

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender

The Institute for Local Government Administration and Rural Development (ILGARD), part of Ohio University's Voinovich Center for Leadership and Public Affairs, gathered data through focus group discussions on the awareness, experience, and perspective of 13 population groups about tobacco use and prevention. The focus group transcripts for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender follows. This project was funded by the Ohio Department of Health and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Reports on the findings are available through the Ohio Department of Health.

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QUESTION 1

The first question is: What television commercial, print advertisement, or billboard that tells about the health hazards associated with tobacco have you seen and what was the message as your remember?

Um, Okay, I don't have TV so that doesn't help much.

Billboards, magazine, that are about health hazards.

I think I have seen some in magazines. I can remember some of those MTV ads, where they put on this big stage production or whatever, bunch of people laying dead. Probably some in magazines, but not really any.

The most that stand out most in my mind at this point, but is the STAND, but I forget what it stands for. STAND up, STAND against tobacco. I am trying to think if there are any in mainstream magazines that I have seen or in the LGBT magazines. Actually, some advertisements, yeah, probably some advertisements in those. I am having trouble differentiating those and, I mean they are prevention magazines or health promotion magazines that see what have anti-smoking messages. But I think there have been some in those magazines. Somehow, I think it is out in California, but I am not sure specifically about LGBT

Any message that you remember?

Actually the only one that I remember one of these sites. Be upright be upstand? The, what is it, one is "Mind if I light up?" and the tagline is "Mind if I die?"

That is a billboard.

I can think of a million and one of them that I always see all the time. Which is like a lot of the stand ones and some that, there is this one that really sticks out in my head. It's a commercial where this kid is running around a school and runs into a bathroom and turns on this spigot and there is smoke that comes out of everywhere and they are like: "Tobacco doesn't care who you are it just cares that you die." It's like a really creepy commercial that kind of makes me scared. There's also like the really old one "Tobacco is wacko" Um, and then one that was up in my gymnasium in elementary school said kissing someone who smokes is like licking an ashtray. But I don't know, there are a lot of commercials that tell or like reading out of a tobacco company's report... I don't know it's just kind of interesting to see these commercials that are coming out. And then, Like the little arrows pointing at the people like "This is what the tobacco companies say about this group of people" and also having cows go around like pooping cause there's nothing, or farting, I don't know.

That's the first time that word's been used in the focus group.

I don't know, it's just like Methane is in tobacco and also in cow manure.

As she was talking I also remember the Great American Smoke out like they ... (inaudible) right around that time and that kind of thing as well.

There were some more. Like a bunch of people around a table and they were the executives of the tobacco companies and they were like all these evil people sitting around with shadows over their face.

Eww!

I remember the STAND commercials, the arrow pointing down that says "Lacks self-esteem" I also remember one that was popping up all over the place. It was um, they were out of a magazine. You cut them out and put them on straws, like the McDonald's drink straws and you were supposed to put them in the urinals or toilets or something. That says "Cigarettes contain 'Urea' and so does Urine." The first time I ever quit, quit smoking it was cause of those, and, it creeped me out.

How long did you quit smoking?

6 Months.

QUESTION 2

Okay. Number 2 and this is just answer as you feel. Have you participated in any tobacco prevention or cessation activities in the past two or three years? What was the focus? Was it on youth, was it on adults? Did it include Second Hand smoke information?

I certainly have not.

I don't think I have in the past two years.

Not in the past two or three years.

So when you attempted to quit it was just, you said you were going to put the pack down you didn't go to a group or anything.

Well a class I took last quarter kind of really shed a big amount of light on it. Was my HSLs class.

HSLs?

HSLs, Hearing speech and language science and there was a day when our professor. Was showing us pictures of people with throat cancer and like...

Freak you out and....

Yeah, all kinds of things having to do with that. He Kind of promoted the whole not smoking thing and he was like "Hey if you do smoke now [unintelligible]" and I was like that was a good claim I don't want to sound like that when I am 90, or 70, 60 whatever.

So that was like health education? You were being educated?

Yeah. That wasn't the focus of the class but that was a couple days of it that we focused on.

All sorts of stuff. Health classes in high school. In the last two years, well yeah, my last year in high school which was like two years ago. Um, I actually, it's really funny. When STAND first came out it was the whole, those little ads, I ended up working for the Cincinnati chapter of the youth movement and then I quit doing that quickly and then started smoking again. But, you know.

QUESTIONS 3 AND 4

Okay. Why do the population Lesbian, Gays, Bisexuals, Transgenders- what is the shorter term for that?

(Group in unison) LGBT.

LGBT (laughs) Why do LGBT use tobacco? What are some differences within LGBT such as men vs. women, youth v. adult, people who are in poverty v. people who have money, smoking tobacco vs. smokeless tobacco?

I don't see as much non-smoke tobacco in the community.

There are a lot of cloves

Yeah, and a lot of hookah bars and stuff I know in Cincinnati. They became really big, they have that flavored tobacco.

With the gay community?

Yeah, well, with the entire community in general. Because that was such an exotic and trendy thing to do.

How about bidis, kreteks or blunts? Black and Milds?

Black and Milds I know.

Black and Milds, well it depends

They are kind of like an occasional treat.

It's an urban kind of thing.

Differences between men and women?

I know a lot more women that smoke

Yeah, actually.

I am trying to think... it's interesting cause from time to time I will go out to a bar in West Virginia you can still smoke in the bars there. The other local bars are in Columbus and now Columbus has a smoking ban. So I am mostly trying to compare the two.

Exactly, with that smoking ban now.

I think a lot of people smoked only when they go out. So now that you can't smoke when you go out they probably smoke a little bit less but there are still people huddled outside on the back patios of places. But I am trying to think of even the students that I encountered or other people that I know. Actually I would

say that of the older gay men, say over thirty, or gay people of the, gay and lesbian people over thirty, more men smoke. But, um, college age students I see more women smoking than men. I would agree with what they were saying.

For some strange reason it sticks out in my mind that around here, it seems that with the college students... it's more, maybe it's just what I see, but more it's mentholated cigarettes.

Menthol?

Menthol is strangely popular.

I don't know but the cloves too. It's the whole thing that, It's different, and maybe cause it's harsher or it has a different aftertaste...

Cloves are an additive in tobacco?

A clove is not actually tobacco.

It's a completely different variety of tobacco.

More pipe tobacco.

Yeah, less nicotine, more tar though, which is... and most of the time those are flavored. Vanilla, cherry, there are three or four different varieties of cloves. There's Dijorums.

Dijorums are what I see most often.

Springwaters are another one. Springwaters are a clove cigarette that are completely pure it has not additives. Some of the more natural cigarettes is what I see more.

If you had to put a percentage on cigarettes versus everything else together, what would be for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender community?

Like 99 percent.

99 percent Cigarettes?

Yeah.

I know very few that dip or chew. I have never actually, I have actually encountered cans. I've never actually seen anybody.

But I am including cloves and everything else.. Cigarettes vs. everything else...

75 to 25 percent..

Yeah or higher.

Yeah, 75, 80 percent.

QUESTION 5

What are the brands that are the most popular?

Camel.

Camel.

Marlboro.

Virginia Slims, Newports. Virginia Slims is more of a, I don't want to say it but it's more of a lesbian cigarette than anything.

I see a lot of old ladies smoke.

Yeah..

For college students, the cheapest thing you can buy.

Pretty much yeah.

Kentucky's Best.

But, camels really. I don't know why.

It's the Turkish blend, the ones that taste better.

QUESTION 6

In terms of quitting tobacco use, what kind of messages work with the LGBT community to encourage them to quit tobacco?

First thing that comes to my mind, typically, what I have noticed LGBT, particularly students don't want to hear the message. In fact the more that you talk about it the more they (inaudible). And there are some studies and some talk that there is a higher percentage of LGBT people that smoke compared to other groups. I know one person said I have tried to find studies and there is nothing there that shows that definitively and that kind of thing. So there is a real, I think it gets, it think it probably feeds into personal freedoms and the fact that there are restrictions on our freedoms in some ways and we don't want any other restrictions on our freedoms is what it seems.

I hate to mention it.

There is like a militancy about "No I will" other people. By in large LGBT college students probably don't smoke as much as they probably did, at least on this campus, even three years ago there was like a big group of people that smoked.

