

# Operationalizing intersectionality to stimulate smoking cessation in pregnant women in socially vulnerable situations

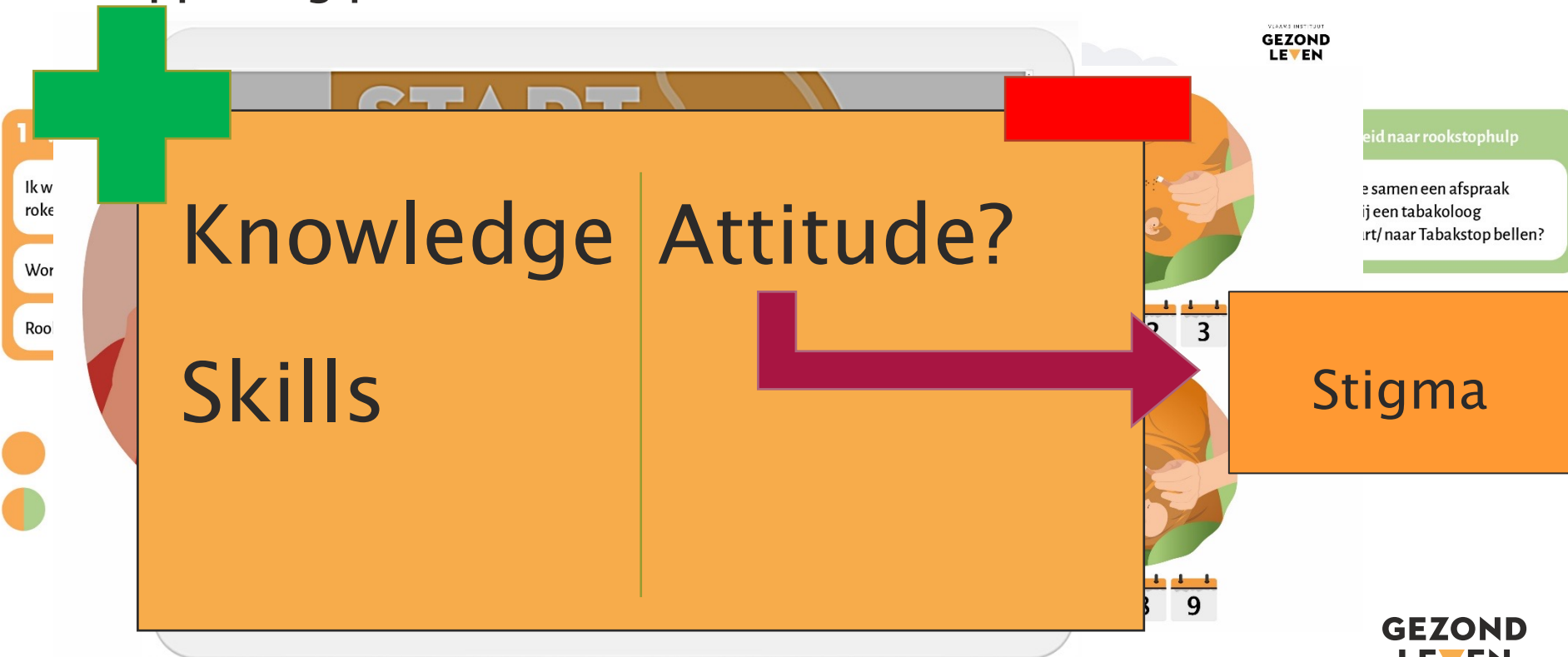
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Flemish Institute for Healthy Living



*This presentation is done in total independence from the event organizer.  
I have no conflict of interest to declare regarding the current presentation.*

# Providing smoking cessation advice

## Supporting professionals?



Knowledge | Attitude?

Skills

Stigma

GEZOND  
LEVEN

leid naar rookstophulp

Samen een afspraak  
 met een tabakoloog  
 of rookadviseur?  
 of rookadviseur?  
 of rookadviseur?

