

INCREASING PARTICIPATION IN TOBACCO CESSATION CLASSES: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS

Nicole Dantes
Spring 2012

Abstract

Tobacco companies are extremely business savvy. They know how to market their products effectively, not just to increase short-term sales, but to propel their product far into future generations by ingraining it in media and culture. The addiction to tobacco is a deadly problem for both users and non-users. The knowledge is readily communicated, but not the behavior change component. Northeast Florida AHEC's *Quit Smoking Now* (QSN) program addresses this disparity via free tobacco cessation classes.

The objective of this study is to propose a campaign initiative or intervention ideas to Northeast Florida AHEC, by April 2012, that will help increase the participation rates of their tobacco cessation classes in Clay County. Using a qualitative design, seven interviews were conducted and recorded with community stakeholders. The data was transcribed verbatim and analyzed using NVivo software version 9.2.

The most commonly coded barriers identified in the interview transcripts were: culture, transportation, need for education, time, stress in the community, and lack of enforcement. Clay County is geographically spread out and encompasses varying populations and cities, raising the need to appeal to both urban and rural populations. All stakeholders were interested in and supported the QSN program and believed it to be a valuable asset to the community.

The study resulted in four themes formulated from the barriers identified in the interviews and the stakeholders' suggestions for improvement. They are (1) Communicate with facility managers about the option of contacting Council on Aging for transportation possibilities (2) Focus on scheduling more work site QSN classes in Clay County (3) Increase marketing of QSN in rural areas of Clay County and (4) Continue to educate the youth about the dangers of tobacco use, the addictive properties of it, and preparing them to change the culture and stigma of tobacco in their community for the future.

Keywords: tobacco, cessation, stakeholders, culture, addiction, Northeast Florida AHEC, Quit Smoking Now (QSN)