

# Exploring how Tobacco Industry-Targeted Communities Experience and Perceive Thirdhand Smoke Residue

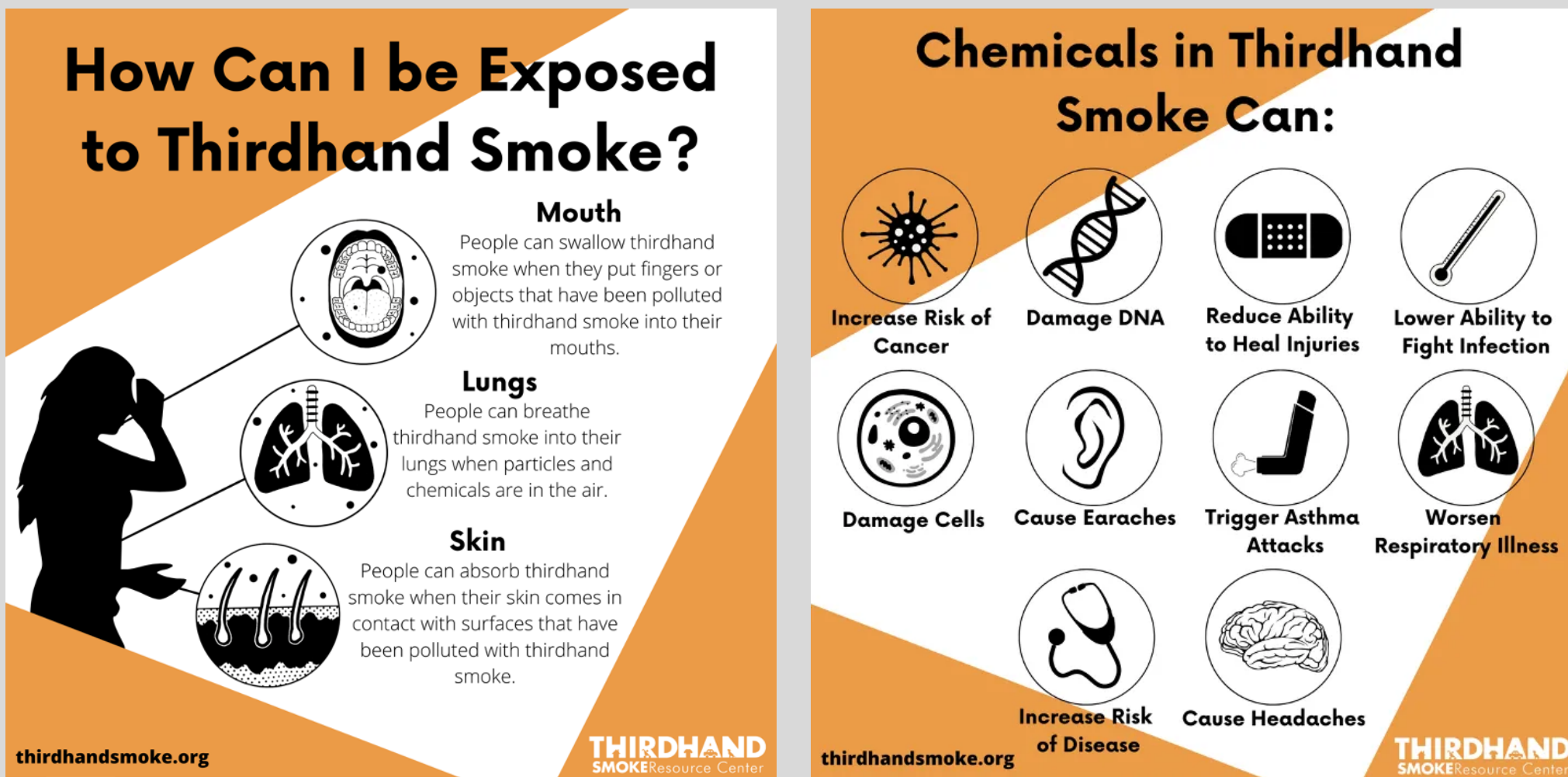
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## BACKGROUND

