

Happy Friday Friends!!

It's FRIDAY! (*Are you as relieved as I am??*)

This January has really been difficult to adjust to. I'm not sure why this one seems different, but it's just been tougher to get back into a work groove.

I think part of it is that we've endured a difficult loss and creating a "new normal" is a process that takes time.

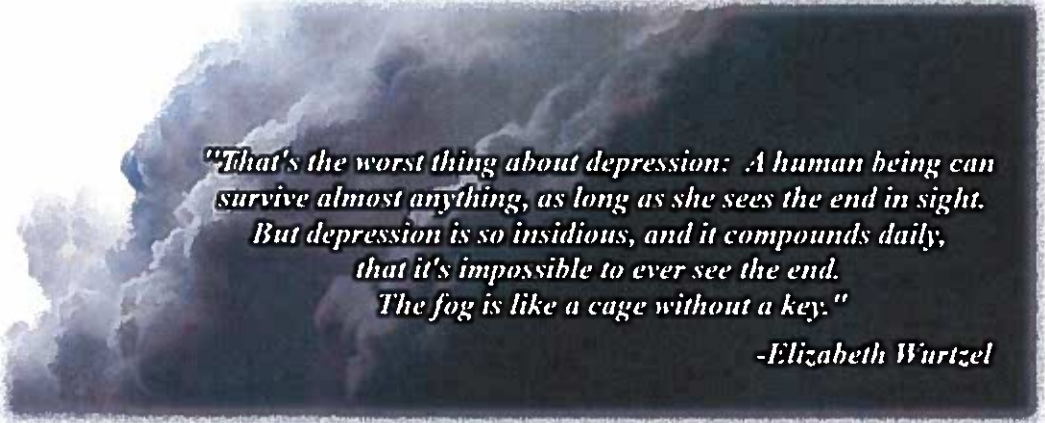
In the news, we keep hearing of another icon that has passed from cancer, from smoking, from you name it...

It's enough to make even the strongest of us as "WHY?"

Thankfully, we do have something that can carry us through.

We have
HOPE.

But for those who are battling depression, it can be a much more difficult path. Especially if they are smokers trying to quit.



"That's the worst thing about depression: A human being can survive almost anything, as long as she sees the end in sight. But depression is so insidious, and it compounds daily, that it's impossible to ever see the end. The fog is like a cage without a key."

-Elizabeth Wurtzel

Depression is More Than Just a Bad Day

Everyone has a bad day on occasion.

Those days or feelings were something is just "not right" ... When you feel "off" or sad. But depression goes beyond that.

Depression is something that is felt everyday (or most days) and lasts at least 2 weeks.

The symptoms of depression can make it hard for you to do normal things or stop you from doing the things you want to.

Depression and Smoking: The Facts

Smoking is more common in adults with mental health issues such as depression and anxiety.

About 3 of every 10 cigarettes smoked in the US are smoked by those with mental health conditions.

Those with serious mental illnesses, such as major mood disorders die an average of 25 years earlier.

Much of this is related to tobacco-related diseases.

Smoking is NOT a treatment for depression or anxiety.

Getting help for depression, anxiety and quitting smoking is the best way to feel better.

Why is Depression More Common in Smokers?

Honestly, we aren't sure.

However, there are several educated guesses that can be made.

People with depression smoke to feel better.

Smokers get depression more easily because they smoke.

What we DO know is that the link is real, but there are treatments that work for both smoking AND depression.

Counseling for Depression and Tobacco Cessation

Counseling (or therapy) involves talking with a trained specialist.

They will help the smoker develop skills that will help improve how they cope with the things happening in their life.

Using techniques like [Cognitive Behavioral Therapy](#), they learn to address negative thinking so they can respond in a more effective way.

They will help the smoker change the behaviors that are causing the problems.

Addressing the triggers and developing a quit plan can help the smoker feel more confident in their quit attempt, hence overcoming the voice of self-sabotage that depression can have.

