



# National Behavioral Health Network

for Tobacco & Cancer Control

from NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR MENTAL WELLBEING

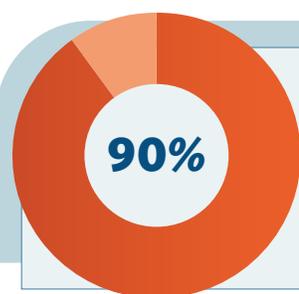
## Youth, Vaping and Stress:

### What Mental Health and Substance Use Treatment Providers Need to Know

The most commonly cited motivation for high school students who vape is stress alleviation. Although 70% of students cited stress as the main influencer and a symptom they are seeking to alleviate, students who vape report higher levels of stress compared to their non-using peers (Jha & Kraguljac, 2021). This is due to the fact that despite myths and misconceptions around vaping alleviating stress, **nicotine can induce stress, leading to greater mental health and substance use challenges in the short and long term (Nicotine use, 2022):**

- Young people (identified as ages 15 – 24) report greater levels of stress and depression after they started using nicotine compared to before they started using. They also experience greater stress, irritability and depression compared to non-users upon engaging in use (Parrot & Murphy, 2012).
- Early exposure to nicotine increases the risk of long-term mental health effects including the development of another substance use challenge, a mental health condition and increased impulsivity (Leslie, 2020).
- Vaping nicotine as a young person increases the likelihood of initiating use of combustible tobacco products such as cigarettes (Jha & Kraguljac, 2021).
- Young people are likely to experience subtle increases in stress levels in between uses of nicotine products (Parrot & Murphy, 2012).





## NINETY PERCENT

of young people who quit vaping nicotine report less stress, anxiety and depression (Nicotine use, 2022).

**How can providers help?** Mental health and substance use treatment providers can use thoughtful engagement, support and evidence-based interventions to educate and encourage teens and young adults to quit vaping, prevent adult tobacco use and improve young adults overall mental wellness. Learn more about how to best support youth by engaging in prevention and treatment conversations, as well as evidence-based strategies and other cessation resources:



Starting a meaningful conversation around prevention and cessation can sometimes be hard. [Find tips for starting the conversation](#) around youth substance use prevention, developing tailored messaging, making the case and suggesting behavior change to youth.



Free text message programs give 24/7 tips, advice and encouragement to help youth become and stay nicotine and tobacco free. Recommend Truth Initiative's [This is Quitting](#) program or National Cancer Institute's [SmokefreeTXT for Teens](#) to help young people quit.



[Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment](#) (SBIRT) is a comprehensive, integrated model of care that can be used to screen and identify individuals engaged in nicotine use and facilitate a conversation around readiness to quit to reduce use and refer to treatment. To specifically apply SBIRT to young people, check out Youth Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (YSBIRT), an evidence-based practice to prevent and reduce risky substance use among adolescents ages 12 to 18. For more information on YSBIRT, visit [YSBIRT.org](#).



[Motivational interviewing](#) is a collaborative intervention that provides a framework for creating a dialogue around an individual's willingness and commitment to behavior change.



Managing stress, slips and cravings when newly quit from vaping can be difficult. Offering strategies for coping with stress while engaged in tobacco cessation treatment can support short- and long-term recovery. It can also help to create a care plan that might include [practicing mindfulness](#) and engaging in [regular physical activity](#) to help individuals with mental health and substance use challenges cope with cravings and work through stress. Recommend online tools that can help individuals create and implement a quit plan, such as the National Cancer Institute's [quit planning tool](#) or the Truth Initiative's [BecomeAnEx](#) tool. These programs also provide tools that have been found to support quitting and recovery, such as chat services, text messaging or apps for mobile devices to provide support and coping strategies.





# Citations

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Jha, V., & Kraguljac, A. (2021, March 31). Assessing the social influences, self-esteem, and stress of high school students who vape. PubMed.gov. U.S. National Library of Medicine. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33795986/>.

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