

SMOKE DOES MORE THAN POLLUTE THE AIR: CURRENT SMOKING RESEARCH

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Recently I found myself involved with the task of sorting through some old files that I had buried in my office. I am a collector of anything and everything that in any way will aid me in performing my job to the best of my abilities. I have for the last twenty years conducted group seminars for behavior modification in the areas of weight control and smoking cessation. As you may already know, these areas have afflicted many people in all walks of life. The press and the media have deluged the public with awareness of the health risks involved with both of these behavioral problems. I have scraps of paper and bits and pieces of information that I have collected over the years from my involvement in this area of the health care profession. As you may have guessed, the job ahead of me was truly a daunting one.

As I progressed through the task at hand, I found myself stopping periodically to familiarize myself with articles. I felt a need to delve further into researching the effects that smoking has on the people of today. (Some of the information I had was so old it didn't even mention second-hand smoke.) Thus my reason for writing this article.

My first action by way of research was to contact the American Cancer Society. When I told them my intent, they were extremely courteous and helpful. They offered to send me "the works," and at no charge! Additionally, the package of information arrived the very next day.

As a "veteran" in the business, I can comfortably say that what I share with my clients in my seminars is a combination of sufficient information pertaining to statistical information, mind dynamics, and hypnosis for change. You would think with twenty years under my belt that nothing could surprise me on these subjects. Nothing could be further from the truth! What I learned through research was astounding.

For the benefit of the therapists who are working with clients who wish to stop smoking, the following information may prove to be helpful in one way or another.

First and foremost, your clients need to understand that there is no safe way to smoke. Cigarettes can cause damage to the human body, and even a small amount is dangerous.

Cigarettes are perhaps the only legal product whose advertised and intended use is harmful to the body and is proven to cause cancer.

Smoking fewer cigarettes is not the answer. Neither is switching from a high tar and nicotine cigarette to one with low tar and nicotine. Smokers often smoke more to get the same nicotine dose as before.

Make no bones about it. Cigarette smoking is addictive. The nicotine in cigarette smoke is what causes an addiction, just like heroin and cocaine. When taken in small doses, it produces pleasurable feelings that make a smoker want to smoke more. Smokers usually become dependent on nicotine and suffer both physical and psychological withdrawal symptoms when they stop smoking. These symptoms include nervousness, headaches, irritability, and sleeplessness. Nicotine affects the chemistry in the brain and the central nervous system. It can also affect the mood and temperament of the smoker. Anyone who starts smoking is at the risk of becoming addicted to nicotine. Studies show that among addictive behaviors, cigarette smoking is most likely to become an established habit during adolescence.

Nicotine is a poison, and taken in large doses, could kill a person by paralyzing breathing muscles. Smokers usually take it in small amounts that the body can quickly break down and get rid of, which is why nicotine does not kill instantly. The first dose of nicotine causes a person to feel awake and alert, while later doses result in a calm, relaxed feeling.

Nicotine can make new smokers who get too much of it feel dizzy or nauseous. It also lowers skin temperature and reduces blood flow in the extremities of our body. Evidence shows that nicotine plays an important role in increasing smokers' risk of heart disease and stroke.

Tobacco smoke contains at least forty-three carcinogenic substances. Tobacco use accounts for 30% of all cancer deaths in the United States. Smoking is responsible for 90% of lung cancer among men and 70% among women. Cancer of the mouth, larynx, esophagus, kidney, bladder, pancreas, and uterine cervix also have cigarette smoking in common as a major cause.

All cigarette smokers have a lower level of proper lung function than do non-smokers. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, including chronic bronchitis and emphysema, kills about 81,000 people each year. Cigarette smoking is responsible for more than 65,000 of these deaths.

The smoke from a bumming cigarette is harmful. It is a complex mixture of organic and inorganic compounds generated by the combustion (burning) of tobacco and additives.

Cigarette smoke contains tar, which is made up of over 4,000 chemicals. Some of the chemicals that can be found in cigarette smoke are cyanide, benzene, formaldehyde, methanol (wood alcohol), acetylene (the fuel used in welding torches), and ammonia. It also contains the poisonous gases nitrogen oxide and carbon monoxide. Wherever smoke touches living cells, it does harm. Even if they don't inhale, pipe and cigar smokers run the risk of getting lip, mouth, and tongue cancer.

Smoking also affects women who are pregnant. Babies of smoking women average 6 ounces less at birth. When a pregnant woman smokes, the nicotine, carbon monoxide, and other dangerous chemicals enter the bloodstream and pass directly into the baby's body. Statistics show a direct relation between smoking during pregnancy and spontaneous abortion, stillbirths, deaths among newborns and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). SIDS triples for babies of mothers who smoke during pregnancy.

People smoke for a variety of conscious reasons. Most people begin smoking between the ages of 10 and 18. Startling, isn't it? Peer pressure and curiosity are the major influences that encourage them to experiment with smoking. Also, children with parents who smoke are more likely to begin smoking than those who have nonsmoking parents. Those who begin to smoke at a younger age are more likely than late starters to develop long term nicotine addiction.

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Another prevalent influence in our society is the tobacco industry's advertisements for its products. They spend nearly \$6 billion annually to develop and market ads that depict smoking as an exciting, glamorous, healthy activity. A nonsmoker who is married to a smoker has a 30% greater risk of developing lung cancer than a nonsmoker living with a nonsmoker. Children whose parents smoke are more likely to suffer from pneumonia or bronchitis in the first two years of life than children who live in a smoke-free household. Environmentally-transmitted smoke can also affect nonsmokers by causing eye irritation, headaches, nausea, and dizziness.

In today's economy, the tobacco industry is one of the most profitable businesses in the country. In 1991 tobacco manufacturers' revenue was \$32 billion. Health care costs caused directly by smoking total more than \$50 billion each year. Lost productivity caused by smoking costs the US economy more than \$50 billion each year. This totals more than \$100 billion lost each year to health care costs and lost productivity due to smoking.

Smokeless tobaccos are not a safe alternative to smoking cigarettes. Smokeless tobacco contains nicotine, the same addictive drug found in cigarettes. Snuff dippers consume 10 times the amount of cancer-causing substances (nitrosamines) as cigarette smokers. Some brands contain as much as 20,000 times the legal limit of nitrosamines permitted in certain foods. The juice from smokeless tobacco is absorbed directly through the lining of the mouth. This creates sores that often lead to cancer of the mouth. Smokeless tobacco users greatly increase their risk of the other cancers, including gum, pharynx, larynx, and esophagus. It also causes bad breath, discoloration of the teeth, gum disease, and tooth loss.

If you are a smoker, the chances that smoking will kill you are astounding, startling, and frightening. Three million people die each year as a result of smoking. In the United States, tobacco use is responsible for nearly one in five deaths, killing more than

400,000 Americans each year. This is more than the number of people who would die every year if three jumbo jetliners crashed each day with no survivors. Smoking is the single more preventable cause of death in our society.

In closing I would like to adamantly express to others the need to continually expand their knowledge in their chosen profession. Become a student of the business. Buy the books, tapes, and videos. Attend conferences regularly. For it is only within our quest for knowledge that we find true satisfaction in knowing that we have given our client 100% of ourselves.