It's kind of a split between you either you smoke or you don't smoke. There is no occasional thing for the most part around here.

Well, (laugh).

I think a lot of people, just like when they drink they smoke.

Well yeah, social smokers are one thing. But the regular smokers, you either, well I don't know.

What do you think would be the best way to reduce tobacco use among LGBT people?

Bars and coffee shops from my experiences. I smoked more in coffee shops in high school than I did at any other time.

So you are saying a smoking ban would help?

It would move it to other areas and it wouldn't be as prevalent in public. Cause it's, around coffee shops and bars as long as you are paying they don't care what you do.

I do think that when you do limit, whether that's a smoking ban or even restrict locations. What I have seen in either bars or coffee shops is, it's, I think people smoke more or more often a chain smoking kind of thing, you put one out, you see someone else smoking and you think I am going to light up a cigarette too. It becomes this kind of mindless thoughtless kind of thing that you are doing that if you weren't in an environment where you could just light up at anytime you would probably pace it out or think about it. Your mind would go elsewhere. So, yeah, I guess.

QUESTION 7

If you were a nonsmoker, what has kept you from starting? Or if you successfully quit smoking what has kept you from restarting?

(Sigh) Fear. My parents recently found out about my smoking habit and they... there's a lot of threats involved with that. And this is after I quit smoking and they found out that I used to smoke and they came across an old pack of cigarettes and they flipped out. I was raised in an extremely conservative household so, the fact that I was smoking didn't go over well. And when mommy and daddy pay tuition.....

Yeah, um, definitely the health hazards and not having the money to give to people buy cigarettes, I don't know. Just, I guess, I was just more like this was five bucks like every couple of weeks and oh crap I am running out of money. And that kind of accumulative amount of money that I spend on cigarettes, it kind of makes me sick to think about it.

I know last quarter, even in the two months that I was smoking last quarter was, I think I went through \$140 or \$150 bucks on cigarettes. And it was, it just, it became mindless, oh um, you know, it's Friday and I am out of cigarettes and I am going to hang out with people on Saturday, so I might as well go buy a pack of cigarettes...

And then you start smoking on Friday

Right and I have gone through a quarter of them by the end of Friday

QUESTION 8

Are there any specific barriers that keep LGBT from accessing tobacco cessation programs? There are programs in Athens...

Yeah, I...

Should we say it was lack of knowledge of these tobacco cessation programs?

That could be.

Well, I think that in this area, because there are kind of two different worlds what happens on campus vs. what happens in the rest of Athens And even, trying to watch it, trying to watch out for these kind of things... you don't see it. Maybe if you got the Messenger in terms of newspapers over the free ones, you might catch something, I think if people wanted to quit they kind find information in the phonebook or from websites or that kind of thing.

Are people familiar with the quit line?

The Ohio tobacco quit line....

You've read that billboard!

Uh, NO, no no no no, we got pamphlets at the store I was working at over winter break and ah, the only reason I remember those pamphlets is because they were over the parking lot everyday. People would end up getting ahold of them and they would end up all over our parking lot and that is the only reason I memorized it.

Something that I wanted to add from the prior question about how I really wanted to quit I am also in the marching band here and I could also tell that I was out of breath a lot easier. Like I have Asthma so it's probably not a good idea for (inaudible) It's really, like I really just want to be able to breathe, basically.

So when you feel well you'll know if you start smoking again you won't feel that well.

I know that when I first quit I felt horrible for weeks and then I was just around people that smoke and that felt so much better. It was such a horrible thing to realize, that it wasn't that I had become dependent on it was just a normal thing for me and it felt that something was wrong with the day the fact that I hadn't smoked.

QUESTION 9

That is the next question actually, if you are a tobacco user what keeps you using tobacco?

It became part of my day, you know I am walking between this class and this class and I know I can smoke two cigarettes between this class and this class, and it became something to do. It was like I am having to walk up Jeff Hill... you know...

(inaudible) by walking up a hill.

It adds a ritual or regimentedness to it as well, you know. Like you were saying you tend to time it out that way. So it, I think that's part of it. But I also think that for some people what I see with students is if one person is going to go smoke and then like four people are now smoking where it's really that only one person wanted to go smoke or felt like they needed to smoke but then it becomes this group or community effort.

Or if you are walking around campus and see people walking down the street with a cigarette in their hand it makes you want a cigarette. Or oh my god I have a test in an hour, oh my god.

Or before a class, Like, I...

It's just something to do on your way to class.

Yeah you know, I do theater here and you know it's like you know, right before rehearsal, or at the five minute break in rehearsal for people to go do coffee or whatever, or the director to go drink, or whatever, but um, depending on how bad the show is going. And it's like the entire cast and crew we were all standing outside to get air and it was like, oh, you know, does anybody have a cigarette? And it's like okay you've got this you know, trade you one for these. It became, it reminded me of trading baseball cards when I was little.. it's like oh, you've got cloves, I love cloves!

QUESTION 10

You guys are getting good at answering the next question! When and where are LGBT most likely to use tobacco?

Bar.

Parties and bars.

Parties.

Pretty much anywhere there is alcohol.

Yeah, and alcohol, Coffee and cigarettes are a good staple. Alcohol and cigarettes and coffee.

I'm not really sure where I lie on the whole nonsmoker-smoker thing cause I hardly ever do it, but then I do. I'll buy a pack and use it very very slowly...

Keep it in the freezer and it will stay fresh for a year.

Thank you.

I've heard it, but I never believed it.

I learned that from the tobacco prevention people.

We did not say that.

We did not say that!

You know like maybe, I go through a pack every half a year.

Whoa, that's pretty good,

But I still do it you know.. and for whatever reason. I think a lot of time, like if I get really depressed or something you know, like well it's too early to go drink and something so...

It's 10 am I can't go drinking.

QUESTION 11

What do tobacco companies do to encourage LGBT to start using tobacco products? What do they do, do they target LGBT?

I don't think so, no. I think it is kind of a community, like almost a tradition or something that is passed down very much.

Part of, I think for LGBT folks, particularly in the past the only place you could gather and socialize tended to be bars. So I think that going out to bars and then battling for bars and smoking I think was also part of it. But I know I have also been in a gay bar that was handing out free cigarettes samples.

Oh my gosh.

Really?

Yeah it was like you got two packs of menthols and they just were, like, had trays of them walking around. This was actually in Columbus. That was also in the last few years. They are also trying to figure out other ways to market it cause (inaudible) So I think in some ways they are probably targeting, I don't know beyond that though how they doing it. I have not seen it directly.

Can you think of a counter-strategy? Were the tobacco companies to target LGBT would there be a counter strategy that you could think of? Cause it's kind of manipulation....

I know one good way to cut down. Back in Cincinnati, I went back home to Cincinnati for winter break and one of the local staples in the community in which I grew up there is a coffee shop during the day that is a bar at night. Well the owner of the bar is this nice old lady which everybody loves and she recently got lung cancer. And I know that dropped the use probably by half of the people cause everybody knew this woman. And it was just part of the community... so... I think if it's an impact, if there's a sudden decision like that bar and coffee shop went completely smoke free following her getting sick cause they wanted to be nice to her.

QUESTION 12

A little bit different topic here... what is the impact on youth when tobacco is used on TV and in movies? Like what's that TV Real World or whatever, they always seem to be smoking...

I think that, I know from me growing up... (inaudible) But the tape at that time (Laughing) I think it used to be really portrayed in a very glamorous way.. I think if you look at old films you see it. It's a very glamorous kind of thing, um, but I don't necessarily think it's, and I think it meant for me growing up, current things it was cool or it was like this rebellion thing. And I don't know that is plays that way anymore for youth growing up. But I think in normal life you just see it over and over, and you think oh.. and I think when you are trying to quit when you see it on TV also, it's that reminder, like oh I need a cigarette or oooh cigarette. Where you hadn't even thought about it but then you see somebody smoking so there's that repetition of it.

Though I would say that there is also a little bit of uh, I don't know, a kind of go out and smoke from a lot of the community images, just because. Yes, it normalizes but it also these gorgeous people and where I know it's bad but maybe it's okay. Slightly above normal I guess.

