

Best Practices for Youth Antitobacco Education, Updated and Annotated, 2019

Some tobacco use prevention programs have been limited to providing only factual information about the harmful effects of tobacco use. Other programs have attempted to induce fear in young persons about the consequences of use. However, these strategies alone do not prevent tobacco use, may stimulate curiosity about tobacco use, and may prompt some students to believe that the health hazards of tobacco use are exaggerated.

Successful programs to prevent tobacco use should include:

- Immediate and long-term undesirable physiologic, cosmetic, and social consequences of tobacco use. Programs should help students understand that tobacco use can result in decreased stamina, stained teeth, foul-smelling breath and clothes, exacerbation of asthma, and ostracism by nonsmoking peers.
- Social norms regarding tobacco use. Programs should use a variety of educational techniques to decrease the social acceptability of tobacco use, highlight existing antitobacco norms, and help students understand that most adolescents do not smoke.
- Reasons that adolescents say they smoke. Programs should help students understand that some adolescents smoke because they believe it will help them be accepted by peers, appear mature, or cope with stress. Programs should help students develop other more positive means to attain such goals.
- Social influences that promote tobacco use. Programs should help students develop skills in recognizing and refuting tobacco-promotion messages from the media, adults, and peers.
- Behavioral skills for resisting social influences that promote tobacco use. Programs should help students develop refusal skills through direct instruction, modeling, rehearsal, and reinforcement, and should coach them to help others develop these skills.
- General personal and social skills. Programs should help students develop necessary assertiveness, communication, goal-setting, and problem-solving skills that may enable them to avoid both tobacco use and other health risk behaviors.

To address youth tobacco use, schools should:

- Provide tobacco use prevention education in kindergarten through 12th grade. This instruction should be especially intensive in middle school and should be reinforced in high school. Without continued reinforcement throughout high school, success in preventing tobacco use dissipates over time.
- Tobacco use prevention can be effectively embedded in broader curricula for preventing drug and alcohol use or within comprehensive curricula for school health education. School-based efforts are enhanced by the addition of targeted communitywide programs that address the role of families, community organizations, tobacco-related policies, antitobacco advertising, and other elements of an adolescents' social environment.
- Provide program-specific training for teachers. Teachers should be familiar with the underlying theory and conceptual framework of the substance abuse prevention program as well as with the content of these guidelines. Teachers should be given the opportunity to practice implementation.
- Some programs may elect to include peer leaders as part of the instructional strategy. By modeling social skills and leading role rehearsals, peer leaders can help counteract social pressures on youth to use tobacco. These students must receive training to ensure accurate presentation of skills and information. Also, these youth must absolutely be tobacco-free and remain tobacco-free!
- Support tobacco cessation efforts among students and all school staff who use tobacco. Effective cessation programs for adolescents focus on immediate consequences of tobacco use, have specific attainable goals, and use contracts that include rewards. These programs provide social support and teach avoidance, stress management, and refusal skills. Further, students need opportunities to practice skills and strategies that will help them remain nonusers.
- Cessation options for youth include the American Lung Association's Not On Tobacco, smokefree.teen.gov apps and text messaging, www.thisisquitting.com, and www.quitnowkentucky.org (for ages 15+).
- Adult tobacco users can find cessation support through the American Lung Association's Freedom From Smoking, smokefree.gov apps, and www.quitnowkentucky.org.

Adapted from MMWR. Guidelines for School Health Programs to Prevent Tobacco Use and Addiction. February 25, 2004. 43(RR-2);1-18

Instructional concepts (kindergarten through grade twelve)

