

Smoke-Free Supportive Housing

The Importance of Smoke-Free Indoor Environments



McCreesh Place— a smoke-free supportive housing property in Charlotte, N.C.

Why smoke-free policies in supportive housing?

Smoke-free policies in supportive housing are important because they can help protect the health of residents who are vulnerable to health problems. Smoke-free policies ensure that all residents are able to breathe clean air in their apartments. Other benefits include:

- ⇒ Reducing maintenance and turnover costs;
- ⇒ Minimizing the risk of fire; and
- ⇒ Helping to support residents who want to quit smoking by reducing smoking triggers.

What are smoke-free policies?

Smoke-free policies protect residents from breathing secondhand smoke. Secondhand smoke in multi-unit housing can easily travel through cracks, holes, doors, windows, and plumbing and ventilation systems. Policies usually prohibit smoking indoors but may allow smoking in designated outdoor areas.

How common are smoke-free policies in North Carolina?

Healthcare facilities and supportive housing providers have policies that limit smoking. State requires all licensed health and adult care facilities, including mental health and supervised living facilities, to be smoke-free indoors.

Other organizations have voluntarily adopted smoke-free policies at their supportive housing properties. “Banning smoking inside has become such a norm,” says Lynne Mason, former executive director of Hospitality House, a smoke-free transitional housing and supportive housing provider in Boone.

Did you know that...

- ⇒ Individuals with **mental illness die 25 years earlier** than the general population, largely due to preventable **smoking-related diseases**.¹
- ⇒ The **tobacco industry** has specifically **marketed cigarettes** to **mentally ill and homeless** persons.²
- ⇒ Individuals with mental illness or substance abuse problems **want to quit smoking**. Previous studies have shown that 44-to-80 percent are interested in quitting.³

Implementing and enforcing a smoke-free policy

You can adapt a smoke-free policy to respect your residents' individual rights and meet your residents' needs.

- ⇒ Use surveys or meetings to get residents' feedback on the smoke-free policy.
- ⇒ Include multiple warnings or fines in your enforcement plan.
- ⇒ Post reminders about the policy to help minimize violations.
- ⇒ Support your residents who want to quit smoking by providing cessation resources

Smoke-free policies are about smoke, not the smoker. Individuals who smoke are welcome to live at properties with smoke-free policies. They must simply abide by the policy and restrict their smoking to appropriate areas.



1-800-QUIT-NOW
QuitlineNC.com

Quitline NC (1-800-QUIT-NOW or 1-800-784-8669) provides free 24/7 smoking cessation assistance to N.C. residents

Key facts

- ⇒ Quitting smoking **does not** worsen psychiatric symptoms. Tobacco use is associated with **increased** suicide and depression.⁴
- ⇒ Exposure to **secondhand smoke increases the risk of heart disease**, a leading cause of death among individuals with mental illness.⁵

References

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**Together we can
clear the air**

**Learn more about other properties that went
smoke-free and why they did it.**

**Visit the N.C .Smoke-Free Housing Website at
www.smokefreehousingnc.com.**

