

MYTHS and FACTS

Tobacco & Behavioral Health Population

Myth

Tobacco is not as harmful as other substances.

People with mental illness are not interested in quitting their tobacco use.

Quitting tobacco use interferes with recovery from mental illness or addictions.

Tobacco is necessary for self-medication and tobacco cessation would be too stressful.

Smoking is the lowest priority concern for patients with acute psychiatric symptoms.

Fact

Tobacco is an addictive substance and causes more deaths than alcohol, drug induced and suicide deaths combined.

People with mental illness are motivated to quit and can do so without aggravating psychiatric symptoms if provided appropriate support.

Tobacco treatment during addictions treatment is associated with a 25% increased likelihood of long-term abstinence from alcohol and illicit drugs.

Smoking is a predictor of greater problem severity and poorer treatment responses in individuals undergoing outpatient substance use treatment.

Patients with psychiatric disorders are far more likely to die from tobacco-related diseases than from their mental illness.

The Master Settlement Agreement between the attorneys general of 46 states and Brown & Williamson/British American Tobacco, Lorillard, Philip Morris, R.J. Reynolds, the Council for Tobacco Research, and the Tobacco Institute released millions of additional documents to the public. These documents provided an unprecedented look at how tobacco industry lawyers were involved in the design, conduct, and dissemination of tobacco industry-sponsored research.

The tobacco industry also formed research funding organizations that gave the appearance that the research they supported was independent of influence from the industry. The *Council for Tobacco Research* (CTR) was formed by U.S. tobacco companies in 1954 as the Tobacco Industry Research Committee (TIRC). Industry representatives stated publicly that the TIRC was formed to fund independent scientific research to determine whether there is a link between smoking and lung cancer. However, internal documents from Brown and Williamson Tobacco Company have shown that the TIRC was actually formed for public relations purposes, to convince the public that the hazards of smoking had not been proven.

Prochaska JJ. *Smoking and Mental Illness—Breaking the Link*. New England Journal of Medicine, 2011;365:196-8

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Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Vital Signs: Current Cigarette Smoking Among Adults Aged ≥18 Years With Mental Illness—United States, 2009–2011*. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report 2013;62(05):81-7