



SMOKING



“But it’s the least of their problems...”

A Guide for Youth Workers and
Youth Service Managers in Tasmania

Acknowledgements

Smoking *"But it's the least of their problems"* A Guide for Youth Workers and Youth Service Managers in Tasmania was developed by Population Health, Department of Health and Human Services, with the support and feedback from members of the Smoke-Free Young People Working Group established under the Tasmanian Tobacco Coalition.

This guide has been adapted from *"Tobacco, but it is the least of their problems – a guide for youth workers and youth service managers"* (July 2006) with kind permission from the City of Casey in Victoria.



About these guidelines



Working with young people today, it can seem smoking is the least of their problems. But in reality the effects of tobacco may become their most significant problem.

Young people's behaviour is influenced by adult role models. Taking a stand against tobacco is the best example and is likely to have a positive effect on their smoking behaviour.

Youth workers by nature of their role and relationship with a young person can play a significant role in supporting and influencing young people's behaviour. Many young people who are smokers seek support to quit smoking and to address other issues in their lives. The role of a youth worker or youth service is therefore critical in decreasing tobacco use among young people.

These guidelines will help youth workers and youth service managers extend their skills, knowledge and practice in dealing with the tobacco issues of the young people they support.

They present a practical range of strategies that support the best interests of young people. At the same time they promote a safe and healthy work environment for staff.



By using these guidelines workers can help:

- prevent or delay a young person from taking up smoking
- prevent a young person experimenting with tobacco from progressing to nicotine dependence
- create and support smoke-free environments and policies that improve young people's health and wellbeing

Tobacco is a drug, and youth workers and youth service managers have a duty of care to ensure the young person's environment is not harmful to their wellbeing.



Effects of Tobacco



The health effects of smoking tobacco have been well known for several decades. People who smoke have more health issues and a lower life expectancy than the general population.

Smoking causes a range of serious health problems, including cancer, heart disease, stroke, asthma, emphysema, vascular disease and damage to most body organs.

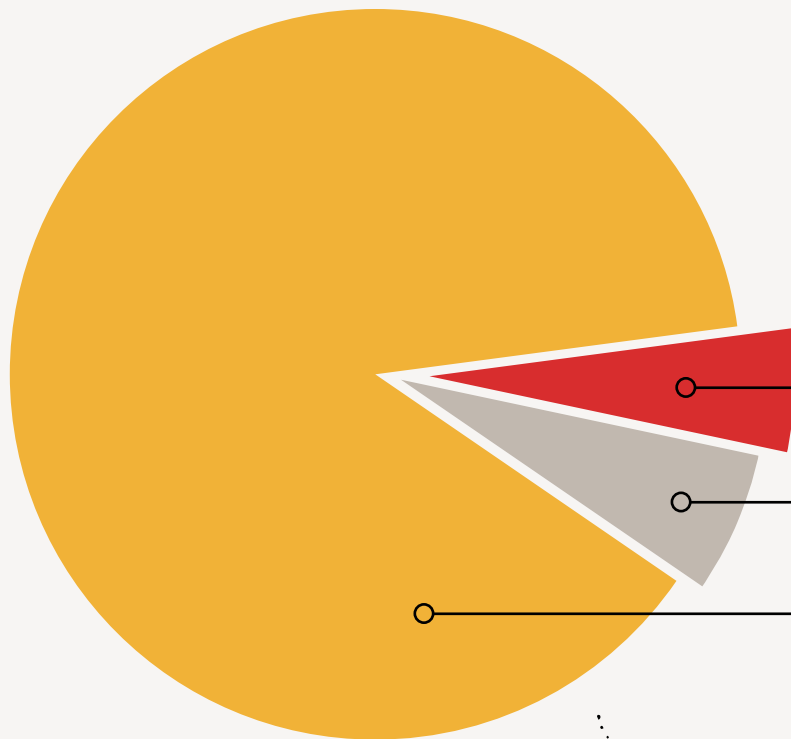
Smoking is one of the leading preventable causes of death and disease in Australia.