Medication for Depression and Tobacco Cessation

While medication is not a quick, instant fix, it can help to even out moods and feelings of withdrawal. This will allow them to better handle changes and life events that are making their mood worse.

When taking medication for depression and cessation, it is important to stick with them for a while.

This should be stressed during the patient visit.

As we know, it often takes a week or two before the medication makes a difference.

Encourage them.

Show you have confidence in their ability to quit smoking and handle their depression.

Other Ways to Help Treat Depression and Tobacco Cessation

Encourage them to find ways to incorporate other things that will help lift their mood and successfully quit.

Exercise.

This can be simple or more involved. Start slow if needed and build over time. The effort will pay off!

Structure each day to stay busy.

Plan each day with purpose, but they should try and avoid the "triggers" that were a part of their smoking routine.

Talk and do things with other people.

Cutting off friends and family can make those who are depressed feel isolated.

And smokers NEED a support system to keep them encouraged.

Having daily contact will help them move forward.



Build in rewards and fun activities.

Remind them to find things that they've always enjoyed to boost their mood.

Putting away the savings from their tobacco can provide a long term reward as well.

CME, Educational & Research Opportunities Cessation

Free Services help Oklahomans go tobacco free -- Leap Year 2016 gives tobacco users an extra day to think about quitting tobacco. The Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline — a program of the Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust — encourages tobacco users to use this time to explore the new free services the Helpline has to offer.

Resources

The **Hospitals Helping Patients Quit** program through the Oklahoma Hospital Association. (*Yes, that's us!* 😊)

The **Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline** has FREE materials that are available to you.

The **Oklahoma Health Care Authority** also has a great handout on the "Timeline of Quitting Benefits" for you to share with your patients.

The **Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse** has staff who can provide additional support specifically for patients with mental health and substance abuse issues.



The CDC *Tips From Former Smokers campaign* featuring Rebecca, a former smoker who struggled with depression for years. The media buys for this campaign go into effect on Monday, Jan. 25. Below are links to the campaign material. CDC will soon release a press package. Some additional material will be added including a companion article, *"Smoking and Mental Health: Five Things Every Health Care Provider Should Know."*

Rebecca Videos: <http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/resources/videos/rebecca-videos.html>

Podcast: <http://www2c.cdc.gov/podcasts/player.asp?f=8639229>

Print Ad: <http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/resources/ads/tips-5-rebecca-full.pdf>

Mental Health Care Professionals: Help Your Patients Quit Smoking:

<http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/partners/health/mental/index.html>

Web Button for Rebecca Campaign (under *Mental Health Conditions: Depression and Anxiety*):

<http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/resources/buttons/index.html>

Remember....

"Stars can't shine without darkness."

Many smokers with depression want to quit.

And when given the proper support, they can. Successfully.

You can help by asking ALL patients about their tobacco use and providing evidence-based education and support to those who use tobacco.

And we are here to support you.

Good days, AND bad.

For those who have already completed the satisfaction survey, THANK YOU! Your feedback is crucial. One specific request was for more information on “health screening information on wellness for adults”.

I’m working on that topic and will get an update out to you in the coming weeks.

For those who haven’t had a chance yet...

This is a [brief survey](#) that will help us make sure that the information we provide to you is practical for your situations and allow us to make the most of your time.

This survey should take no more than 5 minutes.

It will allow us to structure these updates in a way that makes the best use of all of our time.

(Otherwise you’ll have to read more stories about me... 😊)

Until next week,

Oklahoma Strategic Tribal Alliance for Health (OSTAH)
Margie Burkhart
Cherokee Nation Healthy Nation



Oklahoma Hospital Association (OHA)
Jennifer W. Roysdon
Hospitals Helping Patients Quit



“There is no clinical treatment available today that can reduce illness, prevent death, and increase quality of life more than effective tobacco treatment interventions.”

-Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence, US Public Health Service, US Dept. of Health and Human Services