GEZOND  
LEVEN

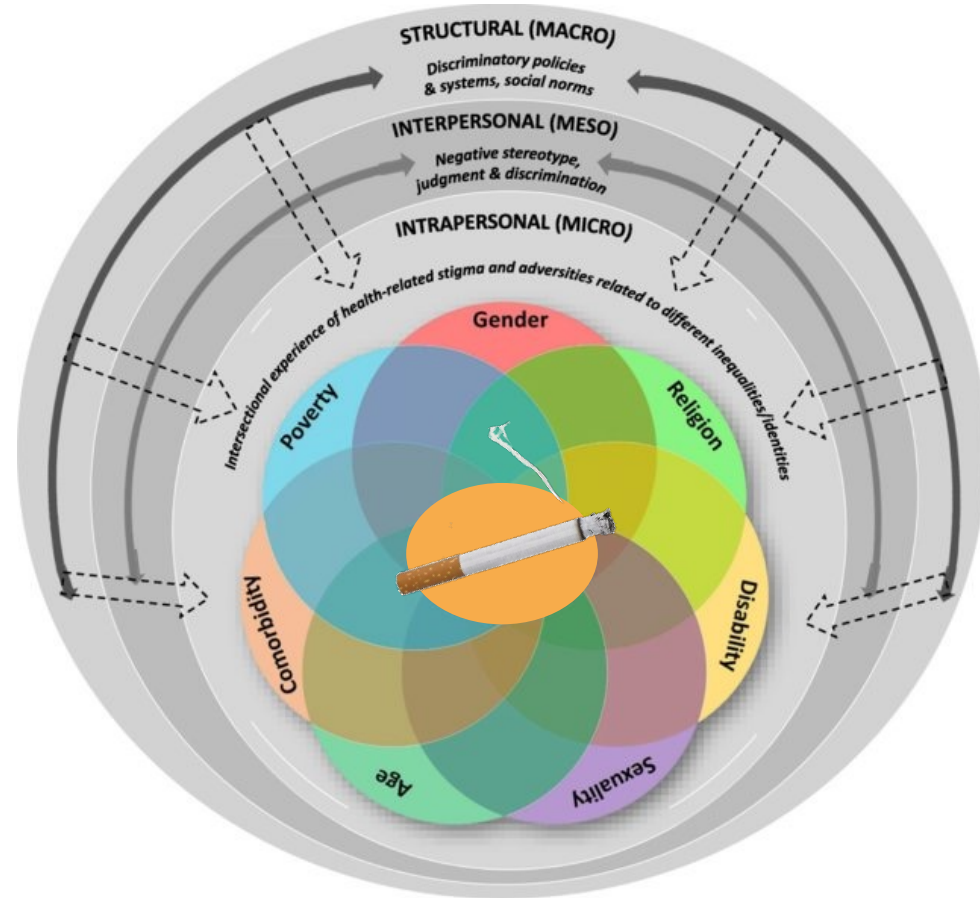
## Smoking and stigma

*You have these professionals where I feel stigmatized because I smoke. They preach and think that quitting is so easy for me to do.*

*Before I got pregnant I didn't feel stigmatized, but now it happens...when I smoke and people notice my pregnant belly.*

# Intersectionality

- ▶ Individual characteristics/identities intersect
- ▶ Intersections
  - → privilege or discrimination.
- ▶ Unequal distribution of
  - Smoking
  - Chances of quitting
- ▶ Smoking-related stigma intersects



# Stigma

## Smoking

- ▶ Denormalization of smoking
- ▶ Smoking as voluntary/rational behaviour
- ▶ Socially unacceptable activity
  - Harming own health
  - Harming innocent victims such as children
- ▶ → negative stereotypes
  - Foolish
  - Sneaky
  - Ignorant
  - Lacking self-control
  - ...



# Stigma

## Smoking x gender

- ▶ Men's smoking as more acceptable
- ▶ Smoking woman as ugly, unattractive and out of control

*Why not head to the website and upload a pic to the Future You Smoking Booth and see how **old and horrible** you could look if you keep smoking. It's a **shocking transformation**.*

