

Abstract:

- Two peer recovery organizations in Maine, Groups Recover Together (Groups Recovery) and the Portland Recovery Community Center (PRCC), partnered with the MaineHealth Center for Tobacco Independence (CTI) to address tobacco use disparities among people in recovery from substance use disorder (SUD).

Background:

- 3 in 5 adults in recovery from SUD currently use tobacco. Individuals with behavioral health or substance use disorders suffer a mortality rate from tobacco use that is twice that of the general population.
- Over half of these individuals express an interest in quitting.

Strategy:

- Promote health equity by assisting individuals in recovery to access resources and support to overcome tobacco dependence, empowering people in recovery with effective cessation tools.
- Implement multi-level staff training (including CTI’s Essential Skills Training, Intensive Skills Training, and Tobacco Brief Interventions and Referral (BIR) to Treatment Training.

Activities:

- Groups Recovery:
 - Surveyed program participants
 - 78.5% used tobacco
 - 50.1% of these wanted to quit
 - Workflow and Electronic Medical Record changes: screening questions and embedded referral process for Maine QuitLink, Maine’s evidence-based tobacco treatment program
 - Surveyed its staff to assess knowledge of resources.
 - Produced video highlighting commitment to addressing tobacco as part of 12-week “Start to Quit” campaign.
- PRCC:
 - Initiated in-person 12-step nicotine cessation group (“Today’s the Day”)
 - Established three mutual aid groups (“Maybe Tomorrow”) for “quit curious” staff and members,
 - Tobacco questions added at check in kiosks all locations.
- Both:
 - Tracked screenings, interventions, and MQL referrals monthly.
 - Free 2-week starter kit of Nicotine Replacement Therapy for participants accepting MQL referral.
- CTI:
 - Funding, training, technical assistance

Enhancing Tobacco Treatment Supports in Substance Use Recovery:

A Collaborative Initiative to Address Tobacco Use Disparities in the Recovery Community in Maine



Center for Tobacco Independence

Outcomes:

- Staff trained by CTI in Brief Intervention & Referral : 372 at Groups Recover, 30 at PRCC. Groups extended BI&R training to staff in 10 states outside Maine.
- Following BI&R training, 90.9% of Groups Recover staff felt empowered and equipped to address tobacco with participants.
- Staff trained by CTI in Evidence-Based Tobacco Treatment: 5 at Groups Recover, 4 at PRCC.
- Staff on path to TTS certification: 1 at Groups Recover, 1 at PRCC.
- PRCC’s engagement efforts lead to screening and intervention with 129 participants and 33 referrals to the Maine QuitLink in the first 6 months. (PRCC had not referred before.)
- Quit resources are routinely provided to participants.
- At Groups Recover, 10% of tobacco-using participants started quits. By end of 6-month pilot, 31% had stopped smoking entirely, 45% had reduced smoking by 50% or more.

Challenges and Learnings:

- Staff turnover was significant
- Many staff and volunteers use tobacco, ineligible for certification as tobacco treatment specialists.
- PRCC is a coalition of community-based recovery centers with no centralized authority to require participation in training.

Conclusion:

Implementing tobacco interventions at community-based peer-support SUD recovery programs is possible by assessing current awareness and attitudes among staff and participants, providing brief training to staff, and making help available in different modalities.

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