### What is Thirdhand Smoke (THS) Residue?

- Mixture of toxic chemicals left behind after someone smokes
- Sticks to surfaces, accumulates in dust, and becomes embedded in furniture and fabrics
- Persists in environments for months to years after smoking stops
- People recognize THS by the stale tobacco odor or discolored stains, yet most do not make the connection between these experiences and the term THS

### Risks of THS Exposure



- Underserved communities disproportionately targeted by the tobacco industry are at higher risk of THS exposure

## PURPOSE & RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore present THS awareness and perspectives among the Black, Hispanic, Asian American/ Pacific Islander [AAPI], and LGBTQ+ communities.

Specifically, this project examined their....

- RQ1: ...experiences with THS.
- RQ2: ...knowledge of THS exposure.
- RQ3: ...awareness of the health impact of THS exposure.

## METHOD

### Procedures

- Focus group sessions with California adults who identified as a member of one of the four industry-targeted communities
- Digital materials for participant recruitment
  - Social media post
  - Email scripts
- Disseminated materials via
  - Thirdhand Smoke Resource Center
  - California community partners
- $n = 67$  participants across 12 focus group sessions
- Three focus group sessions per community:
  - Black/African American ( $n = 14$ )
  - Hispanic ( $n = 19$ )
  - AAPI ( $n = 18$ )
  - LGBTQ+ ( $n = 16$ )