QUESTION 13

How do younger people under 18 years old get tobacco products since it is illegal for them to buy them?

Ahh, I knew a high school teacher that used to buy us cigarettes...

Oh my god.

Um, coffee shops, just go there with friends. Everybody has a friend or an older brother or older sister that's cool with buying you know (inaudible) if you really want to you can get whatever the heck you want..

How can you get it in the coffee shop?

Um nobody really checks identification..

So they sell them behind the counter?

No no no no. it was just people handing them out.... But you wouldn't be purchasing them.

Not like out of machine..

Are there any machines anymore?

Yes there are. I see them out at truck stops...which is not normally somewhere most people go.

The only place I remember seeing them are at like bars and this is when they were two or three something a pack but they were charging five dollars for it. You put 5 dollars in you get your cigarettes but you get no change back. I think there are always people old enough to buy or that look old enough. I am sure a lot of places that don't card, little mom and pop shops probably more so than some of the more corporate places but I think if you get a sympathetic person in a corporate place you know, someone does sell them to.

When I was in high school a friend of mine's brother worked in a gas station so we always go there and buy cigarettes or if somebody else already had something from some unknown place. But like I mean he had, I mean, okay, I'll get this person back and then the next person who had them...

Connections...

Yeah.

That is so underworld...

I got them as a kid, I think friends just had them.

Family members. I remember family gatherings.

I remember walking in a dry stream bed and you all probably won't catch up with this, or catch this. I was smoking but not really smoking I was probably in fifth or sixth grade and I was burning holes in a Big Mac container.... They were Styrofoam back then. And like I just have that memory of that, I don't know where we got the cigarettes.

QUESTION 14

What are some tobacco related health problems?

Lung Cancer.

Lung Cancer, Throat Cancer.

Mouth Cancer.

There's a lot of things.

Other health problems, breathing.

Emphysema

There's a lot of things, I remember when I first started smoking I remember burning the heck out of my fingers all the time. Like, or, dropping cigarettes and burning yourself. Accidentally someone burning someone...

So for you it wasn't really a matter...

(too many voices at one time)

Do you see many of these problems among the LGBT?

I think we focus on other diseases...

Yeah... I know that, cause I work for the University everyone is just always young and I think that they're that invincible like yeah I'm not going to have any problems and that's down the road... and...

All of these problems take years and years and years to develop and by that time. They're invisible to us??

It's funny cause I grew up with smokers and I know it can be really painful and a lot of health problems. But the people that I've known who were smokers none of them have ever had any problems really with smoking.

Yeah the only person that I have ever known was my grandfather and it was sad that the first cigarette I ever had was at his funeral and he died of lung cancer. It's kind of one of those stupid things that yeah, we don't see them that much. We see people dying of old age or dying of other things we don't really see it, or we're invincible like [another participant] said.

QUESTION 15

Do the LGBT people think that second hand smoke has a negative effect on health?

I don't think it's a focus

I think people have an understanding of it, I think most people have the understanding that it is more harmful than direct smoke in some ways.

Because if you go somewhere it builds up, it really does, but it doesn't change their behavior.

In terms of them stop smoking, or not going to those places. I don't think so, I don't think it changes them.

I don't think people are as conscious of it either, the people who are acquiring the secondhand smoke, or that they are giving other people it it's not really a conscious thing where people notice.

I do see that it's not a conscious thing but I do see a weird self-conscious thing.

Right in front of you, and you're like excuse me, hello, I'm right here. Or if they like throw their cigarette on the ground like I remember I did that when I smoked. And I'm just like, I can't believe, it's just so rude.

Or when you are at a dance or something and people are dancing someone

And someone blows smoke in your face

Or like they just trip and they hit you with the cigarette...

(Excited Sigh) yes that happens all the time.

That's usually the only time I notice.

I notice it as a subconscious thing. Places like the local Casa is just people notorious subconsciously people split to one side if they smoke or they smoke directly on the floor. And it's, weird

At the local establishment part of it is smoking, there is a smoking side and a nonsmoking side... and the one side is heavier in the smoke you can definitely tell.

Do you think that smokers respect the rights of nonsmokers?

No.

No.

They don't even think about it.

You were saying there is a smoking etiquette...

Some people do learn to like blow up,

Blow up, hold the cigarette down when you are moving, or hold it above your head when moving through a crowd. I learned a lot of the smoking etiquette by going to concerts where it would be, you're standing there and the person next to you is not smoking so you blow straight up, or if you are a jerk you blow straight at them...

Like walking down the sidewalk I would switch the cigarette to my other hand if someone was coming towards me on that side, or blow out.

I don't think I have ever had someone actually breathe into my face.

But, there is that whole thing where people just tend to not really care as long as the cigarette is out they just toss it wherever.

Yeah throw it on the street

I think there are some people who just have no clue that other people around who are troubled or bothered by their smoke. Um, or they are smoking, but I also, I do think that I have seen over the years that people are more aware like they ask or they will go away from the group or go outside. Or I have even seen

people right outside the door and as people are coming through they are trying to wave their hand to try and clear the smoke a little bit.

Awwwwww...

Um, So I think some people are aware. I think there are also those militant folks who don't care, you're not going to tell me what I can or cannot do. It's my right to smoke and there doesn't seem to be that connection that it's my right to not breath smoky air.

QUESTION 16

Has a close friend or someone in your family died or been diagnosed with a cancer or condition related to tobacco use?

My grandfather died of lung cancer and my great uncle was diagnosed with lung cancer but um, it's one of those great jokes that if he didn't die of lung cancer he died because he slept that much. That's what we jokingly said, but we knew it was because he died of lung cancer related stuff, but he didn't die directly of the cancer.

The father of one of my friends was diagnosed with emphysema and he continues to smoke now just not as much and he kind of hides it sometimes. Like he has a wife but they split up but they still live together anyway she always like "Hey put that out" but he smokes even though he has emphysema.

I don't know anybody that died of a smoking related death. My grandparents, I think it could have impacted their health but they are actually both alive, um, they are in their mid 70's and in their mid 60s they both quit one day cold turkey. I think had they continued those last ten years in addition to what I have seen in terms of their health decline it probably would have exacerbated it, but I have not seen anything directly and I don't know anybody that has died for instance.

Those that have, has it changed your outlook on smoking at all?

I started smoking at his funeral so know, it didn't. I had my first cigarette at his wake, I also had my first drink. Like yeah it changes my outlook every once in a while, it changes a lot of people's outlooks, like it definitely changed my parent's outlook towards it. Like my mother you know, now that she's realized, when I got out with my friends she's like "How many of your friends smoke?" and I would list off the people you know, and she'd be like "They do know your grandfather died of lung cancer?" I was like yeah "And she's like you remember that he died of lung cancer right?" It's one of those horrible parents guilting you things, but yeah

So your mom does not smoke.

No.

QUESTION 17

Here's a question, do you consider nonsmokers having to work in places such as bars, bowling alleys, or waitresses, whatever. That allow customers to smoke do you think that is unfair to the worker?

I think they might consciously realize it.

Who the worker, or the people smoking?

The worker, or the people smoking. I don't think they so much notice. Well they might know but I don't think that it comes down to the point of caring. My first thought when I thought of that, they chose to work there, you know if you choose to work at a bar you choose to work at a place in which you realize that it's not the most... I don't want to say the most clean, but the most...

Healthy environment?

Yeah. Especially around here you know that if you work in a bar you know you are going to deal with people that are drunk and people that are smoking, and you realize that.

I get the sense that most people who work in environments like that also smoke. So they don't have a problem with it. I know very few nonsmokers. I have even noticed at places where there's a smoking section at a restaurant, it is usually someone who smokes that ends up working at that section. I don't know if that's what they negotiated and worked out through management and that the establishment, but, um, I think people are kind of aware, a little bit more aware of those kinds of things, um, but I tend to agree that some people don't have a choice of where they find a job cause jobs can be hard to find, that kind of thing. But for the most part, can get a different job.

I know back in high school, at the local coffee shop, like you said the people that worked in the smoking section were always smokers and that was an agreed to thing. That you know, if you are a nonsmoker you didn't have to work in the smoking section. You didn't have to go to that side of the shop.

