

## Tobacco Treatment Specialist Core Competencies

Core Competency 1: Tobacco Dependence Knowledge and Education	
1	Describe the prevalence and patterns of tobacco use, dependence and cessation in the country and region in which the treatment is provided, and how rates vary across demographic, economic, and cultural subgroups.
2	Utilize the findings of national reports, research studies, and guidelines on tobacco treatment.
3	Explain the health consequences of tobacco use and benefits of quitting, and the basic mechanisms of the more common tobacco-induced disorders.
4	Describe how tobacco dependence develops and be able to explain the biological, psychological, and social causes of tobacco dependence.
5	Summarize and be able to apply valid and reliable diagnostic criteria for tobacco dependence.
6	Describe the chronic relapsing nature of tobacco dependence, including typical relapse patterns and predisposing factors.
7	Provide information that is gender, age, and culturally sensitive and appropriate to learning style and abilities.
8	Identify evidence-based treatment strategies and the pros and cons for each strategy.
9	RECOMMENDED: Explain the role of treatment for tobacco use and dependence within a comprehensive tobacco control program.
10	RECOMMENDED: Explain the societal and environmental factors that promote and inhibit the spread of tobacco use and dependence.
11	RECOMMENDED: Be able to discuss alternative therapies such as harm reduction, hypnosis, acupuncture, and cigarette tapering.
12	RECOMMENDED: Demonstrate ability to access information on the above topics.
Core Competency 2: Counseling Skills	
1	Demonstrate effective counseling skills, such as active listening and empathy, that facilitate the treatment process.
2	Demonstrate establishing a warm, confidential, and nonjudgmental counseling environment.
3	Describe and demonstrate use of an evidence-based method for brief interventions for treating tobacco use and dependence, as identified in current guidelines.
4	Describe the use of models of behavior change including motivational interviewing, cognitive therapy, and supportive counseling.
5	Demonstrate the effective use of clinically sound strategies to enhance motivation and encourage commitment to change.
6	Demonstrate competence in at least one of the empirically supported counseling modalities such as individual, group and telephone counseling.
Core Competency 3: Assessment Interview	
1	Demonstrate the ability to conduct an intake assessment interview including tobacco use history, validated measures of motivation to quit, validated measures for assessing tobacco use and dependence, current challenges and barriers to attaining permanent abstinence, current strengths to support abstinence, prior quit attempts (including treatment experiences, successes, and barriers), availability of social support systems, preferences for treatment, and cultural factors influencing making a quit attempt.
2	Demonstrate the ability to gather basic medical history information and conduct a brief screening for psychiatric and substance abuse issues.

3	Describe when to consult with primary medical care providers and make appropriate referrals before treatment planning is implemented.
4	Describe the existing objective measures of tobacco use such as CO monitoring, and/or cotinine level assessments.
<b>Core Competency 4: Treatment Planning</b>	
1	In collaboration with the client, identify specific and measurable treatment objectives.
2	Plan individualized treatments that account for patient assessment factors identified during the intake assessment and history gathering.
3	Collaboratively develop a treatment plan that uses evidence-based strategies to assist the client in moving toward a quit attempt and/or continued abstinence from tobacco.
4	Describe a plan for follow-up to address potential issues, including negative outcomes.
5	Demonstrate the process to make referrals to other health care providers or to recommend additional care.
<b>Core Competency 5: Pharmacotherapy</b>	
1	Describe the benefits of combining pharmacotherapy and counseling.
2	Provide information on correct use, efficacy, adverse events, contraindications, known side effects, and exclusions for all tobacco dependence medications approved by national regulatory agencies.
3	Identify information relevant to a client's current and past medical, psychiatric, and smoking history (including past treatments) that may impact pharmacotherapy decisions.
4	Provide appropriate patient education for therapeutic choices and dosing for a wide range of patient situations.
5	Communicate the symptoms, duration, incidence, and magnitude of nicotine withdrawal.
6	Describe the use of combinations of medications and higher dose medications to enhance the probability of abstinence.
7	Identify possible adverse reactions and complications related to the use of pharmacotherapy for tobacco dependence, making timely referrals to medical professionals/services. Demonstrate ability to address concerns about minor and/or temporary side effects of these pharmacotherapies.
8	Demonstrate ability to collaborate with other healthcare providers to coordinate the appropriate use of medications, especially in the presence of medical or psychiatric co-morbidities.
9	Identify second-line medications and be able to find information about them as needed
10	Provide information about alternative therapies based upon recognized reviews of effectiveness, such as the Cochrane reviews and the USPHS Guidelines.
<b>Core Competency 6: Relapse Prevention</b>	
1	Identify personal risk factors and incorporate into the treatment plan.
2	Describe strategies and coping skills that can reduce relapse risk.
3	Describe strategies and coping skills that can reduce relapse risk.
4	Provide guidance in modifying the treatment plan to reduce the risk of relapse throughout the course of treatment.
5	Describe a plan for continued aftercare following initial treatment.
6	Describe how to make referrals to additional resources to reduce risk of relapse.
7	Implement treatment strategies for someone who has lapsed or relapsed.

Core Competency 7: Diversity and Specific Health Issues	
1	Provide culturally competent counseling.
2	Describe specific treatment indications for special population groups (i.e., pregnant women, adolescents, young adults, elderly, hospitalized patients, those with co-morbid psychiatric conditions).
3	Demonstrate an ability to respond to high-risk client situations.
4	Make effective treatment recommendations for non-cigarette tobacco users.
5	Describe recommendations for those exposed to environmental tobacco smoke pollution.
Core Competency 8: Documentation and Evaluation	
1	Maintain accurate records utilizing accepted coding practices that are appropriate to the setting in which services are provided.
2	Implement a protocol for tracking client follow-up and progress.
3	Describe standardized methods of measuring recognized outcomes of tobacco dependence treatment for individuals and programs.
Core Competency 9: Professional Resources	
1	Describe resources (web-based, community, quitlines) available for continued support for tobacco abstinence for clients.
2	Identify community resources for referral for medical, psychiatric, or psychosocial problems.
3	Name and use peer-reviewed journals, professional societies, websites, and newsletters related to tobacco dependence treatment and/or research.
4	Describe how patients can explore reimbursement for treatments.
Core Competency 10: Law and Ethics	
1	Describe and use a code of ethics established by your professional discipline for tobacco dependence treatment specialists, if available.
2	Describe the implications and utilize the regulations that apply to the tobacco treatment setting (confidentiality, HIPAA, worksite-specific regulations).
Core Competency 11: Professional Development	
1	Maintain professional standards as required by professional license or certification.
2	Utilize the literature and other formal sources of inquiry to remain current in tobacco dependence treatment.
3	Describe the implications of current research to the practice of tobacco dependence treatment.
4	Disseminate knowledge and findings about tobacco treatment with others through formal and informal channel.