

CHANGING PERCEPTIONS IN AN EVOLVING TOBACCO LANDSCAPE

FDA PUBLIC EDUCATION RESEARCH INSIGHTS

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Disclaimer: This is not a formal dissemination of information by FDA and does not represent Agency position or policy.



- Share findings from qualitative research conducted with youth and young adults
- ENDS use among youth has rapidly evolved since ENDS products first became available on the market. FDA CTP's The Real Cost ENDS campaign has conducted yearly research since 2016 with youth who are at-risk for, experimenting with, or currently using ENDS
- Cigarette cessation education has been a primary focus of public health efforts over 30+ years, but changes in the tobacco landscape, may be shaping current smokers' perceptions of quitting and nicotine.



CAMPAIGN FORMATIVE RESEARCH PROCESS



Message Development

Concept Development

Copy Testing

Conduct early strategic research to identify salient message themes

Use focus groups to identify salient and promising creative concepts using animatics

Conduct copy testing of final rough-cut ads to measure perceived effectiveness, level of engagement, and message comprehension

Consult experts in tobacco public health education and teen interests and behaviors

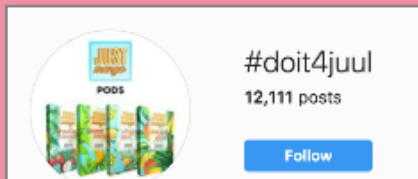


WHERE WE STARTED IN 2017

TEEN-TARGETED ADVERTISING, EVENT & SOCIAL MARKETING



**JUUL'S BREAKTHROUGH ADVERTISING IMAGERY WAS NOTICEABLY YOUTH ORIENTED
ADS FEATURED YOUNG, SOPHISTICATED, ASPIRATIONAL MODELS,
BRIGHT COLORS AND A SLEEK AND FUN VIBE**



Sources: Tobacco Control 2019, tobacco.stanford.edu

HOW MANY YOUTH WERE AT RISK WHEN TRC ENDS LAUNCHED?



- There were approximately 25 million teens in the U.S.¹
- 2 million teens were currently vaping
- An estimated 10.7 million youth² at risk for or already experimenting with ENDS
- There were millions more youth at risk for e-cigarettes than for cigarettes alone

Sources: ¹U.S. Census Bureau 2016; ²NYTS 2017

LEARNING FROM HUNDREDS OF TEENS AT RISK FOR E-CIGARETTES



They are
Aspirational



They are
**Academically
Driven**

They are
**Popular
and Social**



They are
Athletic



WHAT DID THEY BELIEVE ABOUT E-CIGARETTES?

79% OF YOUTH BELIEVED VAPING
CAUSES LITTLE OR NO HARM

ENDS was an immediate and rising threat,
but youth didn't see it that way

So, our initial strategy was to establish that
there's no such thing as cost-free vaping

Source: MTF 2017



TYPICAL QUOTES HEARD FROM YOUTH

"Its undeniable that [cigarettes] are like packed with carcinogens."

"I heard [vapes were] really not that bad. There weren't any studies that showed otherwise. At least yet. A lot of people say that it is a lot better than smoking."

"I know about one person that smokes cigarettes but about 40 people who vape consistently."

"I see vaping all the time.." in classrooms, bathrooms, buses."

"It's easy to conceal ..."

A group of four teenagers (two girls and two boys) are sitting on concrete steps outside a building with a wooden door. They are dressed in casual attire like hoodies, jeans, and sneakers. One boy is holding a tablet, and another is holding a smartphone. There are backpacks and drinks on the steps. A semi-transparent blue banner is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the title text.

CURRENT STATE OF YOUTH VAPING:
HOW TEENS PERCEIVE AND SEE VAPING IN THEIR LIVES RIGHT NOW

VAPING BRANDS AND TRENDS

- In addition to **JUUL**, young people are becoming familiar with brands like **Puff Bar**, **Njoy**, **SMOK**, **Posh**, **Suorin**, **Mr. Fog**, **Hyde**
- Availability and convenience are key. Some will also choose brands that have their favorite flavors or ones they would like to try.
- Teens note that vape shapes have changed and that vapes are smaller now
 - Disposables are mentioned as easy access:
“They look like a JUUL but are really skinny like a flash drive” [Susceptible_18-20]



- Participants reported that throughout the years there has been a **shift in popularity** from JUUL to Puff Bars and disposables. Reasons given include: JUUL discontinued flavors, Puff Bars and disposables are easier to get, JUUL is perceived as more addicting.
 - “The new trend is disposables. They come cheaper, are easier.” (Current User 15-17)
- With an increased focus on health & sanitation **during Covid-19**, disposable vapes have continued increasing in popularity.