I would also wonder how many people, once they start working in those places become smokers maybe just cause they are around it themselves like "okay, might as well jump in."

Like, I'm not going to die.

Well I mean, basically you are smoking a few cigarettes a night just standing around.

QUESTION 18

The next to last question is kind of lengthy so, I'll read it. What would you be willing to do personally to support the policy of clean indoor air? I am not asking you to do anything I just want to know the highest level of involvement you would feel comfortable with. Some options are: Do nothing at all, sign a petition that was presented to me, vote for an ordinance, go out of my way to find a petition to sign, carry a petition around for others to sign, attend a rally, and travel to Columbus to speak with a legislator. One of our other focus groups, you know we wrote this question and had it approved by our leadership team and then one of our focus groups they enlightened us that there was this opposite side, that one person said "I would go to Columbus to lobby against a smoking ban" so we have a continuum, and what I am interested in is where would you put yourself on that continuum in terms of a smoking ban?

I think that I would actually be a little bit against it. Only as far as signing a petition. Just because I think that is up to the owners of the bars and people there, they should either boycott the bar, or do something like that. But not some high level. I might sign a petition, I'd have to know what the petition is. If it were a statewide ban I probably wouldn't sign it, if it were a city ban or some other type of ban I would probably, I would give it some thought as well.

I think I agree with the first one, I would have to consider the individual bars, or individual places, or whatever that currently do allow smoking in certain areas. Cause I don't think that it should be up to anyone but the owners.

Same thing with me, that's the same thing, you know if your gonna put, I feel like it's too much control at some higher government thing saying "You can't smoke there" it's like people will end up finding somewhere else to smoke. Or, if there is a ban on smoking at the bars

They're going to lose so much

They are going to lose a lot of business because a lot of people drink when they, a lot of people smoke when they drink. There's so much of a ritual almost to it, you go to a bar you have a drink you have a cigarette.

Also a little thing I mean, you are going to a bar,

Yeah!

You are going to drink poisons, it doesn't matter all that much really. It doesn't matter all that much really, a toxin is a toxin really.

I know the University of Cincinnati, I was going there last year, banned smoking on campus. You could not smoke on the campus, walking in between classes, you can't smoke outside the dorms.

It kind of goes into individual rights

Yeah and it was fought so hard by the student population, that was like it's our choice to do that.

Do they still have the ban?

Um, yeah. They are petitioning to get rid of it, but yeah?

QUESTION 19

Does anybody have anything else they would like to say about tobacco use, attitudes?

I think prevention is a tough one. I think definitely scare tactics only go so far and when it's in seen in the media, or in advertising that typically prevention efforts are so limitedly funded, and that's one of the reasons STAND stands out so much is that it is on a regular cycle. And, um, tobacco can't be advertised anymore, right, so that is on TV where tobacco is not on TV but there still are billboards, there still are signs at gas stations, there still are print media that are out there, um, and it really is a marketing thing. Who has more money? Tobacco companies have more money.

I think, at least, the most effective or better solution would be something more balanced. It seems like each side is just sort of screaming at each other. Then you just sort of drown it out, like obviously they are wackos and they are wackos so I'll just go about it my own way. Whereas you know if there were some marketing thing that were a bit more subtle you know, this is not the most evil thing in the world, yes it's bad and for these reasons, but you might not die, but at least consider this.

I think my uh, like what we were talking about like with stand and all of the things like that, is that there is variety. There's certain things you can hear just these amount of times. Once you've been hearing it for like a hundredth time your like I am done with that. But like STAND will do a cycle of many different commercials, or different so that it's not always the same exact message, they bring up a lot of different information instead of all the same thing all the time. Actually the things they say are really productive cause it's very mixed up and it catches your attention.

The one commercial they talk about lung cancer, then the next commercial they talk about all the people that die from secondhand smoke and the next commercial they do they talk about the chemicals that are in cigarettes that are really disgusting, but they are in there. The “Urea” commercial. Or they talk about the smell of being cigarettes, or kissing someone that smokes is like licking an ashtray, they go to different topics.

So you are saying it’s a good strategy.

Yeah.

The variety factor they have is probably the best thing they have going for them.

If you are not really positive about their message at least it’s still really entertaining.

And it’s not like oh my god I saw that commercial two minutes ago. It’s the same group but now it’s new information.

Yeah I got so sick of hearing if you smoke one cigarette you die you know.

Or it’s one year off your life.

If you smoke one cigarette, you know, There’s a great commercial I remember that. I had a discussion with her about it once I saw a billboard once that was like every cigarette is one year off your life.

He’s like I should have been dead years ago.

And I should have been dead like 18 years ago.

One year off your life? I always heard it was one minute off your life. I never saw a billboard but that was kind of like...

(Two people) Yeah.

END

Transcript: LGBT
February 16, 2006
Stonewall Community Center
Columbus, Ohio
Contact: Kellye Pinkleton

QUESTION 1

The first question is what television commercials, print advertisements or billboards that tell about the health hazards associated with tobacco use have you seen?

Um, I've seen about a million television commercials nothing in print or billboards.

What do you remember about the message?

The message is that um, either that A it's not cool or B it's damaging to your health. Oh, also, I remember the message that the tobacco industry is lying to us.

I just seem to remember more television advertisements, and the ones that I remember more are the ones that have to deal with secondhand smoke.

I haven't seen any in print or on billboards, but yeah I've seen them over television and it's usually like you said it's not cool, it's bad for your health, or secondhand smoke issues and something like that.

For me, the commercials were "Stand" for the youth and I guess adults, Philip Morris has that program to help stop. I have actually seen it in print, because I get Marlboro coupons so they sent me a booklet on how to quit smoking.

(inaudible) ... Stop smoking and stand, and well second hand smoke.

Mostly on television. Some print. The one's that stand out to me are the ones where they are standing outside the building yelling with megaphones and things like that. With the rats dying on the sidewalks.

What were the messages that you recall?

Uncool, you're lying, smoking kills.

I don't remember a lot of the TV commercials cause they tend to skip through them. The one I remember the most is how it affects your baby if you smoke. I have also seen it in print cause my brother lives next door to our mother and when I get their mail he's used the state program to try and quit smoking. It's something from the state of Ohio, I'm not sure. I've seen it, I really didn't pay attention, when I looked at it I said "oh that's from the state." He put my name on a list to get Kool coupons, So I still get them. But basically it's bad for your health and the one's I remember most from TV are about how it harms babies.

QUESTION 2

Has anybody he participated in any tobacco prevention or cessation activities in the past two or three years, and can you describe them?

I've tried the nicorette patch.

Okay, and so was it prescribed?

No you can just go to Wal-Mart and get it.

Anybody else?

I took, one of the anti-depressants, it's Welbutrin, that's supposed to help you try and, but....

They market it as, they want to make sure it's (inaudible).

Those of you that have participated in this, what do you think of nicotine replacement therapy?

Well there are three levels. The first level I did not like at all, it just was like, nicotine levels all over the place. Second level I thought worked pretty well, and third, I thought it worked overall.

Oh my god,

In the morning

It's a patch, you leave it on overnight... it gives you the most vivid, incredible, crazy dreams.

I've never heard that before, people that use the patch, is that common?

Yeah, I've heard from a number of people that have done the patch. Maybe its cause nicotine is coursing through your system...

Well I think it has something to deal with (inaudible) your ... it puts more brain activity. I notice that if I wake up in the middle of the night and smoke a cigarette and go back to sleep, I notice my dreams are kind of crazy then.

You were saying something?

When I had the patch it was saying something on the box that you should take off it the morning or night and that you can have wild dreams. I had a problem with it staying on me.

Can I go back to our first question?

Sure.

It just dawned on me, it was either in Newsweek or U.S. News and World Report when they mentioned the patches they are finding that one finding found that by starting the patches two weeks before you quit smoking that smokers will having a bigger success. It used to be that they were telling you to never to take them together while you're smoking. And this article just came out in the last two months, could be, I am a little behind on my readings. But that was in one of the major magazines.

I am really surprised they are telling you that because they say that if you take them together you can have a stroke.

Or nicotine poisoning

But, with everybody, one study will say one thing and the next day (inaudible).

When you use the patch, do you go by the directions on the box, what do you use to guide your own personal use of the patch?