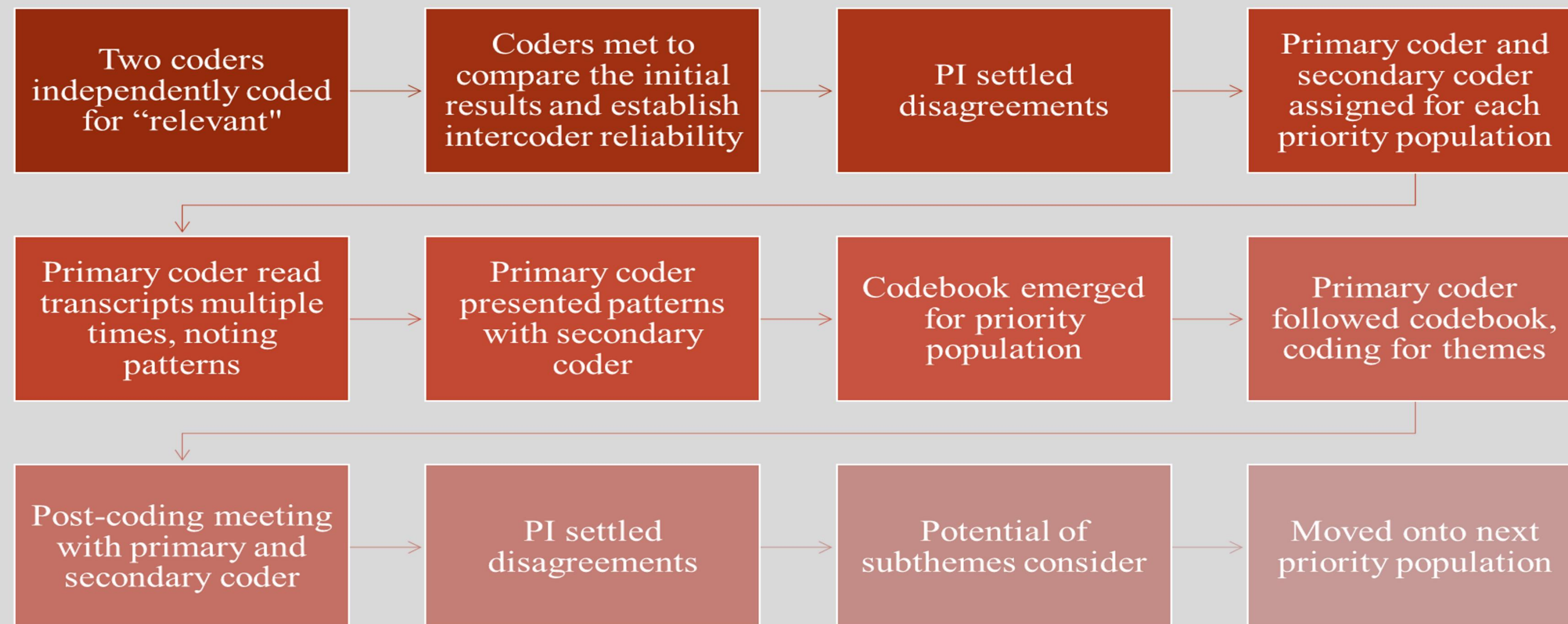
### Focus Group Protocol

- Iteratively developed with investigative team
- Questions asked participants to reflect on experiences noticing tobacco smoke when no one was smoking, and to consider the impact of these experiences on health
- A loosed protocol and the use of probing questions allowed session hosts to follow the conversation as needed

### Data Analysis

- Zoom's auto-transcription feature used to document session discussions
- Transcripts were coded for each RQ, and then thematically analyzed by individual community

## DATA ANALYSIS



## THEMATIC ANALYSIS RESULTS

### Experiences with Tobacco & Smoking

#### Black Community

**Generational smoking:** Familial history of tobacco use; first memory of tobacco, either the product or smell, being at a young age

- "I remember walking into my grandparent's house as a kid, and my grandpa would be smoking a pipe. The smell of...pipes...cigs...reminded me of him."*

**Social smokers:** Smoking being an expected social experience at bars, parties, etc.

- "I wouldn't say I'm a smoker but if I get passed a vape or a cigarette or even a cigar at a party...I will have some."*

#### Hispanic Community

**Health implications:** Considerations of the impact of tobacco use on health

- "...my Covid was really bad because they thought I was smoking...I'm not a smoker. My husband is; I've never smoked. And because of my diabetes and my secondhand smoke that's how I got very, very sick for COVID-19."*

**Damage to spaces:** Yellowing walls, damaged carpet, smell in rooms, etc.

- "... When I purchased a home, I could smell it in the front and the walls. It was really hard to remove it because even if you paint it, it was still there."*

#### AAPI Community

**Family smoking:** Growing up in a family that smokes; influence of family smoking on others in the family, especially children.

- "With me, when talking about cigarettes smoke that lingers... it takes me back to this image of me going to my parents' room. Growing up as a kid my mom would smoke a lot, but she didn't smoke in indoors... But you could tell when you step into the room...there is that distinct cigarette smell in there."*

**Marijuana:** Smell of marijuana, recognizing the difference between smelling tobacco smoke and marijuana smoke, harms reduction of marijuana use viewed as more acceptable or less harmful

- I used to previously smoke, but it was marijuana, and there was, you know, tobacco infused in some sorts, which also had contributed to respiratory issues I have now."*

#### LGBTQIA+ Community

**Family:** Comments centered on the family; this included other adults around family who smoked, smoking at their family gatherings, family concerns for newborns/children, and family exposure and health risks (e.g., asthma, prevention requests/behaviors)

- "Folks in my house who were smoking, whether it be my grandmother, my dad, or other folks, I feel that it really impacted me negatively. I developed allergies over the years, and I have trouble breathing."*

**Dramatic/traumatic experiences:** Comments centered on dramatic or traumatic experiences

- "He was smoking in his truck. And he rolled down the window...just like a crack, to let the smoke out. He pretty much hot boxed that whole entire cigarette."*

**Environmental exposures:** Comments centered on the environment (e.g., cleaner air, less waste/garbage/litter, leaving it better for the next generation)

- "We get smog from the bay and LA as well...I learned in pre-school just living here is like smoking a pack a day...smokers are inhaling the smoke and plus the smog"*

**Queer-specific spaces:** Comments centered on queer-specific spaces

- "There's a lot of folks, for example at Pride or in clubs, bars, or at least outside of clubs and bars. There is a significant amount of people who smoke cigarettes, and oftentimes those spaces are for queer people...so going to those you're often looking for community to meet others. And you're kind of around smokers."*