Nationally, it causes about 15 000 deaths a year and more drug-related hospitalisations and deaths than alcohol and illicit drugs combined.¹

The most recently available data show that between 2003 and 2007, an average of 471 Tasmanians died each year due to tobacco use.²

What you do today may extend the life span or save the lives of the young people with whom you are involved.





In 2004-05, **89%** of drug-related deaths were caused by tobacco³

Illicit drugs **5%**

Alcohol **6%**

Tobacco **89%**





There are also health risks from being exposed to environmental tobacco smoke in indoor and outdoor areas.

Environmental tobacco smoke contains many cancer causing chemicals and other toxic substances.

Passive smoking occurs when non-smokers inhale environmental tobacco smoke, causing non-smokers to breathe the same dangerous substances as people who smoke. Some of the immediate effects of passive smoking are eye irritation, headache, cough and sore throat. Passive smoking can also lead to more serious health issues similar to those of people who smoke, including lung cancer, heart disease and respiratory problems.⁴

Scientific evidence indicates that there is no risk free level of exposure to second hand smoke.⁵

“...there is **no risk free level** of exposure to second hand smoke.”



Young People and Tobacco

Nearly all tobacco use begins during adolescence and young adulthood.

“Among adults who become daily smokers, nearly all first use of cigarettes occurs by 18 years of age (88%), with 99% of first use by 26 years of age.”⁶

The average age at which most Australians report taking up smoking is around 15½ years.

“Nicotine acts on the brain and creates feelings of pleasure or satisfaction. Young brains are still developing. That may be one reason many young people feel dependent on tobacco after using it for only a short time.”⁷

Short-term health consequences of smoking among young people include respiratory and non-respiratory effects, addiction to nicotine and the risk of other drug use.

Smoking harms young people's physical fitness in both performance and endurance – even among young people trained in competitive running.⁸

Young people who start smoking are more likely to:

- get addicted to nicotine
- become lifetime smokers
- get diseases caused by tobacco use
- die from diseases caused by tobacco use.





The resting heart rates of young adult smokers are two to three beats per minute faster than non-smokers.⁹

Young people who smoke run the risk of other short term effects including abdominal weight gain¹⁰, acne¹¹ and increased risk of depression.^{12,13} Cigarettes stain their teeth yellow and create an unpleasant smell for non-smokers, with the potential to adversely affect their social life.

Tobacco causes more ill health and premature death than any other drug used in Australia. If cigarette smokers start smoking as teenagers and do not quit, eventually tobacco will kill about half of them.¹⁴

There are over 3,000 regular student smokers in Tasmania – 1,500 of these smokers will die prematurely from a tobacco-related illness.

In 2011, nine per cent of 12 to 17-year-old Tasmanian school children were current smokers, smoking an average of 20 cigarettes a week.¹⁵ Around 23% of 18-24 year old Tasmanians are also regular smokers.¹⁶

“The resting heart rates of young adult smokers are two to three beats per minute faster than non-smokers.”



Youth Worker and Youth Worker Manager Responsibilities

Duty of Care

Duty of care of young people is an integral part of work practice for a youth worker or youth service manager.

Duty of care is included in the Youth Network of Tasmania (YNOT) publication - 'Youth Ethics Framework for Tasmania.'

This document states:

"A youth sector worker avoids exposing young people to the likelihood of foreseeable harm, injury or exploitation."

Youth service managers and youth workers also owe a duty of care to children under State and Commonwealth legislation and under the common law.

Supporting tobacco use, or acting in a way that promotes, encourages or condones tobacco use, compromises a youth worker's duty of care by exposing young people to potential harm associated with tobacco use.

Rights of the Child

Under the United Nations' 'Convention on the Rights of the Child' 1989:

- In all actions concerning children ... by ... welfare institutions ... the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration. (Article 3.1)
- State parties shall take appropriate measures to diminish ... child mortality. (Article 24.2)
- States parties recognise the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health (Article 24.1)



These rights are best respected when a youth worker:

- avoids smoking in the company of a young person
- raises smoking with a client as a health issue
- supports smoke-free environments.