Um, well, I read the directions, I was real surprised to see you can keep it on all day, go in the shower, keep it on overnight, stuff like that. Um, and just um, I did read the directions, you're not supposed to use multiple patches, stuff like that.

We'll move on....

I cheated on the patches, brought the strongest ones possible. I wore them for three days and didn't have any dreams. The next day I wore them for 23, then 22, then 21, and I only had to buy one box cause they are kind of expensive. And by the time I was only wearing them for one hour a day I had no desire for nicotine.

How about the outcome? Did they help you quit smoking?

Yes.

Yes.

That time.

Pardon?? Oh that time, I got you.

QUESTION 3

Okay, why do gay persons use tobacco?

I started because a friend of mine smoked and I'd be out in the bar with him and would be nervous, and wanted something to do with my hands and at first it was only when out at the bars when I smoked, then it got where I smoked all the time. But the bars were so smoky and so loud that when I went to see my grandmother one day and she asked me if I was smoking because I still smelled like smoke. But mine was just nervousness, something to do with your hands.

The big parts it's not so much why they smoke but for a long time it's the only social thing used as outlets for gay people a lot of times tend to be bars and everything. And so, when you were there and many people are doing it there was no stigma to doing it as well. I mean there weren't, there still aren't as many venues that was maybe perhaps more recently.

You agree with that?

Um yeah. For me...

I wouldn't blame my parents, but they smoke, my father quit just a couple of years ago, but for me it was seeing my parents doing so then I started, everybody in my family smokes except for like three people.

I didn't start smoking until about 10 years ago, everybody growing up in my family smoke instead of me. Then I think I agree with what people have said it's a social thing at the bar, go out with friends and buy a pack to share at night and that was it. Then everybody eventually just added on and we need our own pack.

QUESTION 4

Is there a difference among tobacco usage among gay men and gay women?

In my experience, no.

About the same.

So you'd say the usage level is the same. How about the product? Are there different products that gay women vs. gay men might use?

I see a lot of my friends they tend to smoke the Marlboro lighters, and then some of my other friends, my straight friends will smoke some of the heavier duty harsher ones.

In the population, not gender, it's more gay vs. straight you're seeing the difference?

Yeah but that's just my circle of friends...

For me, my gay friends smoke the regular brand and my lesbian friends smoke menthols...

Really?

Naturally the opposite.

So [specific participant name], you don't think there's a difference?

No I just don't like menthols.

(Laughter)

We both smoked the same brand and he smoked menthol and I picked his up one time and I thought I was going to die right there.

Do you think there is different smoking patterns among gay youth vs. gay adults?

I can't answer.

I think, from what I tend to see, is more gay than young people smoking. And I see, maybe because a part of it has been a trend over the last number of years has been of body image and things like that. You still may smoke, but you go to the gym, and you'll go to the bar and smoke then. But maybe not during the day. It seems like a lot of the younger folks are smoking.

Do you think there's a relationship of smoking solely in the gay population of income levels, or resources?

No, because I have friends who don't have any money and they'll spend it on cigarettes.

Could it potentially be inversely correlated, the less money you have the more you smoke? Could that possibly?

I don't think so.

Some of the folks have mentioned some other class of like, frequency, whether or not that will keep some people from going that route from getting medical care. That could be a factor.

I know like when I've gone in and your standing at the counter and trying to make a choice do I buy the pack or do I buy the patches? It's like okay, I'm making a \$4 outlay vs a...

\$34 outlay

That would probably come into play then.

Probably most people in this room have quit more than once. I have found that until you want to quit yourself, you can't quit cause your partner wants you to quit or your family wants you to quit, until you yourself has decided that you want to quit taking a few patches, gum, smoke enders, anything you want, it's not going to work because you don't want to quit. You have to make that decision, like almost anything else in life, I've tried to quit for a partner—didn't work. When I decided I was getting like bronchitis every three months I thought that was nature's way of telling me that it probably wasn't a good idea.

For me price, because of the taxes that have gone out, it has been forgoing, since I Don't want to quit, it has been going from brand name to generic, and it that's there are some people that I know that will not go to generic, they will smoke their brand. But for me, it's not like I'm spending 40 dollars a carton, I am spending twenty.

The comments that everybody has made are on smoking cigarettes, I assume. What about smokeless tobacco? What is the usage level of that?

They are very low.

Yeah.

I've never seen anybody.

Yeah.

Because to me, everywhere I've been where it's been only gay people it's an image thing. And if they are going to stand there and spit, you know chewing....

No.

No.

Part of it is regionally based too. It's probably a lot different down in SE Ohio then it is up here.

I've seen one commercial where they are promoting smokeless for the office worker. Because they are in a smoke free environment. Do you see much of that?

I've seen it. On an airplane too.

Right but you don't personally know people that use it as a substitute?

No.

No, I had an ex-girlfriend that did the smokeless tobacco.

Ironically, my friend in Boston one of her ex's did, and it's the only time I have ever seen any gay person or lesbian use it

QUESTION 5

What are the different types of products used? Cigarettes is one, what would be another product used? As an example, there are divies, blunts, all kinds of things, black and milds?

I like the black and milds but sometimes they smoke an actual cigar.

Pardon?

Repeat.

There's clove cigarettes.

Cloves, okay, I don't understand those.

I will be buying a pack when we leave here.

Aren't they supposed to be just as bad for you though?

I don't know.

Hookah.

Tobacco, it's a basic cigarette, just with clove in it.

But they have the highest asbestos content.

If you were to pick a percentage of, a percentage of cigarettes versus every other tobacco product, what would that percentage be? Would it be 60/40, 95/5 where would it be?

80/20...

I'd say like 95/5..

I don't understand the question.

I am trying to see what proportion of tobacco usage is cigarettes only...

Oh I see.

Yeah yeah.

Pretty high.

Would you say it was like 95% cigarettes.

About 80/20

I think that's low. I was going conservative on that. I have since the last year since I have moved back to Columbus, I haven't really been out much. I don't really know what the trends are in the respect.

Stay at home, smoke more.

That's just it, and I don't see anybody standing on the sidewalks. So I am just trying to figure out where new people smoke. Not that I want to cause I don't, I was just wondering cause I hadn't seen it.

What are the brand names or labels that are most popular?

Marlboro.

Kool...

Marlboro Lights.

Camel light.

Camels are like smoking a rubber tire. My boss used to smoke those and I ran out one time, oh they were horrible.

I've seen some more Marlboro medium lately.

Salem.

QUESTION 6

What kind of messages work with gay persons to help them quit tobacco use?

I personally try to stop cause I got tired of my friends nagging me about it. It's just like, I can't think of a specific message.

When they nag you what's the message they are giving you?

You know, if it's at work, if it (inaudible) it's more just that it's at parties and especially since the smoking ban kicked in you have to disappear so you can smoke outside.

Truthfully I don't know if there's any message that works. It's what he said you are going to do until you want to not do it.

I think what helps though is that it's not cool, and the social part, with the and that's necessarily with the younger people. But uh, took a trip, a friend of mine moved to England, got married. You'd be surprised how many people over there still smoke compared to here. Probably double or triple, walking down the street smoking and it's like wow!

I was just going to say at least from what I've seen, I haven't lived here that long or quote unquote been "out" that long cause of where I've lived. But there seems to be more studies, more and more, in terms of gay and lesbian health related kinds of issues or information specifically for this population and talking about that. I think that seems to make some sort of a difference. With the gay men population, especially

the younger folks, uh, uh, body image good or bad seems to be a driving force for many in terms of, and so perhaps messages wrapped around that might be helpful for that particular constituency.

I don't know if any of that's carry over from high school or not. Because there's, when I was in high school there was a strong, one of the ways to rebel was to smoke. And, so if you start there and carry it on whether you are gay and straight it's going to be a different pressure.

Did you have something?

Well for me, what really gets me is when people tell me I stink. Like when I go out and have a cigarette and come back in and someone is like "Oh you stink."

What about health messages that are detailed. Do you feel there is any effectiveness in that?

A little bit. I mean it weighs in on your mind a little bit, you think about it.

I think sometimes too, it can just like looking at probably at a higher instance of drug use then a certain portion of gay males it's almost like smoking would almost get trumped by an awful lot of things as far as health related messages go.

