Art Therapy for Tobacco Cessation: A Client’s Written Expression of Victory

By Veronique Polo, MBA, CHES, CTTS
Tobacco Cessation Specialist, Community Health Worker

Trish McMahan, an artist from New Port Richey, has wanted to quit smoking for over fifty years. She has tried acupuncture, hypnosis and went cold turkey, but so far has not been successful, until now. The established yoga instructor joined our Quit Smoking Now (QSN) program and combined her experience, desire to become healthy again and the QSN curriculum tools to face the battle anew. Her favorite hobbies, decoupage and poetry are helping to fight her addiction.

Mrs. McMahan has been a featured artist and volunteer at the Progress Energy Art Gallery downtown New Port Richey, where she displays and sells her decoupage and glass art. She also enjoys writing. She admits the fight against tobacco is ferocious, but art keeps her mind occupied, and expressing her feelings in a poem is another way of coping. Mrs. McMahan’s poem illustrates that this painful separation from her long-time “friend” is a continuing battle she feels may never end. It is a bittersweet resistance to say the least.

Forever Fortnight
(Excerpt)
by Patricia McMahan

…One week has passed. Eight days, nine.
Can I ever say success is mine?
ten, eleven days a dozen.
I told my friends,
my Baptist cousin.
On day thirteen, my house smells clean.

Day thirteen, hour two.
I must find something new to do.
Hour four get out the door.
And then it’s Five!
I’m still Alive!
And when it’s six
the day is licked.
Oh, wow! My car’s not dirty
and poetry night starts at 6:30.

At LAST. At LAST. Two weeks have passed!
The Forever Fortnight!
NO SMOKES IN SIGHT!!!

Hey! You over there!
Gotta Light?

Read the poem in its entirety at www.gnahec.org.
AHEC’s Quit Times

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“Don’t Worry, It Will Never Happen to Me!”

By Claudia Quinones, BS Tobacco Cessation Specialist, GNAHEC

That was Gary Hawks’ response to his young son when he begged him to stop smoking a couple of years ago. Like so many children whose parents smoke, his son was afraid that he would get sick from smoking. Back then, Gary smoked a pack a day, and at the urging of his wife and children, he tried to quit many times. He remembers sneaking around to smoke, hiding cigarettes in his camper, and taking out the dogs for long walks just to see if he could find someone to give him one.

In the fall of 2009, Gary found out that he had diabetes, and his doctor clearly told him that if he wanted to live he needed to quit smoking. During the next three monthly follow-up visits, Gary faced his doctor with shame for continuing to smoke. Then in November, something “clicked,” and on the Great American Smoke Out day, Gary quit. After 33 years of smoking, he never picked up a cigarette again.

In February, Gary was diagnosed with lung cancer. This bad news catapulted Gary to do something to help others at his workplace. While undergoing chemotherapy and radiation treatment Gary researched existing tobacco prevention and quitting programs, and he came across Gulfcoast North Area Health Education Center’s (GNAHEC) cessation services. He successfully advocated at work and obtained a strong support of his employers at One Touch Direct (OTC) in Tampa to bring the Quit Smoking Now program onsite. He reached out to almost everyone of the 35-45 percent of OTC’s employees with addiction to nicotine and shared his “don’t worry, it will never happen to me” story. His sincere and passionate concern became a turning point for many who decided to quit. Gary became a facilitator and together with GNAHEC staff, he has held five groups and helped over two dozen people remain tobacco free.

A year after Gary quit, his cancer has metastasized, and he is currently undergoing an aggressive radiation and chemotherapy treatment. His medical prognosis is poor, the doctors have given him from three to six months, “but they don’t know me,” says Gary. His family, coworkers and all those, whom he helped to start new “smoke free” lives, love him. Furthermore, he is still determined to continue helping others to kick the smoking habit.

Spotlight on: Claudia Quinones, Tobacco Cessation Specialist

Since her graduation from the University of South Florida, Claudia Quinones has worked in the public health related field. For eight years, she worked with HIV and AIDS patients helping them navigate complex socio-medical systems, and later, continued within this field helping the larger HIV community in the administration and management of federal, state and local funding for services.

Claudia joined Gulfcoast North Area Health Education Center (GNAHEC) in the spring of 2007 in the capacity of Continuing Education Coordinator and, in the spring of this year, became a Tobacco Cessation Specialist. She truly enjoys having the opportunity of helping people obtain the necessary tools and support to overcome their tobacco addiction and being part of this monumental life change.

Claudia enjoys traveling, gardening and rescuing little critters.
For more than 10 years, Gulfcoast South Area Health Education Center’s (GSAHEC) ICHS program has recruited health professions students to work in community projects that benefit rural and medically underserved populations. The students’ interdisciplinary skill sets, including medicine, pharmacy and nursing, foster the creation of unique projects and comprehensive solutions to address local health disparities. In 2010, eight ICHS spent eight weeks of their summer working in two teams and provided over 1,500 hours of community service.

