



## PTSD Awareness

If you are a Veteran living with PTSD and smoke, you are not alone. Those with PTSD have reported that they tend to smoke to help deal with their mood and symptoms of stress and anxiety. While smoking may provide some relief, it can cause PTSD symptoms to worsen.<sup>1</sup>

What kind of problems can occur if you have PTSD and smoke?<sup>1</sup>

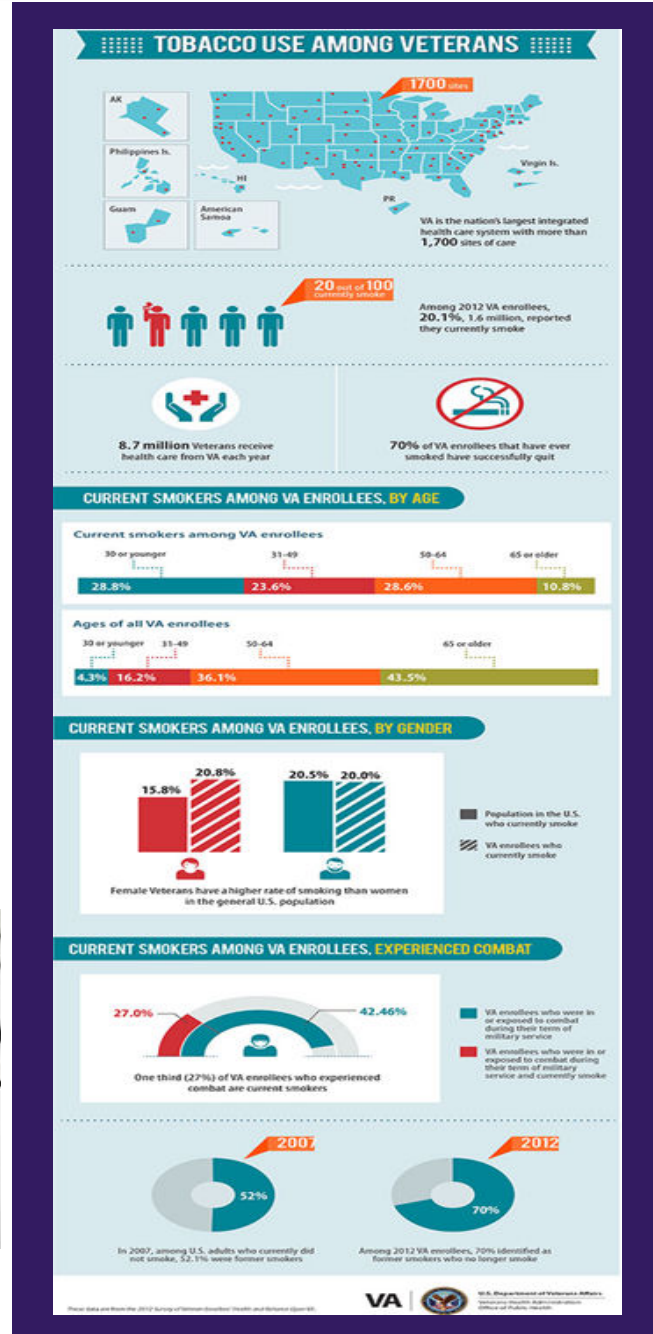
- Smoking can make your PTSD symptoms worse such as enhancing your feelings of anxiety, re-experiencing, avoidance, and numbing.
- Smoking can make it harder to fall asleep or worsen your quality of sleep.
- It can interfere with specific medications that you may be taking.
- May put yourself at higher risk for other serious health conditions such as cancer, heart disease, or stroke.

How can quitting help improve your mental and physical health?<sup>1</sup>

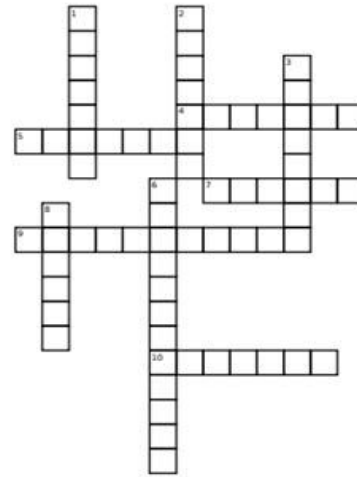
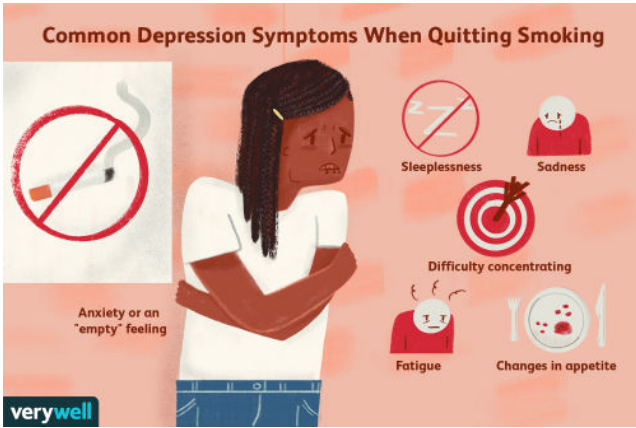
- Chances are you will experience less anxiety and relief from some PTSD symptoms especially the longer you are living a tobacco-free lifestyle.
- Your mood and quality of life will generally improve.
- If you take medication for depression or anxiety, staying quit will allow these medications to work to their full potential.
- Reduces your risk of developing other chronic health issues.



1. Tobacco & Health Policy and Programs. (n.d.). PTSD & Tobacco Use. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Retrieved from PTSD & Tobacco Use PTSD & TOBACCO USE (va.gov)



# PTSD & Smoking Crossword Puzzle



## SMOKING AND MENTAL HEALTH



Patients with a mental health disorder are

**2-3 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO SMOKE**

than patients without a mental health disorder.

**Tobacco users with a mental health disorder die 25 years earlier than Americans overall.**

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To learn more, listen to this podcast with Dr. Ellen Herbst who discusses nicotine dependence and debunks myths about PTSD and smoking. Find out ways to get support to quit or to cut back on tobacco usage.

**Down:**

- Your \_\_\_\_ of life will improve after quitting smoking.
- \_\_\_\_ can make your PTSD symptoms worse.
- Several \_\_\_\_ can occur if you have PTSD and smoke.
- Smoking can put you at risk for cancer, stroke, or \_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_ Veterans have a higher rate of smoking than women in the general U.S. population.

**Across:**

- Quitting can help \_\_\_\_ your mental and physical health.
- If you are a \_\_\_\_ living with PTSD and you smoke you are not alone.
- Smoking can make it harder to fall \_\_\_\_.
- Smoking can interfere with specific \_\_\_\_ you may take.
- \_\_\_\_ percent of VA enrollees that have smoked are able to successfully quit.

<https://www.verywellmind.com/depression-when-you-quit-smoking-2825274>

Got questions on other health issues related to sleep health, physical activity, tobacco, or nutrition? Share them with us and we will help you "Bust The Myths!" Send your questions to [usaf.jbsa.afmsa.mbx.afmra-hpo@mail.mil](mailto:usaf.jbsa.afmsa.mbx.afmra-hpo@mail.mil). Make sure to include in the subject line "Health Myth Buster." For more online health tips visit the Air Force Health Promotion webpage <https://www.airforcemedicine.af.mil/Resources/Health-Promotion/>



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