

Research Evidence for Action to Create Smoke Free Homes (REACH) Smoke Free Strategy

The findings from the systematic review of evidence on the motivators and barriers to creating and maintaining smoke free homes suggest that, after the introduction of smoke free legislation, supporting the individual and collective agency of people, households and communities is likely be one of the most effective strategies to support smoking households to create and maintain smoke free homes. We recommend taking a strengths-based approach to build relationships that support the individual, collective and collaborative agency of people, households and communities to create and maintain smoke free homes.

We have identified a three-part approach to foster agency and strengths across the population, namely to: (i)-, continue to support individuals and households to create and maintain smoke free homes; (ii)-, develop a series of campaigns across media designed to reach all adults, to change collective and community norms around the benefits of smoke free homes for all, and (iii)-, work with health and social care professionals to ensure that clear and consistent messages to support smoke free homes are given at every opportunity to encourage and effect positive changes, so the smoke free agenda is not seen as the particular remit of only a few professionals.

(i) Supporting individuals and households

A strengths-based approach can help to develop the agency of people to create and maintain smoke free homes. While recognising cultural norms and other barriers to smoke free homes especially the difficulty some people experience asking others to comply with their household rules, the evidence suggests that harnessing household and personal motivations can lead to the creation of smoke free environments. Strengths-based approaches acknowledge the efforts caregivers make to care for their children and recognise that the vast majority of smokers have some knowledge and make some concessions towards having a smoke free home (e.g. not smoking around a newborn baby, not smoking in children's bedrooms), and are simply 'doing the best they can' in often difficult circumstances.

(ii) Campaigns to Influence collective and community norms

Shifting social norms regarding smoking in the home at community level is essential to support and sustain the work done at individual and household level. Targeting campaigns to raise awareness of smoke free environments for all (adults and children) should foster change in normative expectations around home smoking, and so make it not only easier for people to ask visitors to smoke outside their home, but

for others to automatically smoke outside the house without the resident having to ask. Similarly the general population is likely to be more receptive to initiatives to create new smoke free environments (such as play areas, public outdoor spaces, or residential home settings) and take steps to moderate their smoking behaviours accordingly. These campaigns need to follow the strengths-based approach outlined in (i) and focus on the support and care people can provide for one another to make changes, and the benefits of smoke-free environments to health rather than on a 'fear-based' approach targeting/demonising smokers.

(iii) Creating professional communities to support smoke free homes

We believe that the strengths-based approach is core to the practice of health and social care, as it allows professionals to make independent judgments, foster relationships and work to achievable targets over time. Research consistently suggests that while people may expect to be asked about their smoking, many professionals are uncomfortable talking to smokers about their smoking, and would welcome the opportunity to develop other approaches with the harder to reach smokers, the majority of whom experience multiple disadvantages and challenges in their daily lives. We propose that professionals should be enabled to build on positive changes people have already made in their homes, for example, not smoking in the home following the birth of a baby, or changing smoking habits due to illness. Following training, professionals might reassure households that others have created and maintained smoke free homes while successfully protecting important relationships within their family and social networks.

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