Meaning that there are worse things?

Right, obviously HIV is still there. It's kind of like the worst thing if I do is smoke, it's not all that bad.

Another thing, general thing in terms of messaging or whatever, I tend to notice that gay people tell me what they feel a lot more than straight people will. Good or bad. So they're opinionated, if they are on the other side of a smoking issue they are not afraid, whereas in some other communities they might disagree about telling you that.

I know a lot of gay personals, a lot of them say no smoker, right off. And I had another thought but it's gone.

Were you to be contacted by a marketing agency and they wanted to know what message would be effective to stop gay people from smoking, what would the message be?

I think you'd have to get some people who were gay, or lesbian, that are 40 and above, like a picture of them when they were 20, a picture of them 45 with lung cancer so they can actually relate, like the peter pan syndrome you never think you are going to get old you can always rationalize well not everyone gets cancer. But there's not really anything that shows you, they're not even really graphic in any of their advertising like they were for a while...

So you're saying a before/after picture side by side of this is what tobacco has done..?

Exactly, if it makes you look like you've aged more than 45 it will definitely help.

Well its part of that image thing again.

They use those type of messages all the time now with anti-meth campaigns. How people looked prior to going on the crystal and how they looked afterwards. I think the first person stories are always more compelling than some guy in a lab coat.....

I think just like in general that the message no doubt would be more compelling , but it's also back to the fact that what [another participant] said someone has to be willing to do it. The fact that I see somebody else, if I am not ready to quit, whether it's tobacco or something else...

Right the right place, the right time.

Or, there's condoms available, lubes and things like that but you don't really see any messaging on any other kinds of issues out there, you know be safe if you are going to have sex.

Do you think that would be effective to have anti-tobacco at the bars?

I don't know.

I think it'd be worth a shot. Maybe we could wrap the message in the condom.

QUESTION 7

If you are a non-smoker or at this point in time you have quit smoking, what has kept you from restarting?

Just the smell of it sometimes, when you walk through somebody smoking, when they were allowed to smoke in malls. Sometimes it would smell so good, but 90% of the time it made me sick to my stomach

So no desire to restart it?

And no desire to want it, or want to shell out forty bucks or eighty bucks a week. And two it's just bad for you I know, I knew it then.

Anybody else?

Just personal health stuff, I had bronchitis for a month and a half and I think it was from being around somebody smoking. Before that, I could feel my heart race when I smoked. You always hear the health messages but until it hit me personally I didn't really... you know same thing, until I was ready it did not have the effect.... I had a friend who had heart surgery last eek ... she started smoking and she's still trying to quit. But, personally that doesn't really effect my decision I think. I don't think advertising would affect either.

Another thing on the advertising if you would should perhaps a surviving partner on someone who died, that has worked with people with AIDS. You know how they died, a short message on what they went through. I volunteered for a Columbus AIDS task force, I did it when I lived in Philadelphia too. That worked very well with AIDS with the survivors and cutting down their transmission rate in Philadelphia at least.

QUESTION 8

Are there any specific barriers that keep gay persons from accessing tobacco cessation programs?

Health insurance.

You're saying health insurance won't....

A lack of it. Work won't pay for it.

Are you aware of cessation programs that are available?

No.

Have you heard of Quit Line?

No.

Yes.

I said my brother what he's getting from the state.

It's sponsored by the state foundation yes.

I don't know if it's helped him or not. I do know that whenever I go to my mother's house I smell less like smoke.

I'm just not sure (inaudible)... if any of those associations..... I'm sure there are programs out there but rather than hearing a few blips on the Stonewall recently I don't know there's anyone that's really spoken to the community about what's available or would if there are specific issues related to the gay population would provide this kind of cessation activities.

So would a potential barrier be a lack of communication, that it's not cessation programs are discriminatory?

They're discriminatory.

Do you think they're discriminatory?

Yes.

How is that?

I haven't seen anything targeted as gay people, lesbians, transgender.

Do you think that the cessation programs that you have seen ads for, do you think they are exclusive of gay people?

I can't say that they are exclusive but usually there's just one person there and or, if it's two, its different sexes from the one that I remember.

You mean in the group itself?

Yeah in the advertisement. And I think another thing a lot of people, a lot of help, a lot of gay people from what I've read do not have health insurance more than higher average, but the ones who do would call their company a lot more covering things that they don't know is covered and all they have to do is call the number on the back of the card. Like I said, I work for Medco, we do a lot of prescriptions more and more companies are covering tobacco cessation products. So if you have insurance call the number on the back of your card and that may be something for part of your campaign, check with your Insurance company see what they've got for you.

I was going to say another interesting thing that we haven't brought up is changing a little bit but some of the few advertisers out there that are willing to advertise out there specifically to the gay community are the alcohol companies, the tobacco companies, but if you look at the ads in Advocate and Out magazine and look at the sponsorship of events and those kind of festivals and those things like that they tend to be those companies that indeed some would say feeding bad habits, but they're but if there's a lack of support from other corporations and businesses, I don't know how much that plays a factor. That being in your face more so with alcohol and cigarettes but I think it's still true.

Were you to broadcast the opportunity for cessation activities opportunities for cessation activities to the gay population, how would you make it known? I mean you say Stonewall already knows, so they are a community center. How else?

Well there's a gay channel if you have satellite called "Logo".

Just TV in general.

The gay magazines, fliers in bars,

I think the bar idea is a good one, as much as if your out in that atmosphere and now you have to make a decision to go somewhere else to smoke and maybe you're there with something in your face. And nothing wrong with having to think I have to leave my friends for a few minutes maybe I can do well without a cigarette. So your kind of getting two messages, maybe there's a little bit of peer pressure while you are out there and also some other...

Like a sign while you are standing out there in the rain smoking,

QUESTION 9

What keeps you using tobacco? Those of you who are tobacco users.

Well I stopped twice and restarted twice the first time I stopped and restarted was the stress from work. That was kind of a short period of time. The second time I was very successful but then I gained so much weight so I started again.

Your successful period, how long did that last?

It was a whole month, month and a half, something like that.

Stress.

I really enjoy smoking. I might be one of those people I know who go out and have a drink and cigarette and then not smoke for a month. And then pick up a cigarette.. I have too addictive of a personality.

For me it's enjoyment. It really is. Don't get me wrong. There are times that I hate it, beyond hate it, but I enjoy it.

In the past when I would try to quit and get derailed cause of the stress situation and, lately I've been able to somehow get away and kind of do what she wanted. I'll smoke in certain situations. But two packs since the beginning of the year. I smoke them when I do whatever and usually, and like if I know I am going over your house to smoke and I know what brand you smoke I will buy your brand and smoke what I do and leave the rest. So now it's just more of a social thing, but there's all kind of pressure that makes me want to do it.

Those of you that say stress, does that mean that you feel stress and you know that a cigarette will calm you down.

(Several sounds of agreement)

I miss it most when I am driving, believe it or not. Because it's like back to your hands, I went from a manual to an automatic and quit smoking, I just like feel and I have no desire to restart though.

The change in the laws has been a factor. I am tired of feeling a little like a second class citizen. It cost me a lot of money when you have to stand out on the street smoking you get hit up by every... it's true. It's become more of a pain and it's so stigmatized that it's, especially in February and it's ten below...

QUESTION 10

When and where are gay persons most likely to use tobacco?

(Several people say bar)

Or a party.

Social situations.....

QUESTION 11

We started to touch on this when we were talking about, I can't remember, events perhaps. What do tobacco companies do to encourage gay persons to start using tobacco products? We know that these are very large companies that make a lot of money and they do so by targeting populations. What do they do to target persons specifically?

When I was on Wall Street, I would say about four months ago, these girls with little whatever, if I took a survey for them they gave me this cool Zippo lighter with Marlboro logo printed on it. I am a sucker for anything free.

I didn't even have to take the survey, they just zapped my I.D.

That's something that they'd do, it used to be more prevalent before the ban but they did it in bars that weren't gay bars. I don't know if that's a targeting thing. But certainly there was awhile when every time you walked into a bar there was a free pack of cigarettes.