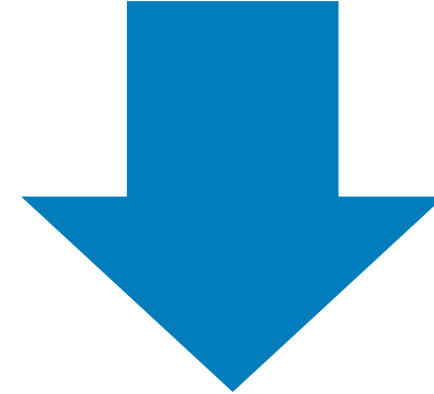


Current Users think use has increased



- People now must get their own vapes since they **cannot share**,
- They have a lot **more free time** to experiment and try it,
- Because of **isolation** and **loneliness**, there's **more depression** and they feel vaping provides an outlet.

Some susceptible teens feel less inclined to vape



- Some susceptible teens said that Covid-19 made them feel less inclined to vape because of **the lung problems it creates**.

“...Covid has such an impact on your lungs, it sort of is a serious reality check that things are damaging, so I see things that can damage your lungs as more intense than I used to.”

VAPING CONTINUES TO REMAIN “CLIQUE AGNOSTIC”

- Gen Z is the most diverse and dynamic generation ever
- From valedictorians to star basketball players, e-cigarettes are used across multiple and diverse demographic groups of youth

“Almost everyone vapes. It’s not like, ‘It’s just the cool kids or it’s just the jocks.’ It’s the church girls, it’s everybody.”

“Valedictorians vape.”

“I don’t think there’s a certain type of people that vape”

*“It doesn’t matter if you’re going to a Brockhampton show or to see a local punk band, **everyone there** is going to be vaping.”*



- Gen Z cares about their family relationships and **don't want to disappoint** their family.

“My most important thing in life is my family. I would most definitely categorize me as a momma's boy. Me and her are very close. She's somebody I can trust to talk to.” -Dalton, 16

“My father is like the biggest influence in my life.” -Isabela, 21

“My mom, she's the only person that I love so, so, so much and one of the worst things about vaping was hiding it from her.” - Jazzlyn, 15



- Teens and young adults see anxiety and depression as major problems among their peers. Often turn to vaping to “deal” but it **makes their anxiety worse**.

“With my anxiety, I thought it made it better. But if anything, vaping made it worse.” –Marcella, 16



“Whenever I got anxious, I would hit my vape. It wasn't helping me get through it. It wasn't helping me eliminate it. It added to it.”
–Keightlyn, 17

“I have always had bad anxiety and I thought that vaping was going to help, but it just made my anxiety worse.” –Emily, 15



TEENS STARTED TO SEE THAT ADDICTION IS A BAD THING

“I love singing and vaping was affecting my ability to do that. I would get short of breath. Nicotine withdrawal headaches every morning when I woke up. I would feel nauseous, my heart was always racing. I was so addicted I couldn’t control my own decisions anymore.” -Amanda

