

COMMUNITY ADVISED SMOKING CESSATION PROJECT: 2SLGBTQIA+ FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY



**November
2023**

LUNGNSPEI

Financial contribution from



Public Health
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé
publique du Canada



2SLGBTQIA+ Focus Group Summary

Aim: To better understand the needs and challenges for reducing the use of commercial tobacco or quitting smoking within the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

Fourteen people from Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island took part in one of four small group discussions. Three sessions were online with one for transgender people only. One in-person session was held at the Cape Breton Youth Project in Sydney, NS. Two sessions included a peer champion.

Participants were aged 16 years to over 40. More than half identified as transgender. Most had been smoking for years, often starting with their peers in high school. Many spoke of being on a fixed income or unemployed. Several people vaped, including flavoured vapes and or used cannabis.



Take Away Themes

- **Stress** was the #1 reason for smoking. Other reasons were: boredom, the social aspects of smoking when with friends or drinking alcohol, and easy access to cigarettes. Smoking was gender-affirming for some trans participants. For people with ADHD (attention-deficient hyperactivity disorder), nicotine's stimulating effects helped manage their symptoms.
- Increasing prices or packaging changes were **not** a deterrent for quitting. Some people turned to 'discount' tobacco or vaping as alternatives.
- Tobacco cessation ads have not been representative of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. **More effective 2SLGBTQIA+ advertising of programming and resources was proposed.** For example, ads with gay couples or a trans person. One person said this would help signal that the 2SLGBTQIA+ community is worth saving from the negative effects of smoking.
- Needed cessation supports were multi-pronged and flexible to meet each person's unique needs. This included **access to free nicotine replacement therapy** and **counselling in 2SLGBTQIA+-friendly spaces.** Or, online and telephone support for people who cannot or prefer not to visit sites in person. NRT should be available by mail as well.
- Trans participants voiced the importance of **whole-person care.** This included access to primary and gender-affirming care. For some, this was a higher priority than cessation.
- **Health determinants** (e.g., lack of healthcare access and housing insecurity) are the root cause of some smoking behaviours. They also impact a person's ability to quit. People want more focus on the benefits of non-smoking and motivating people. Not negative messaging and shaming people about their smoking.
- Given the tight connection with socializing, **'dry' events** may help reduce smoking in the community.



Thank you!

“A wider community benefit to quitting, I think would be that's one less thing for the greater society to stigmatize us for.”

“...making our community know that we're important enough to quit smoking and to save from the consequences....because there's a lot of apathy around it too, I feel.”

“This community is resilient because we have no choice, no other choice here.”

Thank you to everyone who joined the focus group discussions! Your feedback will help LungNSPEI and its partners develop needs-based tobacco cessation programming. Visit <https://www.lungnspei.ca/casc> for more detailed findings.