Most of the people they use in the commercial, if you are a gay male you want to look like that guy. Or if you are a gay woman you probably want to either look like, or I'll say it, even sleep with that person. They go for the youth and the attractiveness and it catches your eye so you stop to look at the, you don't necessarily, I don't remember the brands but I see that a lot. They never show a 90 year old grandma smoking.

A couple of people mentioned coupons, how do you get coupons? Do they come in the mail?

Well one thing when they zap your information out at the bar they got your information, address, I have three camel

Fill out um, I've seen them all over the place. When they change stores they pass out matches that have the website go on fill it out and you'll get tons of coupons. When you get cigarette packs there's a little coupon in the back and you can get stuff in the mail.

This might be a little conspiracy theory, but if you go on the website like for Phillip- Morris to enter information to quit smoking I think they send you coupons.

I was going to mention something like if you go to American Spirit's website you get a free carton.

What's American Spirit?

It's an organic...

More natural...

I don't remember if I got the information for the person...

And what do you get?

A free carton.

And it's organic?

It's a cigarette, it's just a brand.

Okay.

When I was in Arizona I saw it, I was getting my haircut and I saw it in a magazine.

Do they still offer points when you buy cigarettes?

That keeps some people buying.

Marlboro Miles.

That kept my brother buying.

Do you see people around when you go out socially people with product labels, wearing the t-shirts, having the lighters, do you see those products being used?

I never do, unless I go to NASCAR.

The only part it says here is alcohol, caps, t-shirts. Something like that.

QUESTION 12

Okay, what is the impact on youth when tobacco is used on TV and in movies by the actors? What do you think the impact is on youth?

I don't think much. I don't... that's a cop out.

They say that it has an influence. Maybe back in the 50's when James Dean.... I mean everybody had one then.

They had it on TV too. I mean that's...

They were cute commercials then on TV then, I remember when they took them off.

I think they might have influenced, I haven't seen it in years cause they don't allow it. They don't allow it but in old movies and everybody is smoking I want one. It's like quit lighting up. Or movies in the past few years it seems like...

I just saw *Good Night and Good Luck* (recent movie) and everybody smoked in that.

Are you saying from your comments that perhaps the youth are informed enough that seeing people smoking now they wouldn't be modeling it?

I think that they are more likely to be susceptible to peer pressure or friends and family then someone on TV.

If TV really made that big of an impression then every baby boomer would have smoked at one time in his or her life. They had the Phillip Morris show, and Doctors coming out and telling you how good it is to smoke. Even Howdy Doody had cartoon commercials, or commercials for cigarettes. I find that a lot of people who quit smoking become vehemently anti-smokers and I don't like that because you were at this point once and I try not to be, they are getting to the point that I consider ridiculous you shouldn't smoke on movies and you shouldn't smoke on TV.

I know for example my grandmother when I went off to college and came back she was like "Did you start smoking?" meaning that from her era in her mind once you became an adult then you smoke.

I can't say to what these, I am too far removed what influences the young gays.

Back to you, when your grandmother asked you if you started smoking, was she judging you whether you were good or bad, or?

No almost as if you're an adult and it's a rite of passage.

QUESTION 13

How do the young people under 18 get tobacco products since it is illegal for them to buy them?

Friends.

Relatives.

I used to buy my sister's cigarettes for her when she was 16.

It's like anything else if you want it bad enough you can get it.

Oh yeah.

Some of the kids look older too.

Especially this generation.

There's a guy I went to high school; with who had a full grown mustache at 13. By the time he was 16 he could grow a beard and get in whatever they wanted.

I know people who are addicts themselves but anyway they buy their kids cigarettes.

QUESTION 14

What are some tobacco related health problems?

Lung cancer.

Heart attack.

Bronchitis.

Asthma.

Stroke.

Impotence.

Do you see many of these among gay persons?

No.

Why do you think that is?

I think a lot of it is there's a lot of gay people who would be hitting that age right now who die of AIDS so you don't know whether they would have been. My best friend died of AIDS and one of his conditions was Lung Cancer. He was 40 when he died, so I don't know which caused, did the smoking, did he get lung cancer quicker cause of AIDS, or was it just because he kept smoking while he had AIDS and still knew it. So your talking, I am 49 and when I go into a room of those places, there are very few people within three years of my age which is a really weird feeling because those people died of AIDS and I had stamped out socially, that was in Philadelphia and Boston and so you're not seeing them hit old enough age or older so you got a good chunk out of men that would only apply to the gay men... it wouldn't apply to gay women.

I was just going to say some of the things you mentioned they are not really visible kinds of things, when you say see it, can you see heart disease, can you really see lung cancer, unless someone has emphysema and is carting around an oxygen tank.. It may be the air and when it hits those individuals they won't really be going out so how can you see it?

We tend to be over, I think as gays population in general, tends to not want to see anything that's disturbing (inaudible)

Do you think that's generally a true statement?

Uh-huh.

QUESTION 15

Okay, do gay persons think that secondhand smoke has a negative effect on their health? Not their own smoke, but the smoke from somebody else.

Not anymore I would say then the general public, probably.

The only thing I have ever gotten was that it smells bad, but not like oh my God I am going to die.

I have had more people say that since the ban went into effect that they enjoyed being out now because when they went home they didn't smell like cigarettes. Not saying that because my lungs are cleaner.

I know quite a few people with allergies that go out more since it's not filled with smoke. They are aware of it I think.

QUESTION 16

Has a close friend or someone in your family died or been diagnosed with a cancer or condition related to tobacco use?

Yes.

Yes.

Yes.

Has it changed your outlook at all on tobacco use?

No.

No.

No.

Why do you think that is?

You know I lost my grandfather to smoking, I lost my aunt to smoking, and I am not going to say that it didn't effect me but a week later I still, you know, when my aunt was dying I went down and stayed with her and it was a whole different person, it wasn't her. But I still went outside and had that cigarette. You would think it would affect me and in some ways it did, but I still smoke.

For me it was like I lost my sister, but it doesn't really make that much of a difference why she died. That happens so...

So your sister was young?

Um, she was 50 when she passed away.

And it was attributable to tobacco use?

Yeah. It's kind of like twisted, if I quit smoking she's not going to come back to life. So, what, like a connection became disjointed but it didn't make sense.

The person died, you're not focused on why they died or how they died, it's just that they're not here, so... you know.

Any other stories?

My mother's cousin used to do commercial for the Ohio Lung Association, and she would have a cigarette between breaks of filming.. So I guess that's why in my family, my mother because of smoking has to use oxygen she has diabetes and had one leg amputated and that really didn't change my view because I am not pro-smoking but I do think that it is an individual choice that you can make. And I am not going to judge you for it. I may not be around it, but that's your choice, as long as it's legal.

My mother got breast cancer but smoking may or may not have had any influence on it. She had been a smoker all her life and she quit when she was well into her 60s. The only thing it said to me is that I guess your never too, if she could do it after that many years if I was to get to that point again that maybe its not impossible cause I never thought I'd see her quit.

QUESTION 17

Now this one may not be totally appropriate to Columbus, but do you consider nonsmokers having to work in places such as bars or bowling alleys that allow customers to smoke being unfair to the worker?

No.

No.

Why?

You have a choice there still are some private bars that you can smoke in, you just pay the membership. Cause you have the choice. If you are a nonsmoker and hate the smell of smoke, why would you go work at a bar?

I know some people who work in a bar to smoke, they really hate the ban and now they can't smoke at all cause they can't go outside every ten minutes.

You know that's true because I once I had the opportunity, before I started smoking, to have a really nice job traveling over in Europe and stuff. I was told once you went over there and teach that everyone smokes in there. And I was like man, I don't want to be around there so I declined it. So it's a choice.

It's like if you are an alcoholic, is it going to effect you working at a bar, well you shouldn't be working there if it's going to bother you.

Here is an extension to the question, because one of the population groups we do interview are immigrants and refugees, and they have a completely different take on the question. Do you have any comments to this? Because their response is a job is a job and you don't want to lose a job if it's a good job....

I think out of, my whole take on this whole smoking ban thing is, being allowed to an individual business owners to create spaces um, but what they did was wipe it out all together, so if you have bar you can have a room where there is no smoking or a room where you can smoke. If you have a business or a company there should be accommodations for people who smoke and those who don't. I suppose there are people who don't have a choice about where they work and it is a smoking atmosphere and that is the

only thing that they can get that there are perhaps some disenfranchised populations. It might put some people in more of a bind than others.

