

# Common Myths about Tobacco Use and Wellbeing

Integrating tobacco and nicotine quit support into mental health and substance use treatment leads to better outcomes for both physical and mental wellbeing.

Below are common myths about tobacco use and mental wellbeing and what the evidence tells us:



“Smoking or vaping helps with relaxation and stress reduction.”

## FACTS

Tobacco and nicotine use worsens stress levels and mood, including depression and anxiety. Smoking or vaping may temporarily relieve tension, but this relief is often due to easing nicotine withdrawal rather than true stress reduction.



“People with mental health and substance use challenges don’t want to quit.”

## FACTS

People experiencing mental health and substance use challenges are just as motivated and interested in quitting as the general population. However, they often experience unique challenges and barriers in accessing supports.



“Quitting will worsen mental health symptoms.”

## FACTS

Temporary changes in mood and stress can occur during nicotine withdrawal, but these symptoms ease over time. In the long run, quitting nicotine is linked with improved mental wellbeing, including reduced stress, anxiety, and depression.



“People with mental health and substance use challenges are not capable of quitting”

### FACTS

With the right supports, people experiencing challenges with mental wellbeing quit just as successfully as anyone else.



“Treating other substance use is more important than addressing tobacco use.”

### FACTS

Tobacco and nicotine use should be addressed as part of a holistic substance use treatment plan. Research has found that quitting smoking is linked with recovery from other addictions.



“Tobacco use is a low-priority concern for people with mental health and substance use challenges.”

### FACTS

People living with mental wellbeing challenges are far more likely to die from a tobacco-related disease (such as heart and lung disease) than from a mental illness. The life expectancy of people with severe mental disorders is about 15 to 20 years shorter than the general population, with tobacco use being a major contributing factor.

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