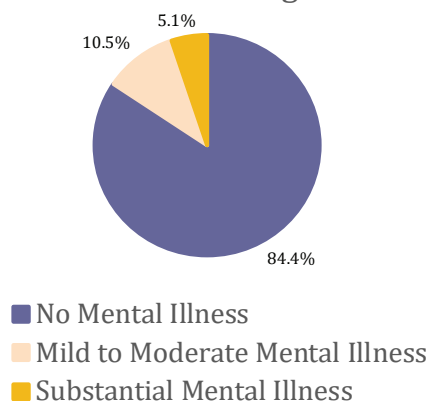# MENTAL HEALTH AND SMOKING IN KANSAS

Kessler 6 Psychological Distress Scale & Poor Mental Health Days Data Overview Based on the 2020 Kansas Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) Survey
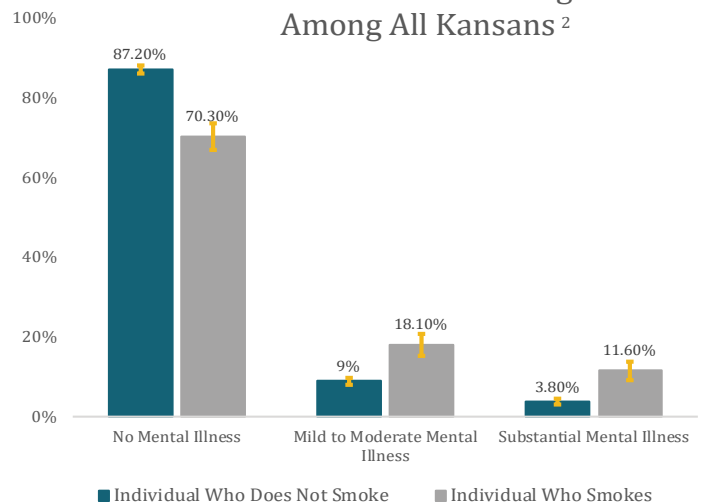
WHAT IS KESSLER 6?

- The Kessler 6 Psychological Distress Scale is an instrument used to screen for psychological distress.[1]
- The Kansas Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) Survey asks all Kessler 6 questions including: feelings of being nervous, restless, depressed, worthless, hopeless, and that everything is an effort.
- A score for each individual is then calculated based upon the total of all their responses; the higher the score, the more severe psychological distress an individual has.
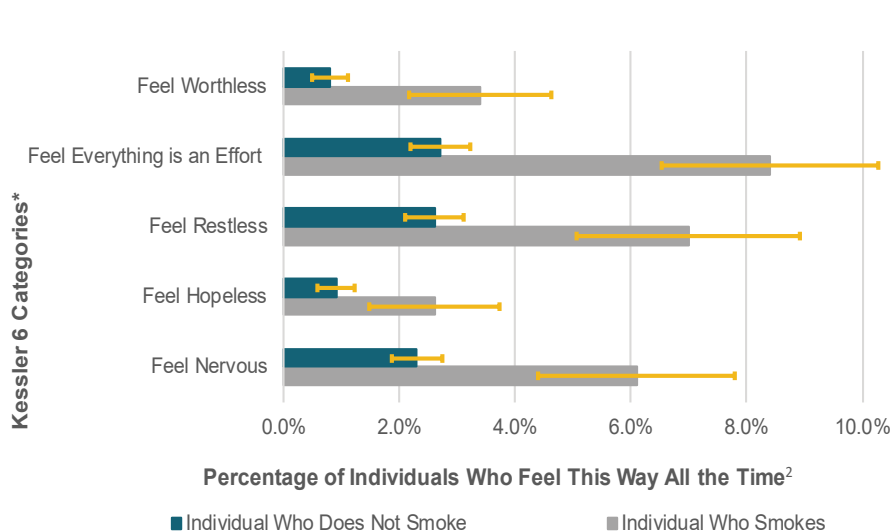
Mental Illness Among All Kansans [2]

- No Mental Illness — 84.4%
- Mild to Moderate Mental Illness — 10.5%
- Substantial Mental Illness — 5.1%

Mental Illness and Smoking Status Among All Kansans [2]

	Individual Who Does Not Smoke	Individual Who Smokes
No Mental Illness	87.20%	70.30%
Mild to Moderate Mental Illness	9%	18.10%
Substantial Mental Illness	3.80%	11.60%

KESSLER 6 QUESTIONS ASKED ON THE 2020 BRFSS SURVEY

1. About how often in the past 30 days did you feel nervous?
2. During the past 30 days, about how often did you feel hopeless?
3. During the past 30 days, about how often did you feel restless or fidgety?
4. During the past 30 days, about how often did you feel so depressed that nothing could cheer you up?
5. During the past 30 days, about how often did you feel everything was an effort?
6. During the past 30 days, about how often did you feel worthless?

Percentage of Individuals Who Feel This Way All the Time[2]

■ Individual Who Does Not Smoke   ■ Individual Who Smokes

* The Relative Standard Error (RSE) was greater than 30% for smokers who feel depressed all the time which is statistically unreliable and is not included in this analysis.

ADULTS WITH MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS HAVE AN INCREASED RISK OF SMOKING

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states, "Adults with mental health or substance use disorders (i.e., behavioral health conditions), smoke cigarettes more than adults without these disorders. Approximately 1 in 4 adults in the U.S. has some form of behavioral health condition, and these adults consume almost 40% of all cigarettes smoked by adults."[3]

WHAT ARE POOR MENTAL HEALTH DAYS?

BRFSS survey respondents are asked the following question, "Now thinking about your mental health, which includes stress, depression, and problems with emotions, for how many days during the past 30 days was your mental health not good?" If a respondent answered a number greater than or equal to 14 days, they were clasified as not having good mental health.

Individuals who smoke who experienced 14 or more days of poor mental health (30.2%) was

MORE THAN TWICE AS MUCH
as individuals who do not smoke (14.3%).

SOURCES

[1]Shon E-J. Measurement equivalence of the Kessler 6 Psychological Distress Scale for Chinese and Korean immi grants: Comparison between younger and older adults. *Int J Methods Psychiatr Res.* 2020;29:e1823 10.1002/mpr.1823

[2]2020 Kansas Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, Bureau of Health Promotion, Kansas Department of Health and Environment.

[3]CDC. (2020, February 4). Tobacco use and quitting among individuals with behavioral health conditions. https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/disparities/mental-illness-substance-use/index.htm

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