Boundaries

The (YNOT) publication 'Youth Ethics Framework for Tasmania' recognises there are professional boundaries between youth workers and their clients:

"The relationship between a youth sector worker and a young person is a professional relationship, with clear boundaries, that is intentionally limited to protect the young person. Youth sector workers will behave in a way that is consistent with these boundaries."

Maintaining a professional approach to tobacco use and encouraging healthy behaviour respects professional boundaries.

Smoking in the presence of, or with young people blurs or crosses these professional boundaries and potentially jeopardises the current and future health and wellbeing of young people.

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Overview of the Guidelines

These guidelines provide youth service managers and youth workers with a framework for thinking and questioning how to progress and place smoking on the organisation's agenda.

1.

Develop a supportive, mentoring relationship with young people and be a positive role model.

3.

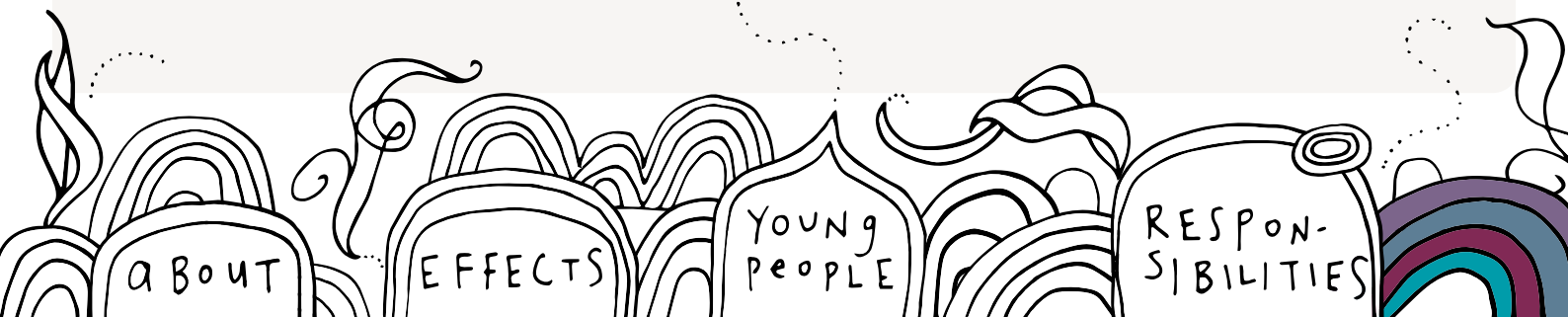
Develop an understanding of the process by which young people become nicotine dependent and highlight the powerful influence of social settings where young people may feel pressured to smoke.

4.

Acquire knowledge and develop skills to help young people to quit or reduce smoking, including staff training.

2.

Encourage and support young people not to start smoking, or if they already smoke, to quit.



5.

Advocate for and support a comprehensive smoke-free policy that encompasses indoor and outdoor areas within your service and at any youth service sponsored activity.



6.

Advocate for and support smoke-free environments and events where young people frequent.

7.

Support legislation that:

- eliminates the sale and supply of tobacco to children, and the promotion of tobacco products; and
- prohibits young people from smoking.

Use these guidelines to reflect on your work practice, your work environment and your workplace processes.

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Here's what you can do


1. Develop a supportive, mentoring relationship with young people and be a positive role model by:

- being a non-smoker
- trying to quit or reduce your smoking if you do smoke
- acknowledging the influence of your smoking behaviour on a young person
- not smoking in the presence of young people and not giving cigarettes to young people
- not using tobacco as a tool for engaging with young people
- not giving positive messages about smoking to young people
- advocating for smoke-free environments with young people
- supporting other youth workers to quit or reduce their smoking
- If asked about your tobacco use, listen and reflect on the reasons why you are being asked. Discuss smoking, not smokers.