While developing and implementing two community-based projects which educated healthcare providers and consumers on chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and the dangers of hookah, they addressed two issues affecting the morbidity and mortality associated with tobacco use in our service area. Tobacco use remains the single largest preventable cause of disease and premature death in the United States. Smoking is the primary cause of COPD, which is a leading cause of death in our community. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there are an estimated 24 million cases of COPD in the US, half of which are undiagnosed, and COPD is the fourth leading cause of death. However, in Manatee, Sarasota and Charlotte counties it ranks higher than the national average—the third leading cause of death.

Because COPD affects mostly smokers over the age of 40, the Global Initiative for Obstructive Lung Disease (GOLD) standard recommends testing this group for COPD with or without the presence of symptoms. The goal of this project was to educate and build awareness among providers and consumers on this debilitating disease and available community resources. Students created a provider resource kit and consumer presentation based on the evaluation of the information they obtained.

The second project focused on hookah use among college-age students. A hookah is a waterpipe used for smoking in which the smoke is cooled and filtered by passing through water. Hookah use although popular in other parts of the world, has emerged in the US in the past 10 years. In 2007, there were about 200-300 hookah cafes in the US. Smoking hookah is smoking tobacco and it produces the same harmful health effects, but many hookah smokers wrongly believe that it is less harmful than cigarette smoking. We designed ICHS project to educate 18-24 year olds on the consequences of hookah use. Utilizing the information collected through a community assessment, market research and focus groups, the ICHS team developed a comprehensive health education campaign and designed effective educational tools to increase community awareness on hookah use and enhance prevention efforts in our service area.

Students Brian Welch, Ezinne Anumudu, Shinelle Pierre and Melinda Buchanan from Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine, Catherine Buchanan-McGrath from New College of Florida, Cathryne Durka from University of Tampa, Stefanie Johnson from Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine and James Martin from State College of Florida worked on these projects.

Source

An Update on the USF Research Project on Hookah Smoking Among College Students

By Mary P. Martinasek MPH, RRT, CHES, CPH PhD Candidate, Graduate Research Associate

The USF Area Education Health Center (AHEC) funded dissertation, entitled “Understanding the Psychosocial Aspects of Hookah Smoking among College Students” is well under way. Mary Martinasek, a doctoral candidate in the College of Public Health at the University of South Florida, is conducting the research.

This study is a mixed method research project incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis. The study and research objectives utilize Fishbein and Ajzen’s Theory of Reasoned Action noted below.

The qualitative inquiry related to interviews and focus groups is completed. The proposed research included 20 intercept interviews with smokers and nonsmokers on the USF campus and 2 focus groups with smokers only. Because the goal of the qualitative research component was to reach theoretical saturation (where no new ideas or themes emerged on the various theoretical constructs shown above) the qualitative inquiry ended with a total of 63 intercept interviews and 3 focus groups. The turn out for the focus groups ranged from 9 to 14 participants. The transcripts with research information will be uploaded into a qualitative software program for analysis by the researcher and 2 outside analyzers.

The development of the quantitative portion of the research will include an online survey, which we plan to distribute to a random 1500 students living on campus at USF. The survey has gone through seven iterations. Dr. Ken Ward and Dr. Brian Primack, two hookah research experts, have given input on the final survey. In addition, three faculty members at USF have provided input and guidance. Anticipated date for survey recruitment is 30 days after the beginning of the spring semester.

Earlier steps include pre-testing, piloting and re-testing of the survey with USF students, and we anticipate completing this phase within the next several weeks. One last component to the research is participant observations at local hookah bars that surround the college; the plan is to complete five observations during the fall and spring semesters.

The qualitative data collection has been very enlightening. I look forward to sharing my findings with AHEC and the college, once complete.
Maria Williams, MPH

Maria Williams is the most recent addition to the Gulfcoast South Area Health Education Center staff. She is the new Tobacco Training Coordinator, holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Psychology, and Master in Public Health from the West Virginia University. Maria specializes in health intervention design and implementation with at risk communities. She was able to utilize those skills successfully in designing an obesity intervention program for Monongalia county schools that was later considered for statewide adoption in West Virginia and granted a CDC publication. She was also instrumental in developing a successful tobacco cessation program for pregnant women and women of childbearing age for the Monongalia County Health Department.

Maria is a native of Brazil. Her experiences in her home country have inspired her interests in international healthcare issues and the hardships of developing communities. This was part of her driving force in helping to create the Belchior Foundation, a charitable aid program that worked alongside West Virginia University School of Medicine and students to provide resources for communities in need abroad. Maria also believes in the value of strengthening her local community by volunteering. She volunteered regularly as an instructor with the American Red Cross, Habitat for Humanity, and care provider with Morgantown, WV AIDS agencies, Caritas and Colligo House. Welcome Maria!

