

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: The Truth About Nicotine Addiction and Mental Health

According to researchers at The Truth Initiative, while there is a misconception that the nicotine found in tobacco can help people manage stress, anxiety, or depression, there are concerning connections between nicotine addiction and mental health. Although nicotine use has not been found to directly cause mental health conditions, nicotine use can quickly turn into addiction, which can amplify feelings of stress and anxiety and make users feel trapped in a brutal cycle.

The Truth Initiative researchers list three ways that nicotine addiction can impact mental health.

Nicotine use can harm the developing brain. Nicotine addiction has real consequences for young people, including teens and young adults. Nicotine use can harm the developing brain, which may not reach full development until the late twenties or early thirties. Additionally, nicotine addiction can make young people more susceptible to addiction later in life, exposing them to potentially dangerous behaviors.

Nicotine withdrawal can lead to stress and irritability. Nicotine use releases dopamine, the feel-good chemical that creates the sensation of pleasure and relaxation. When the body stops receiving nicotine, dopamine levels drop and feelings of pleasure are replaced with an urge to use nicotine, often accompanied by feelings of irritability, anxiety, and depression. Using nicotine relieves these symptoms, leading some people to believe that nicotine use soothes stress. This creates a cycle of addiction and withdrawal where a person needs to use nicotine to stay ahead of the negative symptoms of withdrawal.

Nicotine addiction can negatively impact sleep. Research shows that vaping nicotine is associated with sleep problems, including insufficient sleep, interrupted sleep, restlessness during sleep, nightmares, and daytime sleepiness. Sleep is essential for young people's brain development, and impacts mental health for both teens and adults, with research finding an association between poor sleep quality and negative mental health. Nicotine is also known to increase heart rate, blood pressure, and glucose levels, all of which have the potential to delay or interfere with sleep.

Quitting nicotine is a great first step to improving mental health. According to a Truth Initiative survey of young people who quit vaping nicotine, 90% of those who quit vaping said they felt less stressed, anxious, or depressed.

People who want to quit nicotine for mental health reasons are not alone. About two-thirds (67%) of young adult nicotine users ages 18–24 plan to quit for the new year, and most reported that their top reason for quitting was to improve their mental and physical health.

For people interested in quitting, there are resources to help. EX Program, a free digital quitting program by Truth Initiative with Mayo Clinic, can increase the odds of quitting by up to 40%.

EX Program offers:

- Personalized quit plans
- Interactive support
- Advice and tips from Mayo Clinic
- 24/7 access to a supportive online community
- Tailored text message reminders and daily encouragement

People quitting any type of tobacco or nicotine product can sign up for EX Program and browse blog posts from Mayo Clinic cessation specialists and read tips and experiences from fellow quitters and former tobacco users about coping with stress while quitting.

The Truth Initiative is the nation's largest nonprofit public health organization dedicated to preventing youth and young adult nicotine addiction and empowering quitting. Research is conducted through the Truth Initiative Schroeder Institute that produces independent research to provide evidence for policy change and leadership in cessation research. For more information, please visit www.truthinitiative.org.

SAFE, Inc. is the only alcohol and substance abuse prevention, intervention, and education agency in the City of Glen Cove. Its Coalition is concerned with all combustible and electronic products with tobacco. The Agency employs environmental strategies to educate and update the community regarding the negative consequences of smoking and vaping. To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition or to learn more about electronic products visit the Youth and Tobacco Use and Vaping Facts and Myths Pages of SAFE's website to learn more about how vaping is detrimental to your health at www.safeglencove.org.