



Tobacco And Smoking

People living with mental illness have a high rate of smoking. In America, 44.3% of all cigarettes are consumed by individuals who live with mental illness and/or substance abuse disorders. People with schizophrenia are three to four times as likely to smoke as the general population.

Smoking is known to cause heart disease, stroke and lung disease, among other medical problems. Second-generation atypical antipsychotic medications (SGAs) cause an increased risk of heart disease, so it's important that individuals living with mental illness quit smoking.

Every year, smoking kills about 200,000 people who live with mental illness. Also, smoking increases the breakdown of medicines in the body, so smokers often need to take higher doses to get the same results as someone who does not smoke. If a smoker quits, they can usually get the same treatment results from lower doses of psychiatric medications.

Where NAMI Stands

NAMI is committed to supporting wellness of people with mental illness in every way possible. We recognize that cigarette and tobacco use is a dangerous form of addiction that creates more significant health problems. People with mental illness have the right to be smoke free and they must be given the education and support to make healthy choices. Effective prevention and treatment should be part of effective mental health care treatment.

Smoking has been inappropriately accepted in therapeutic settings. Access to smoking is sometimes used as a form of coercion or reward. NAMI encourages smoke free environments and we call upon health care providers to help put in place cessation programs.

If a hospital has a smoking policy, it must take steps to help stop smoking and provide smoking cessation treatment. This treatment should continue when the person returns to the community.

Read [NAMI's Public Policy Platform](#) for more information on our position on tobacco and smoking.

What NAMI Is Doing

NAMI advocates for access to smoking cessation programs. NAMI also supports incorporating tobacco cessation measures in the treatment of dual diagnosis.

For more information, please visit NAMI's website at www.nami.org/About-NAMI or access NAMI website and important documents from ATOD's Provider Network website at:

<http://www.acbhcs.org/tobacco>