Karla Brody, MSSW

Karla Brody holds a Master of Science in Social Work from the University of Tennessee as well as a Bachelor of Arts from the University of South Florida. She began her career as a Geriatric Case Manager and later as a Hospital Discharge Planner.

Karla served as a Program Coordinator and support group facilitator at the Mental Health Association of Middle Tennessee and as a Program Coordinator at the non-profit advocacy organization, Tennessee Voices for Children. She held a social worker position at a hospice agency in Nashville prior to returning to Florida in 2002. Karla most recently worked as SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders) Liaison and Program Administrator with the Mid-Florida Area Agency on Aging. In this role, she managed over seventy-five Department of Elder Affairs trained SHINE volunteers, and administered the sixteen county regional SHINE program in North and Central Florida.

As of August 2010, following completion of Tobacco Treatment Specialist Training, Karla serves as Tobacco Cessation Specialist at the Gulfcoast South Area Health Education Center in Sarasota. She has a lifelong interest in health and wellness education and is an ex-smoker. Welcome Karla!
Nobody could have ever imagined what was coming into the quiet city of Arcadia. Many were smoking their lives away without thinking about the consequences. That was Arcadian life as they knew it until Kandice Hogan, Tobacco Cessation Coordinator from DeSoto Memorial Hospital (DMH) and Xenia Rosado-Merced, Tobacco Cessation Specialist from Gulfcoast South Area Health Education Center (GSAHEC) combined forces and took Arcadia by surprise! Life in DeSoto County will never be the same. Many Arcadians who had fallen victims to the tobacco lures are now empowered with the 4 D’s (Delaying, Drinking Water, Doing Something Else and Deep Breathing), and are proudly displaying on their wrists the cobalt blue bracelets of their SUCCESS—they have Quit Smoking!

Since DMH received a grant award from the Florida Department of Health to implement a Tobacco Cessation Program, about 400 smokers have benefitted from the program. This program enables the immediate identification of any patient who smokes which triggers a tobacco cessation intervention, including individual or group cessation counseling with a Tobacco Cessation Specialist.

The “Kandi and Xenia” team has offered over 22 tobacco cessation classes, not only for the DMH groups, but also for several local businesses and organizations, such as Orange Co of FL, Inc., The GEO Group, Inc. and Wal-Mart employees. Donna Hines attended the first tobacco cessation class at DMH as one of the members of the DMH family. She is also a grandmother with some health issues because of her smoking. During her last hospitalization, Kandi Hogan visited Donna and introduced her to the Tobacco Cessation Program. After leaving the hospital, Donna attended the “Tools to Quit” class and she quit smoking. Although it is hard for her, Donna is committed not to smoke by utilizing tools provided by the program. She admits, “I used to go to the hospital two or three times a year and since I quit smoking in March, I have not even had a single hospitalization!”

Another class participant Nora Fons was a long-term smoker who also began experiencing signs of health deterioration, but after attending the quit smoking class at DMH she set her Quit Date and began using program tools. Nora identified that “doing something else” was key to her success, so she started using the play dough provided to create what she now calls her “ciggie art,” tiny figurines she created during her quitting process. Nora enthusiastically tells her success story by using the sculpted figurines to demonstrate the stages of her quitting process. “If I did it anyone can do it. You just have to follow YOUR plan and practice the 4 D’s,” she says.

Laura DeFrenza is a Smoking Cessation Facilitator at the Gulfcoast North Area Health Education Center. She received her Bachelor’s Degree from the University of West Florida in Health Education. Additionally she is a Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES). Laura’s true passion is to help people live healthier lives. For recreational activities, she enjoys spending time with family and friends, the beach and kayaking.

Xenia Rosado Merced from GSAHEC conducts the “Tools to Quit” Tobacco Cessation Classes every other week. Kandi Hogan from DMH is available to provide free nicotine replacement therapy to the participants. Classes are open to DMH personnel, medical staff, patient population and the community at large. You may contact Xenia Rosado Merced at 941.552.1280 ext. 25 and Kandi Hogan at 863.993.7648.
Are You Interested In Helping Your Patients Quit Smoking?

Gulfcoast North Area Health Education Center Offer’s a Variety of Trainings for Medical Providers

Training topics include:

• Biology of Nicotine Addiction
• Strategies for Intervention
• Motivational Counseling
• Neurobiology of Addiction
• Cessation Pharmacotherapy
• Other Nicotine Products

Upon completion providers will be able to:

• Recognize and treat tobacco dependence as a chronic disease
• Deliver brief, effective interventions to patients willing to quit tobacco using the “5A’s”
• Utilize the Stages of Change model and deliver brief, motivational interventions to patients unwilling to quit tobacco use at that time
• Prescribe appropriate pharmacotherapies useful in tobacco cessation
• Refer tobacco users to cessation resources

Please call 813.929.1000 ext.208 today to schedule a training!
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To learn more about how you can become involved with AHEC, please call Leila Martini at 813.974.5013.

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