2. Encourage and support young people not to start smoking, or if they already smoke, to quit.

- Increase the young person's knowledge about smoking. Many young people underestimate the magnitude and relevance of the health risks involved. They also do not understand what "addiction" means and are unaware of the powerful effects of nicotine.
- Inform young people about the risks of smoking, including the long and short term health effects.
- In addition to informing young people of the health effects of smoking, highlight how smoking can affect a young person's social life. Many young people try quitting in order to save money, make a sports team, please the person they are dating and avoid smelling or tasting like an ashtray.



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- Focus on the immediate effects of smoking and nicotine dependence. Most young people feel immortal and think they can quit anytime or before they become addicted. Of adolescents who have smoked at least 100 cigarettes in their lifetime, most of them report they would like to quit, but are unable to do so.¹⁷
 - Empower young people to become involved in tobacco control issues. For example, encourage them to support smoke-free environments.
 - If there is a discussion about tobacco use, provide an opportunity for young people to explore the good and the bad things about smoking.
 - If a young person shows interest in quitting or trying to reduce their smoking discuss their concerns with them. Validate any challenges and support them through the change.
 - Encourage the young person to contact the Quitline on 13 QUIT (13 7848). If the young person is reluctant to make the first call you can ring and ask to speak with an advisor and then introduce the young person.

Support young people in resisting the pressures to smoke.



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- Quit Packs, a free self-help resource, can be ordered from Quitline 13 QUIT (13 7848), the Quit Tasmania website www.quittas.org.au or SMS 0408 264 664 (text name and address details).
- Young people may decide to quit by cutting down slowly. The language you use may be helpful in this instance, for example instead of talking about quitting you could discuss strategies to increase their smoke-free time.

Withdrawal symptoms are a sign the body is repairing itself.

- Young people may also decide to quit by not buying cigarettes, delaying their smoking, going cold turkey, quitting with a friend and/or using a Quit program. There are a variety of nicotine replacement therapy products and medications to help with quitting. Be open and supportive to the varied options. (Changing to a lower tar/nicotine brand is not a less harmful option.)
- Withdrawal symptoms are a sign the body is repairing itself. Encourage young people who experience withdrawal to see these as signs of recovery. They may be uncomfortable, but should only last two to four weeks. There are constructive ways to deal with these 'recovery symptoms'.
- Remember quitting is a process and not an event. Most people try several times before they quit for good. Relapses are normal but can be discouraging. Encourage young people to see that the effort to try again is worth it.



3. Develop an understanding of the process by which young people become dependent smokers and recognise the powerful influence of social settings where young people may feel pressured to smoke.

Be aware of the pressures on young people to experiment with drugs, including tobacco, and provide opportunities to discuss this in an open and non-judgmental manner.

Smoking uptake by young people is influenced by a range of complex factors that can impact on decision-making and behaviour. These include:

Environmental factors:

- socio-economic status or coming from a disadvantaged background

- marketing/promotion by the tobacco industry to create a positive image of smokers and smoking. Examples include advertising and promotion through youth culture such as movies, magazines, sport and cultural events, video games and social media
- price and ease of access to tobacco

Social factors:

- family – particularly parents. Young people are more likely to see tobacco use as a normal behaviour if their parents, siblings or other family members smoke. The likelihood of a young person becoming a regular smoker is doubled where both parents smoke in the home.¹⁸
- peer groups – young people are more likely to smoke if their friends smoke.



Individual factors:

- geographic location
- beliefs about smoking that are image related – looking cool, independent or adult, or to lose weight
- beliefs about smoking as a means of coping with stress
- beliefs that the negative effects or health impacts of smoking are not relevant
- addiction
- low self-esteem due to poor social skills, school achievement or not fitting in and being part of a group.

