

Tobacco Use and Quitting Among Individuals with Behavioral Health Conditions

What We Know

The first step in addressing tobacco use among behavioral health consumers is understanding the current available evidence.

Did You Know?

- Individuals with behavioral health conditions are more likely than those without such conditions to smoke and to smoke more heavily; and they account for nearly half of all tobacco-related deaths each year.
- Smoking can exacerbate mental health symptoms and complicate treatment.
- Quitting smoking can improve mental health and substance use disorder recovery outcomes.

Smoking among people with behavioral health conditions ...

Exacerbates symptoms of behavioral health conditions

Smoking is associated with worse symptoms and outcomes among people with behavioral health conditions, including greater depressive symptoms, greater likelihood of psychiatric hospitalization, increased suicidal behavior, and drug- and alcohol-use relapse.



People with Behavioral Health Conditions ...

Are more likely to smoke

Individuals with a behavioral health condition are more likely to smoke than people without such a condition, and smoking rates are even higher among individuals with serious mental health disorders and addictions

Smoke more

Individuals with behavioral health conditions smoke more cigarettes than people who smoke and do not have these conditions.



Die prematurely

Individuals with serious mental health disorders who smoke die almost fifteen years earlier than individuals without these disorders who do not smoke.

Want to quit smoking

Many individuals with behavioral health conditions want to quit smoking but may face extra challenges in successfully quitting and may benefit from extra help.

Reduces effectiveness of some medications

Smoking can interact and interfere with psychiatric medications, often resulting in the need for higher medication doses to achieve the same therapeutic benefit.



The Case for Tobacco Cessation Treatment

Behavioral health treatment settings have permitted tobacco use among clients, in part because of misconceptions that smoking could alleviate symptoms of mental health conditions and that cessation could interfere with treatment. However, **research has shown that smoking can worsen symptoms and outcomes among people with behavioral health conditions**, and quitting can improve mental health and substance use disorder treatment outcomes.



Tobacco Treatment ...

Supports behavioral health treatment

Growing evidence indicates that quitting smoking has positive effects on and is associated with improvements in mental health. Quitting smoking does not interfere with behavioral health treatment and does not worsen or impede recovery from substance use disorders.



Could improve mental health

Quitting smoking is associated with a decrease in depression, anxiety, and stress, and can increase quality of life.

Could make the recurrence of symptoms less likely

Tobacco treatment, during other addictions treatment, is associated with an increase in long-term abstinence from alcohol and other drugs and a reduction in substance use disorder relapse.



Has immediate physical health benefits

Quitting smoking dramatically reduces the risk of heart disease, stroke, and cancer. For example, the risk for a heart attack drops sharply just one year after quitting.



To learn more visit www.RethinkTobaccoIndiana.org