	Knowledge: Students will learn that	Attitudes: Students will demonstrate	Skills: Students will be able to
Early Elementary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A drug is a chemical that changes how the body works. • All forms of tobacco contain a drug called nicotine. • Tobacco use includes cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, and e-cigarettes. • Tobacco use is harmful to health. • Stopping tobacco use has short-term and long-term benefits. • Many persons who use tobacco have trouble stopping. • Tobacco smoke or aerosol in the air is dangerous to anyone who breathes it. • Many fires are caused by persons who smoke. • Some advertisements try to persuade persons to use tobacco. • Most young persons and adults do not use tobacco. • Persons who use tobacco are not bad. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A personal commitment not to use tobacco. • Pride about choosing not to use tobacco. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate knowledge and personal attitudes about tobacco use. • Encourage other persons not to use tobacco.
Late Elementary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stopping tobacco use has short- and long-term benefits.* • Environmental tobacco smoke and aerosol is dangerous to health.* • Most young persons and adults do not use tobacco.* • Nicotine, contained in all forms of tobacco, is an addictive drug. • Tobacco use has short-term and long-term physiologic and cosmetic consequences. • Personal feelings, family, peers, and the media influence decisions about tobacco use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A personal commitment not to use tobacco.* • Pride about choosing not to use tobacco.* • Support for others' decisions not to use tobacco. • Responsibility for personal health. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate knowledge and personal attitudes about tobacco use.* • Encourage other persons not to use tobacco.* • Demonstrate skills to resist tobacco use. • State the benefits of a smoke-free and aerosol-free environment. • Develop counterarguments to tobacco advertisements and other promotional materials. • Support persons who are trying to stop using tobacco.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tobacco advertising is often directed at young people. • Young people can resist pressure to use tobacco. • Laws, rules, and policies regulate the sale and use of tobacco. 		
Middle School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most young persons and adults do not smoke.* • Laws, rules, and policies regulate the sale and use of tobacco.* • Tobacco manufacturers use various strategies to direct advertisements toward young people, such as cartoons and young models.* • Tobacco use has short- and long-term physiologic, cosmetic, social, and economic consequences.* • Tobacco use has direct health consequences.* • Maintaining a tobacco-free environment has health benefits. • Tobacco use is an unhealthy way to manage stress or weight. • Community organizations have information about tobacco use and can help people stop using tobacco. • Tobacco treatment programs can be successful. • Tobacco contains other harmful substances in addition to nicotine. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A personal commitment not to use tobacco.* • Pride about choosing not to use tobacco.* • Responsibility for personal health. • Support for others' decisions not to use tobacco.* • Confidence in personal ability to resist tobacco use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage other persons not to use tobacco.* • Support persons who are trying to stop using tobacco.* • Communicate knowledge and personal attitudes about tobacco use.* • Demonstrate skills to resist tobacco use.* • Identify and counter strategies used in tobacco advertisements and other promotional materials.* • Develop methods for coping with tobacco use by parents and with other difficult personal situations, such as peer pressure to use tobacco. • Request a smoke-free environment.
High School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most young people and adults do not smoke.* • Tobacco use has short- and long-term physiologic, cosmetic, social, and economic consequences.* • Tobacco use has short- and long-term physiologic, cosmetic, social, and economic consequences.* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A personal commitment not to use tobacco.* • Pride about choosing not to use tobacco.* • Responsibility for personal health.* • Support for others' decisions not to use tobacco.* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage other persons not to use tobacco.* • Support persons who are trying to stop using tobacco.* • Communicate knowledge and personal attitudes about tobacco use.* • Demonstrate skills to resist tobacco use.*

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cigarette smoking, e-cigarette use, and smokeless tobacco use have direct health consequences.* • Community organizations have information about tobacco use and can help persons stop using tobacco.* • Smoking cessation programs can be successful.* • Tobacco use is an unhealthy way to manage stress or weight.* • Tobacco use during pregnancy has harmful effects on the fetus. • Schools and community organizations can promote a smoke-free environment. • Many persons find it hard to stop using tobacco, despite their knowledge about the health hazards of tobacco use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidence in personal ability to resist tobacco use.* • Willingness to use school and community resources for information about, and help with, resisting or quitting tobacco use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and counter strategies used in tobacco advertisements and other promotional materials.* • Develop methods for coping with tobacco use by parents and with other difficult personal situations, such as peer pressure to use tobacco.* • Use school and community resources for information about quitting and help with, resisting or quitting tobacco use. • Initiate school and community action to support a smoke-free environment.
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* These concepts reinforce content introduced during earlier grades.