4. Acquire knowledge and develop skills to help young people quit or reduce smoking, including staff training.

- Providing and accessing opportunities for increasing youth workers' knowledge and skills through in-servicing and training is an important factor in preventing uptake.
- Familiarise yourself with the Quitline service and their approach in supporting young people. Quitline is committed to ensuring the needs of young people are addressed in an appropriate and sensitive manner and have developed national protocols around this.
- Keep abreast of smoking rates and other tobacco issues that relate to young people. High smoking rates in Tasmania, particularly among 18 to 24-year-olds remain a significant concern.



- Tobacco use in adolescence is associated with other risky behaviours, including other drug use. Australian and international research consistently shows that smokers are more likely to drink alcohol, use cannabis and other illicit drugs and sniff glue or petrol than non-smokers.¹⁹
- Similarly, many young people mix tobacco and cannabis together and they may not realise the potential addiction to nicotine/tobacco. Therefore, they might also not realise that any reduction in cannabis use could also contribute to increased nicotine cravings.
- Access information from the various online information services (listed on pages 25 -27 of this booklet).



5. Advocate for and support a comprehensive smoke-free policy for indoor and outdoor areas within your service and at any youth service sponsored activity.

- An effective smoke-free policy will consider a wide range of issues such as health, economic, legal and ethical factors.
- An effective smoke-free policy will need the support of managers, workers and young people who use the service. Consultation with all stakeholders in developing the policy will improve acceptance of and cooperation with the policy.
- Smoke-free policies result in fewer adults smoking in front of young people. Going smoke-free is a positive, progressive step towards making a service a healthy place to be.
- A smoke-free environment may help young people not to start smoking and could encourage smokers to stop.



- In Tasmania, the *Public Health Act 1997* requires all indoor areas of workplaces to be smoke-free. The Act also allows workplaces to voluntarily extend this to include outdoor areas.
- A smoke-free policy may also need to include strategies for dealing with young people who continue to smoke on the premises or at a smoke-free event. These strategies should include addressing smoking as a health issue as well as a disciplinary issue.

6. Advocate for and support smoke-free environments and events where young people frequent.

- Work with young people and colleagues to develop healthy, smoke-free environments for young people.
- Ensure you can make environments smoke-free. For instance no smoking permitted inside residential settings or social events (indoors and outdoors).

- Engage event organisers in discussions about the health consequences of smoking and the benefits of being smoke-free.
- Ensure venues and events frequented by young people comply with the *Public Health Act 1997*. For example, outdoor dining areas, sportsgrounds, children's play areas, bus and pedestrian malls in Tasmania all have smoke-free requirements. A range of events such as Carols by Candlelight, agricultural shows, music and food festivals and markets also have smoke-free requirements.
- Report breaches of smoke-free areas legislation to the Public Health Hotline on 1800 671 738.



7. Support legislation that eliminates the use of tobacco products by children, the sale and supply of tobacco to children, and the promotion of tobacco products.

Reducing the supply of cigarettes to children is one of a range of strategies used to prevent uptake of smoking by young people. In Tasmania, the *Public Health Act 1997* prohibits the sale or supply of cigarettes to a child, a person under the age of 18 years.

The maximum penalty is \$6 500 for a first offence and \$13 000 for a subsequent offence.

- Legislation prohibits children (under 18 years) smoking or possessing any tobacco product.
- Legislation also prohibits the sale and supply of tobacco to children.
- Support legislation by not supplying tobacco to young people in your care.
- Report retailers seen or that you are aware of selling tobacco products to people under the age of 18 years to the Public Health Hotline on 1800 671 738.
- Where possible, inform parents and other adults of the legal implications and health risks of supplying tobacco products to children.

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Getting the Ball Rolling

As you move forward, here are some questions that may help discussions about your practice, your work environment and your workplace systems on smoking and young people:

Does your organisation have a youth service smoke-free workplace policy?

No

- What steps could you put in place to start this process?
- Is there a coordinating group to review or develop a smoke-free policy?

Yes

- If you do have a smoke-free policy, does it have:
 - a rationale for restricting tobacco use?
 - support measures to help with quitting smoking?
 - a statement that your youth service is smoke-free: smoking is not permitted on the premises or at any youth service-sponsored activity with the provision to support young people, staff and families?
 - provision of support for parents in helping their child or young person to quit?
 - procedures for administering, communicating, monitoring and reviewing the policy?

