

Implementing a smoke-free policy in alcohol and other drug residential treatment facilities: Qualitative exploration of Staff perceptions

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Introduction and Aims: *There are often high rates of smoking in people who access alcohol and other drug (AOD) treatment services, with estimates that approximately 80% of people entering services smoke. Attempts to address rates of smoking include implementing policies that reduce or ban smoking in the facilities. The aim of the current research is to highlight the challenges and facilitators to having a smoke-free facility within residential AOD treatment.*

Design and Methods: *Semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted with staff examining their perceptions of a smoke-free policy within AOD residential treatment facilities. In particular, interviews focussed on perceptions and knowledge of the smoke-free policy, barriers to reducing smoking in clients, barriers and facilitators of policy implementation, and challenges and facilitators to having a smoke-free facility.*

Results: *There was a large degree of variation in staff perceptions of current smoking behaviours, confidence in implementing smoke-free policies, and the usefulness of the smoke-free policy. Key barriers to a smoke-free facility included new clients learning smoking behaviours from previous or current clients, perception of ostracism when not smoking, smoking as a social activity, and people becoming "triggered" by other clients smoking. Despite these challenges, participants also reported the positive ways that groups can assist with reducing smoking, including providing social support, developing norms around not smoking, and learning alternative non-smoking behaviours.*

Discussions and Conclusions: *Understanding perceptions of a staff can inform the implementation of smoke-free policies within these settings. This is important to address the high rates of smoking in people who use AODs.*

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