

Supporting Tobacco-Free Recovery in Rhode Island

- Smoking remains the leading cause of preventable disease, disability, and death in the United States (US), accounting for more than 490,000 deaths every year. We lose 1,800 Rhode Islanders each year due to tobacco-related illnesses.
- Most adults who smoke cigarettes want to quit. More than half of adults who smoke cigarettes report having made a quit attempt. They are more likely to quit successfully when they have support and treatment from healthcare professionals.

Behavioral Health and Tobacco Use

- People with behavioral health conditions smoke at two to three times the rate of those without behavioral health conditions. Nationally, half of all tobacco-related deaths are among people with mental illnesses.
- People living with a behavioral health condition are far more likely to die of smoking-related illnesses than from causes related to their mental illness or another substance use disorder.
- Of Rhode Islanders who report frequent mental distress or heavy drinking, nearly 25% currently smoke. This is twice the rate of smoking among the general Rhode Island population.
- There is a need for more services to address this inequity. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, only 56.8% of Rhode Island mental health treatment facilities provided tobacco cessation counseling in 2021, and even fewer offered nicotine replacement therapy (NRT).

The Good News

- People who have behavioral health conditions want to quit and can succeed in quitting with help.
- Quitting tobacco or nicotine products can improve symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- Tobacco treatment therapies provided during substance use disorder treatment were associated with a 25% increased likelihood of long-term abstinence from alcohol and other drugs.
- People who have behavioral health conditions are impacted by tobacco in unique ways and may need more support in quitting. Clinicians and staff play an important role in connecting this population to resources to help them quit tobacco for good.



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Resources

- **QuitNowRI, the Rhode Island Nicotine Helpline:**
 - QuitNowRI.com | 1-800-QUITNOW (1-800-784-8669)
 - Free tobacco treatment resources with a tailored evidence-based behavioral health protocol.
 - To make a referral, visit: bit.ly/3lWxCeI
- **QuitWorks-RI for Healthcare Professionals:**

The Rhode Island Department of Health Tobacco Control Program provides access to free continuing education modules, tools, and resources to help you care for your patients with tobacco dependence.

 - To learn more, visit bit.ly/3qvPqH6
 - To sign up, visit bit.ly/3qvJ4Hu
 - Be sure to check out the module on Tobacco Cessation for Behavioral Health Populations!
- **National Behavioral Health Network for Tobacco and Cancer Control** serves as a resource hub for organizations, health care providers, and public health professionals seeking to address tobacco and cancer related disparities among individuals who have behavioral health conditions.
 - Visit: bhthechange.org
- **The Smoking Cessation Leadership Center (SCLC)** offers a variety of webinars by national experts, as well as downloadable resources. Select recorded webinars may be available for free continuing education with a promo code.
 - Visit: smokingcessationleadership.ucsf.edu
 - Download their National Tobacco- Free Behavioral Health Facilities Toolkit: bit.ly/3lYBHyG

Get Involved in Rhode Island

- Contact Victoria O'Connor, Nicotine, Substance Use, and Addiction Treatment Coordinator at the Rhode Island Department of Health, Tobacco Control Program (Victoria.OConnor@health.ri.gov) to request educational materials, receive tailored technical assistance, and to stay in the know about task forces or future grant opportunities.
- Visit tobaccofree-ri.org for ways to get involved or sign up to join the statewide Cessation Workgroup.



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