Advertisement



Non-smoker  
aged 33

Smoker  
aged 33

*If you smoke*  
**YOUR FUTURE'S  
NOT PRETTY**

qld.gov.au/quit

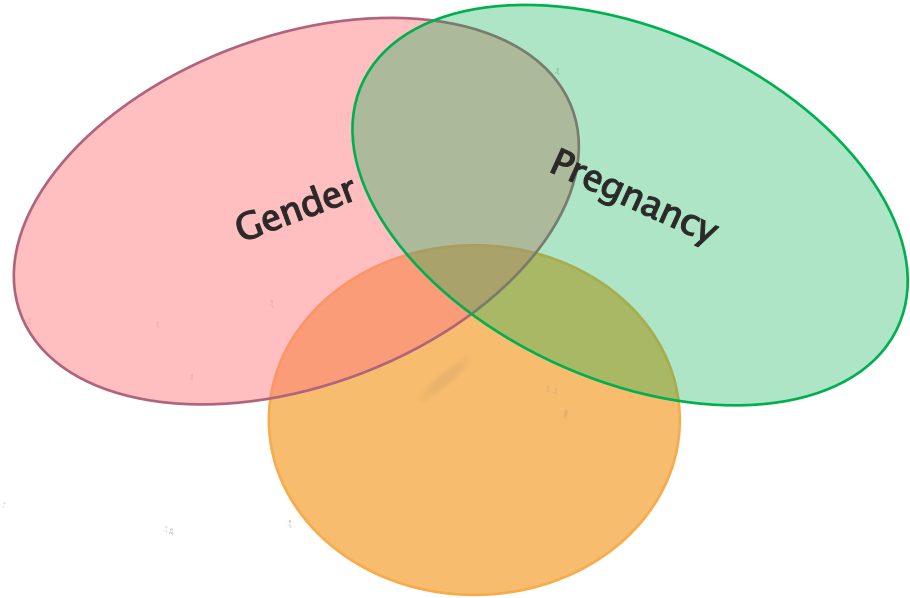
Queensland  
Government

**SEZOND  
LEVEN**

# Stigma

## Smoking x gender x pregnancy

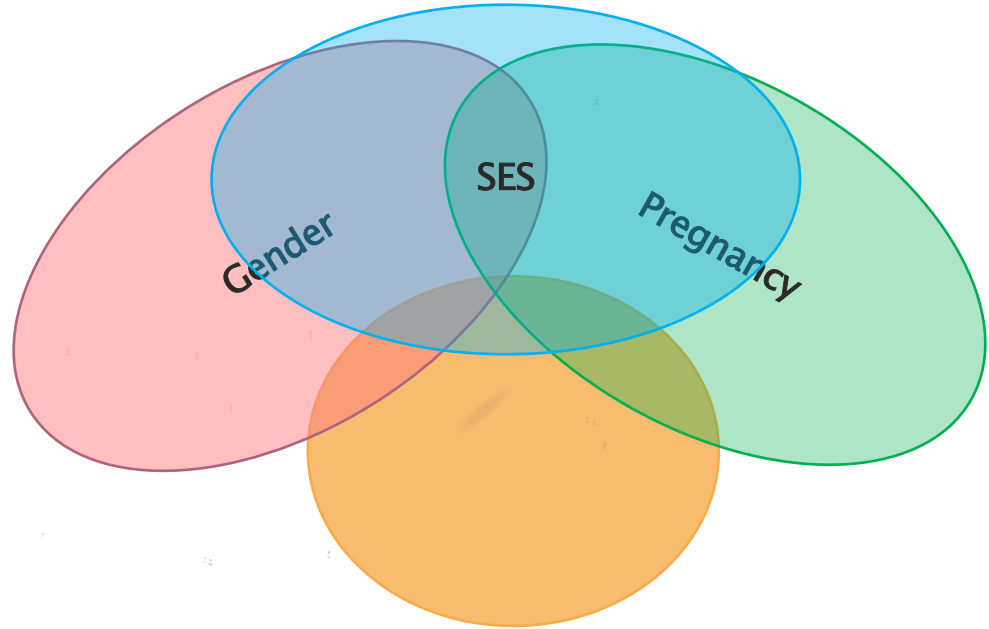
- ▶ Pregnancy as a largely female responsibility
- ▶ Moral judgements
- ▶ Woman who smoke = irresponsible mothers-to-be
- ▶ Foetal-centred approaches



# Stigma

## Smoking x gender x pregnancy x SES

- ▶ Social gradient
- ▶ Lower SES groups most affected by pregnancy-related stigma
- ▶ Stigma linked to low SES



# Stigma

## Effects related to contact with health care

- ▶ Underreporting or non-disclosure of smoking status
- ▶ Avoid seeking support from health care practitioners
- ▶ Lack of feeling safe and trusted by health care practitioners
- ▶ Feeling guilty and shamed

# Reducing stigma by health-care practitioners

1. Take some time to “check yourself”
  - Do I force the woman to quit?
  - Do I consider the health of the fetus AND the mother-to-be?
2. Acknowledge that smoking is an addiction
  - ... and not a lifestyle choice or rational behaviour
3. Use person-first language and avoid overly simplistic descriptions of personhood and groups.
  - Pregnant woman who smokes instead of pregnant smoker

# Thank you

## Any Questions?

More information

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