoke Camels on occasion): This is a coupon through direct mail featuring a smoking accessory, a camel lighter.



Direct mail piece in promotion of Camel Wides, featured in the shape of a Zippo lighter. Uses tattoo style art, as seen in Camel Wides print ads. Piece includes an offer for a freelighter, redeemable from the brand's website, and 4 coupons (2 x \$3.00 off a pack coupons and 2 Buy 1 Get 1 Free coupons).

Of course, there is a wide variety of images on the website. The images can be used for any purpose as long as you cite the website. Try it out!



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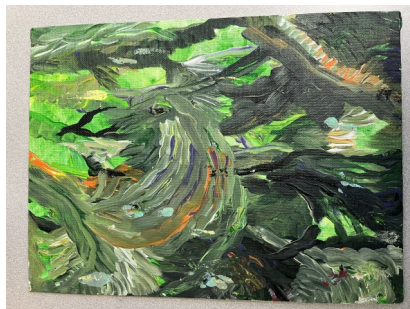
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Intention *(Continued from page 3)*

an individual's level of effort and dedication towards a task. One's attitude towards conduct is determined by their belief in the consequences of their actions and their assessment of those actions and perceived behavior control of their ability to either quit or continue a harmful habit [3].

Izu (2018) says that spiritual evaluation models provide important rules for treating patients in a complete way. Based on a 2016 report from the National Association of Social Workers, it is important for medical social workers to also look at spiritual issues. As a result, social service workers must play an important part in helping people who want to stop smoking, along with psychologists, pharmacists, and other helpful professionals[1]. Ultimately, a lot of individuals have turned to spiritual sources for the courage to quit smoking. Several ex-smokers share their experiences. I am aware that a big part of my healing has been my sincere desire to give up and get well as the numerous prayers that have surrounded me.

1.Izu, R. O. (2018). Exploring How Spirituality/Religiosity Protects against Tobacco Use. Northcentral University.
 2.McFadden, D., Croghan, I. T., Piderman, K. M., Lundstrom, C., Schroeder, D. R., & Hays, J. T. (2011). Spirituality in tobacco dependence: a Mayo Clinic survey. *Explore*, 7(3), 162-167.



This beautiful artwork was submitted by Peter G., a CHOICES supporter. Thank you Peter!

The CHOICES team will come to you! The CHOICES team of peer advocates will visit your group or program in New Jersey and provide mental health consumers with education about the consequences of smoking and tobacco products along with information regarding treatment resources available to make quitting easier. Email us dooleypc@rutgers.edu to set up date.

