

Young people share how nicotine use affected their stress

Nov. 08, 2022 | 2 min read

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Nicotine use and stress

Nicotine addiction can play a role in **intensifying feelings of stress**, but many young people are unaware of this connection. In fact, according to a **Truth Initiative survey**, 4 in 5 young people who had vaped said they started as a way to lessen their feelings of stress, anxiety, or depression.

In the short-term, vaping nicotine may produce feelings of satisfaction by stimulating the production of a chemical in the brain called dopamine, which can create feelings of pleasure and relaxation. However, because of the way nicotine works in the body, those feel-good chemicals don't last long. Within just a few hours, the effect of nicotine in the body wears off and is replaced by an urge to vape again.

This cycle is called **nicotine withdrawal**, and it can produce cravings or urges to vape, irritated or upset feelings, jumpy and restless feelings, difficulty concentrating, changes in sleep and eating habits, and feelings of anxiety or depression. Over time, it can take more nicotine to curb the symptoms of withdrawal and create that satisfied feeling. That's called nicotine dependence. Eventually, what started out as a pleasurable experience turns into a vicious cycle.

truth's new effort "[Toxic Therapy from Your Vape](#)" is exposing misconceptions about nicotine addiction and stress and is raising awareness of the [association between nicotine and sleep](#). **truth** is also sharing resources for quitting vaping and mental health on their [Solution Space](#), an interactive website that offers tips and tricks for quitting and coping with stress. Some ideas include: breathing exercises from [Breathwrk](#), taking time away from your phone, swapping your vape for a lollipop or sour candy when you have a craving, and journaling with [Cope Notes](#), a daily texting program that offers tips for dealing with anxiety.

Toxic Therapy expands on **truth**'s youth prevention and education effort [Breath of Stress Air](#), which dispels the myths connecting tobacco use with mental well-being, stress relief, relaxation, and pleasure.

truth's campaigns connect young people with resources including [This is Quitting](#), the first of its-kind free and anonymous quit vaping program from **truth** that is helping more than 660,000 teens and young adults break free from vaping nicotine. Read on to hear from young [This is Quitting](#) users who know the cycle of nicotine withdrawal firsthand.

Ends up being an endless cycle of trying to reward yourself with a nicotine high after doing certain tasks. Then when this goes on for a while you get stressed out more easily with withdrawal symptoms and the cycle repeats – Julie, under 18, [This is Quitting](#) user

It's a temporary fix that gives you farrrr more stress in the long run –

Jeff, 18-24, This is Quitting user

According to an [August 2021 Truth Initiative survey](#), 90% of young people who quit vaping felt less stressed, anxious, or depressed than when they were vaping. For real life stories from people who have quit vaping, check out [truth's "Quitters" video series](#).

“Once you break that cycle, it feels so amazing.” – Alex, from “Quitters”

“The best thing about quitting vaping nicotine is that I feel like myself again.” – Parker, from “Quitters”

A [randomized clinical trial found](#) that young adults aged 18-24 who used This is Quitting had nearly 40% higher odds of quitting compared to a control group. Young people using [This is Quitting](#) have discovered healthier ways to deal with their stress.

Remember that stress can be dealt with in other ways! Try meditating or even writing down what the problem is and then figure out solutions. – Dalton, 18-24, This is Quitting user

Don't be afraid to tell others that you are struggling. Sharing your struggles with others can be encouraging and reduce stress. – Jake, 18-24, This is Quitting user

If you're stressed and you want nicotine, go outside and taking a deep breath of fresh air, try meditating it can really help you refresh your mind. – Lexy, under 18, This is Quitting user