Actually, it reminds me of an interesting thing, when I was in Salt Lake City, Utah. You are not allowed to smoke on the street. Except in like certain squared areas of the sidewalk.

In Boulder, Colorado you are not allowed to smoke within the city limits.

Even in your own home?

I don't know about that.

You can't smoke anywhere, even outside?

Well like in Salt Lake City you have to smoke...

No, I am talking about Boulder, Colorado....

That's what I was told.

Have you seen those rooms in the airports that they have now.....

They are like glass cases you feel like you are in a zoo, you really do. You are sitting there smoking and everyone is looking at you like you have three heads.

You see mothers walking with their children and point like (inaudible)

I heard something and I think it was in Seattle, they are trying to pass a ban where you can't smoke within 20 feet of an entrance to a public place, so people started protesting by standing in the middle of the street smoking cigarettes.

That's here, your not allowed smoke period. 120 ft from a public place, you can get a ticket.

So basically if you are walking down the street smoking you are screwed cause the doors are way close to the sidewalk, you'd have to walk out in the street.

Part of it just comes down to there are so many things that can kill you. Are they going to outlaw salt, butter, fatty foods, etc., etc., etc. It all gets back to a choice, even for an individual bar. No one's forcing anyone who objected to have the smell when they went home to go in there. So stay home. Eventually bars who allow smoking will go out of business. For me it's become some high level initiative of capitalism, it's like that bar owner who opened that business and had a smoking establishment is not the product of a decision that impacts his business. I think it's wrong on that level.

And I think the state is being hypocritical. They are taxing it to an outrageous amount and then telling you where you can smoke it. It's still a legal product, you should still be able to use it legally most places.

I thought that once they achieved their goal of eliminating smoking across the board, how are they going to make up that tax base?

They are going to be really sorry.

QUESTION 18

The last question is lengthy, but it has to do with your opinion about a clean air ordinance. It may be after the fact in Columbus, but imagine you live in a community that did not have a clean air ordinance. The question is, what would you be willing to do personally to support a policy for clean indoor air? I am not asking for you to do anything, I just want to know the highest level of involvement you would feel comfortable with. Some options are: Nothing at all, sign a petition that was presented to you, vote for an ordinance, go out of my way to find a petition to sign, carry a petition around for others to sign, attend a rally, travel to Columbus to meet with a legislator. We found out when we gave this question to people, well all those questions assume that I support a clean air ordinance. What is your stance, and what would you be willing to do when the subtopic came up of a clean air ordinance?

You mean beyond what we have already?

Let's say you are living in a community that did not have the ordinance. [Specific participant name]?

Well here's my problem with Stand. They talk about second hand smoke and I am from Portsmouth Ohio, according to the EPA the number one polluters of air was Boston Co. plant. That's where my family lives, where my dad works, and he quit smoking and he had smoked for 11 years and he had enough lung cancer in him from where he worked. And that place polluted, it the (inaudible) level is ten times higher there then it is in Cleveland and Cleveland is the 12th worst city with air pollution and it was one plant versus 15 in Cleveland. Now my family is dying off of cancer because of that, who would know how long we would live? I had one ...Smoked for 40 years and she didn't die of cancer. And I think that if you are going to do something about the clean air ordinance, why not enforce the ones that are already there. That's the big problem with Ohio, is they are not enforcing the things that are on these big industries. Ohio has a three times worse cancer rate then the national average. They need to enforce those clean air things before they can start telling me what I can do. I am not making people so they have leukemia and I am not destroying generations of people with sterile people, and birth defects, and mentally challenged. I am not doing that so why don't you enforce those laws before you give me a hard time.

So you are saying that industrial air pollution is a much more serious issue.

Yes it is.

I can live with restaurants and public buildings. I don't know if I could be an activist but I could be a proponent. Bars, bowling alleys, some of those kind of places,

Would you vote for an ordinance if it was on the ballot?

Depending on how it was phrased.

Oh, okay. You were saying something.

I would sign a petition. When I moved here, I lived in Illinois and was surprised to see people smoking.

When I went home for a funeral there in Portsmouth, there is still smoking there and it was really strange to see a smoking section in McDonald's there. But they are trying to pass a statewide ban.

I voted against it when it was on the ballot here. I think it's up to the owner of the restaurant. If I don't want to go to that bar or restraint because they don't segregate enough and, we are one of the few major cities in the country that doesn't have auto emissions testing. And Columbus has crappy air, and we

The busses.....

And it's not that big of a deal to go through once a year with the testing. I lived in Pennsylvania and had to do it every year and you know you get behind some of these people and it smells like pure gas is coming out.

Or there oil is burning and this, cloud, and I was behind this car and was thinking please turn, anywhere.

Luckily if you turn your air on conditioner on maximum no more air comes in, it just recycles air that's already air. It's like the air is so bad, and the number of smokers have dropped I don't think it's fair to penalize them further, you already make them feel like (inaudible) you are already taxing them to death, why do more?

I personally feel like the state is being hypocritical, because, like for example other things that are less dangerous have been outlawed. There's more statistical preponderance of, I would passively support anything that would reduce the use of it. But not actively, meaning that I would not go out and stand in the street.

How about voting?

To me that's more passive. Not much effort.

QUESTION 19

Any other comments, anything else while we're here that we can get on the record?

Is the end results of this whole effort to look at the money that the state of Ohio has been given to spend... how it's most effective?

Can you repeat the question please?

Is one of the end results of the focus groups that you are doing now is to provide recommendations to the state of Ohio on how to best spend the money they were given from the tobacco settlement?

I think the bottom line is yes. That we are gathering information from specific groups and that will inform the ODH about its strategic plan and what it will do. It does get the money from the master settlement agreement,. And then there is the Tobacco Use Prevention and Control Foundation that was funded by the Master Settlement Agreement and this information will help them in their plan.

Personally I would like to see more targeted TV advertising for population group.

Okay.

Here's the deal. For me, I think information needs to be just made aware of what help there is you know that's the key thing for me, help. When I see these kids on TV that are saying blah blah, I feel like you are putting me in the corner and I want to smoke. I will go outside and smoke just to let you know I am in American and if I want to smoke I am going to smoke. It's almost if you are going to be there make

it seem like you are not against me that you are here to help me. I didn't know there were groups out there to help me, I knew about the products, so just make it aware.

Is the me a smoker? Or is it something else? Just me the smoker, that I want help?

Right right. Just let me know, or let us know that you are here for me. Don't tell me that it's going to kill me, I already know that. I know that every time I take a hit of my cigarette.

But how did you know that, because it got that information out there in the first place?

You got that information out of the box.

For me it was my family. Cause of how many people died in my family from smoking, that, but it's just you know, let me know what's out there.

Actually you make a really good point. I had a friend who bought a cigarette package from Canada and there was like death bones and all that kind of scary stuff, and they almost made a joke out of it. So the scare tactics didn't seem to work.

I would say to take over what your saying smokers aren't bad people. The message comes across as you are a bad person.

You wouldn't say that anymore to a person with an alcohol problem or a drug problem. Or, any of those types of things just because you happen to be a smoker doesn't mean you're bad. And that's what gets across sometimes, and then you are meant to feel that way.

You know yeah, because if I saw something that says I want to help you that would be more positive.

Then you're going to die! We already know that.

Exactly.

We are all going to die eventually.

Do you have any figures of what percentage of population smokes?

In Ohio I think it's around 26%.

Do you have any on the gay population?

No, I don't.

That 26% which sounds kind of high, not to refute you.

It's rural Ohio where everybody smokes.

Aren't you going to get to a point around 15% where that last 15% is not going to quit.

Yes, but I think 10% is their goal. Because out in California is down to certainly under 20, I think they may be under 15 and their goal is 10%.

It can also be an economic issue because if 100% people smoked you would only need a penny tax. If only 10%, that's going to go where up there and going to impact revenue and make it more expensive.

People still buy crystal meth, cocaine, and pot. Which is actually worse for your lungs than cigarettes. And all the major tobacco manufacturers have trademark names on more of the more potent pot names under the hope of legalization.

END