

Smoke-Free Supportive Housing

Supportive Housing Communities: A Case Study



McCreech Place in Charlotte

Why Smoke-Free Indoors?

Supportive Housing Communities provides permanent supportive housing for disabled and formerly homeless individuals in Charlotte, N.C. The organization has a “zero tolerance policy” on smoking indoors at its McCreech Place property, to ensure the health and safety of all residents.

Candles and incense are also prohibited indoors, while smoking is allowed outdoors in designated areas. Because all of the property's residents have disabilities and some use supplemental oxygen, a smoking-related fire in the building would pose a serious risk to residents and staff.

How it Works

Mercedes Edwards, Operations Manager, says there have been few violations to the policy. All residents sign a lease that includes the smoke-free policy addendum. If a resident violates the policy, he or she receives a lease violation notice and has three days to create a plan with a case manager to address the problem. After two violations, the resident receives notice that his or her lease will not be renewed.

“We can tell if a resident smokes inside,” Edwards says, “because the units are single-room efficiency units, so odors are obvious.” Staff members perform a routine monthly inspection, and inspect the units bi-monthly for bed bugs. Smoke-free policy violations are detectable during these routine inspections.

Results

While Edwards estimates that 50-60% of their residents smoke, enforcing the policy has not been a problem. On-site case managers link residents with community resources, including tobacco cessation resources. In the past, the property offered an on-site smoking cessation group that was well attended, and some residents quit smoking completely.

Smart Tips

- ⇒ Connect with your local health department for cessation resources for those who desire to quit. QuitlineNC (1-800-QUIT-NOW) provides free 24/7 assistance for quitting tobacco use.
- ⇒ Clear enforcement, clearly communication about where smoking is allowed, and linking residents to cessation resources help to establish a successful smoke-free policy.

Visit the N.C. Smoke-Free Housing Website at www.smokefreehousingnc.com to learn more about other properties that have gone smoke-free.