Information to help develop a smoke-free workplace policy is available at www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/peh/smoke-free_workplace



- Does your organisation have professional development for youth worker staff that includes topics on smoking and young people?

- Do youth service managers and youth workers have the knowledge and confidence to raise the issue of smoking with a young person?

- Do youth workers and other staff in your organisation encourage young people to be smoke-free?

- If young people wish to quit, do you:

- help them develop attainable goals?
- identify strategies to attain and maintain their goal?
- provide them with information and resources on quitting?
- provide them with the Quitline number 13 7848?

- Are procedures to deal with those not conforming to the youth service's smoke-free policy followed?

- Are the policy and procedures reviewed every two or three years?



Is Smoking a Problem?

While it may seem that tobacco is the least of their problems today, the effects of tobacco on young people may significantly affect their health in the future, reduce their lifespan, and become their most serious problem.

Tobacco is a drug, and youth workers and youth service managers have a duty of care to ensure the young person's environment is not harmful to their wellbeing.

You can address this problem by putting tobacco use among young people on your agenda.

Use these guidelines to reflect on your work practice, your work environment and your workplace processes.

What you do today may extend the life span or save the lives of the young people with whom you are involved.

Take Action!

Create and support an environment that fosters a healthy future for the young people of Tasmania.



Further Assistance and Information



Call the Quitline - 13 QUIT (13 7848)

Speak to a trained advisor who can help develop a quit plan and provide support through the quitting process.

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Quit Tasmania website provides access to a range of information including fact sheets, and downloadable and interactive resources to help people quit.

www.quittas.org.au

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Australian Government website providing information about smoking cessation, including reasons for quitting, how to quit and problems associated with quitting. Also provides quitting-related news, campaign information and other useful resources.

www.quitnow.gov.au

Quit Coach

The online **Quit Coach** provides a personalised quit plan based on answers to questions about smoking behavior and circumstances. It is designed to provide relevant, useful advice wherever you are in your quit attempt – from not being ready to quit to having trouble staying smoke-free.

www.quitcoach.org.au

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My QuitBuddy App

The Quit Now: **My QuitBuddy** is a personalised interactive app with quit tips, daily motivational messages and countdown to quitting reminders. The user records their goals in pictures, words or audio messages and the panic button when craving provides a range of distractions. Download **My QuitBuddy** free on your iPhone, iPad from Apple iTunes online Store or for your Android phones from Google Play store.



www.OxyGen.org.au

This website is for young people and educators, providing information and interactive activities about smoking and related issues.

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www.smarterthansmoking.org.au

This website is for those working in schools, communities and other youth settings who would like information and resources to help prevent young people from starting to smoke.

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www.futureinyourhands.com.au

This website is loaded with quizzes, games, videos, competitions and facts about tobacco ... it's all here for young people to explore.

Going smoke-free:Your workplace kit

A Tasmanian resource providing practical and straightforward information to help your workplace go smoke-free and support your employees to reduce or quit smoking.

www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/peh/smoke-free_workplace

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Guide to Smoke-free Areas in Tasmania Brochure

(2012) Provides information about areas currently required to be smoke- free in Tasmania.

www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/peh/tobacco_control/smoke-free





Smoking Cessation Program

The Smoking Cessation Program (within DHHS, Alcohol and Drug Services) provides training to health professionals statewide to ensure all people in contact with health services who smoke are encouraged and supported to quit. The Smoking Cessation Program also conducts a group counselling program called *No More Butts* which facilitators can be trained to provide to young people. For further information email ads-statemanager@dhhs.tas.gov.au

Smoke-Free Young People Project

Population Health (within DHHS) has developed the Smoke-Free Young People Strategy 2013-2017 to outline measures that can be implemented to protect young Tasmanians from the harmful effects of tobacco smoke.

http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/peh/tobacco_control/tobacco_action



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Notes