## THEMATIC ANALYSIS RESULTS, CONT.

### Knowledge of THS Exposure

#### Black Community

**Small spaces:** Comments related to trapped smoke due to the size of a space (e.g., car, hotel room)

- "Every time I get in my sister's car it is an instant smell even if she isn't smoking. She drives a bug and so it just kind of stays there and we all have to put up with it."*

**Sticks to fabric:** Residue sticking to fabric, such as clothes and upholstery

- "My husband used to smoke and even though he hasn't in years...I can still smell it on his old clothes and our couch."*

#### Hispanic Community

**Your actions having consequences:** Impact that secondhand smoke has on you and the world around you

- "I was hospitalized. I have a chronic illness, and...smoking, it's very, very bad. And the secondhand smoke it's the same or worse for us that have a chronic condition..."*

#### AAPI Community

**Secondhand smoke worse than smoking:** Secondhand smoke being more harmful than actual smoking

- "It's straight tobacco where it's a person who's smoking it has a filter. You getting the side stream does not have a filter. So, all the carcinogens that you are inhaling directly."*

**Protecting nonsmokers:** Nonsmokers do not consent to tobacco smoke exposure.

- "And then the person, they don't consent to the secondhand smoke. So it's unfair for the person inhaling the smoke."*

#### LGBTQIA+ Community

**Ranking risk levels:** Which types of tobacco exposure are better or worse than other types

- "Secondhand smoke is worse than actual smoking."*

**Implications for surrounding communities:** Implications of tobacco exposure for certain ethnicities and other marginalized groups

- "Growing up surrounded by extended family and Uncles that were day laborers in construction, there was a culture of smoking to deal with...and there was heavy smoking at family gatherings when they would all get together."*

### Awareness of the Health Impact from THS Exposure

#### Black Community

**Broad implications:** General awareness of the impact of THS exposure on health

- "I...crave tobacco after a drink or two"*

#### Hispanic Community

**Impact on one's quality of life:** Respiratory reactions (e.g., allergies, asthma) in others, particularly children and nonsmokers

- "I don't have any family members that have asthma. But it just makes you think like oh, maybe they can get sick from it because they have asthma."*

#### AAPI Community

**Broad implications:** General awareness of the impact of THS exposure on health

- "It doesn't bother me as much to be honest...only really bothers me when the children around because the lack of mindfulness."*

#### LGBTQIA+ Community

**Breathing issues:** Respiratory reactions (e.g., allergies, asthma) in others, particularly children and nonsmokers

- "[I] could not breath; it was tough to breath"*

**Mental health:** Depression and addiction; the role that smoking tobacco plays in being a remedy for depression, anxiety, and addiction with vulnerable LGBTQIA+ youth

- "I work with young people and queer young people in particular, and I see the amount of stress that they go through at each of our group meetings. And also coming out of the pandemic, too. I know a lot of our young people they experience mental health disparities. There's an increase of depression, anxiety, suicidality, and so I'm really concerned about how these tobacco companies are latching on to our young queer youth, and the long-term effects of what that looks like."*

**Pets, babies, & children:** Health impacts of tobacco on pets, babies, or children

- "Like your pet, for example, is exposed to it, or maybe like a baby is exposed to it."*

## IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS

- Findings provide an understanding of the awareness and perspectives of tobacco industry-targeted communities regarding THS exposure and health risks, with overall themes emerging:
  - Strong emphasis on the risks for nonsmokers, particularly children
  - Recognition of the familial legacy of tobacco use that can impact future generations
- Results suggest messaging priorities for public health education to reduce disproportionate THS-related burdens among industry-target communities
  - Need for increased awareness of terminology (i.e., THS as the label for the experience), routes of exposure, and health risks to adults as well as children
  - Centering future generations as the motivation for addressing THS exposure
- This research study contributes to important strategies for closing the tobacco-related disparities gap