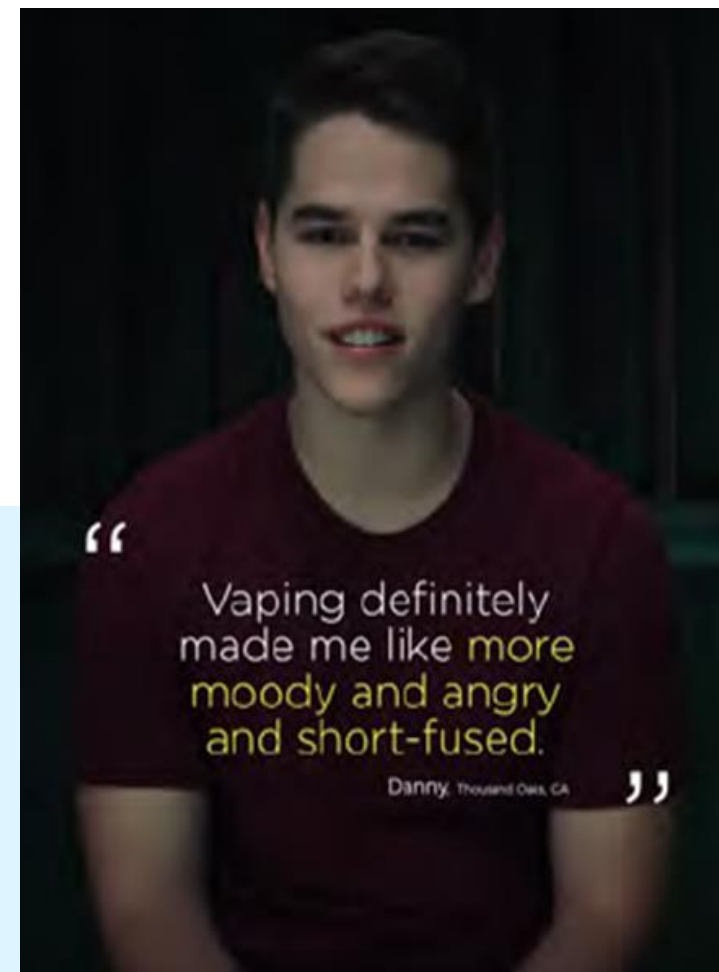
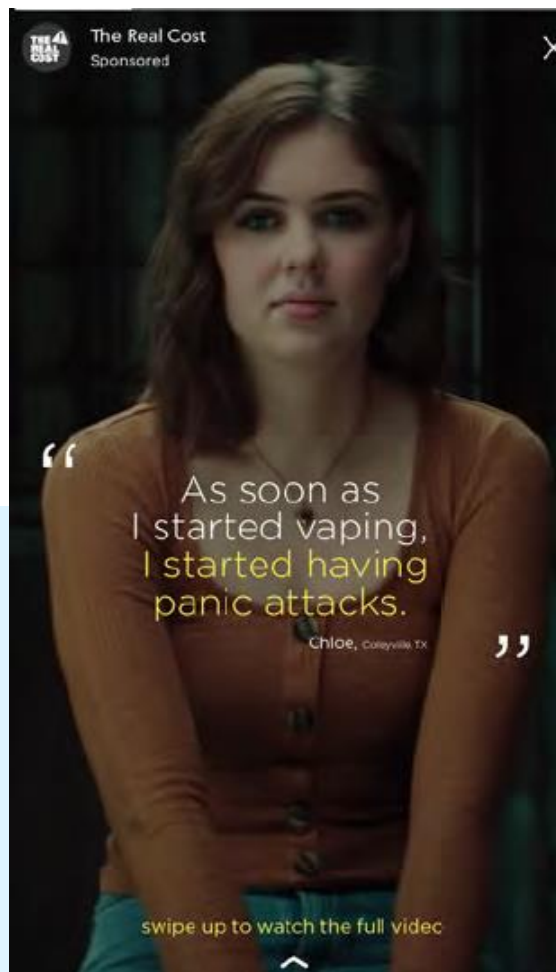
TEENS BEGAN TO BELIEVE THAT ADDICTION TO VAPING IS A POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCE AND EVEN STARTED TO SEE SOME NEGATIVE EMOTIONAL CONSEQUENCES FROM VAPING



TEENS MENTIONED FRIENDS OR PEERS WHO WOULD “FIEND” FOR A VAPE OR A HIT

“With my family especially, vaping began to take its toll. I began to tell more lies, I was just lying, I was like ‘everything’s fine mom’ but things were not fine.” Alexander

THEY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THEY’VE SEEN NEGATIVE BEHAVIOR LIKE IRRITABILITY AND IRRATIONAL ANXIETY ABOUT LOSING ACCESS TO VAPING



TEENS ACKNOWLEDGED THAT ADDICTION CAN BE EMOTIONAL, NOT JUST PHYSICAL

FOR SOME TEENS, VAPING IS A CONSISTENT PART OF THEIR DAILY RITUAL AND DON'T LIKE WHEN IT'S DISRUPTED OR LIMITED



“When I was addicted, it felt like I had a hunger inside of me and it felt like I couldn't live without nicotine.” Emily

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

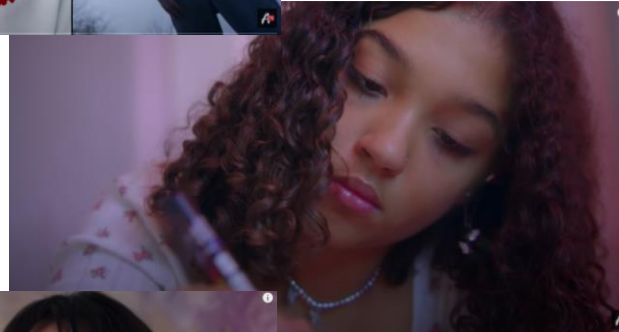
“I care about my mom a lot. And seeing the look on her face of disappointment looking at me in a way as, “I don't know who you are anymore.” That was the hardest.”

- Jazlynn, 15



“It was a fake form of confidence.”

– Henry, 21



“My sense of self started to change once I started vaping more was because I would become completely closed off from everybody and everything.”

- Emily, 16

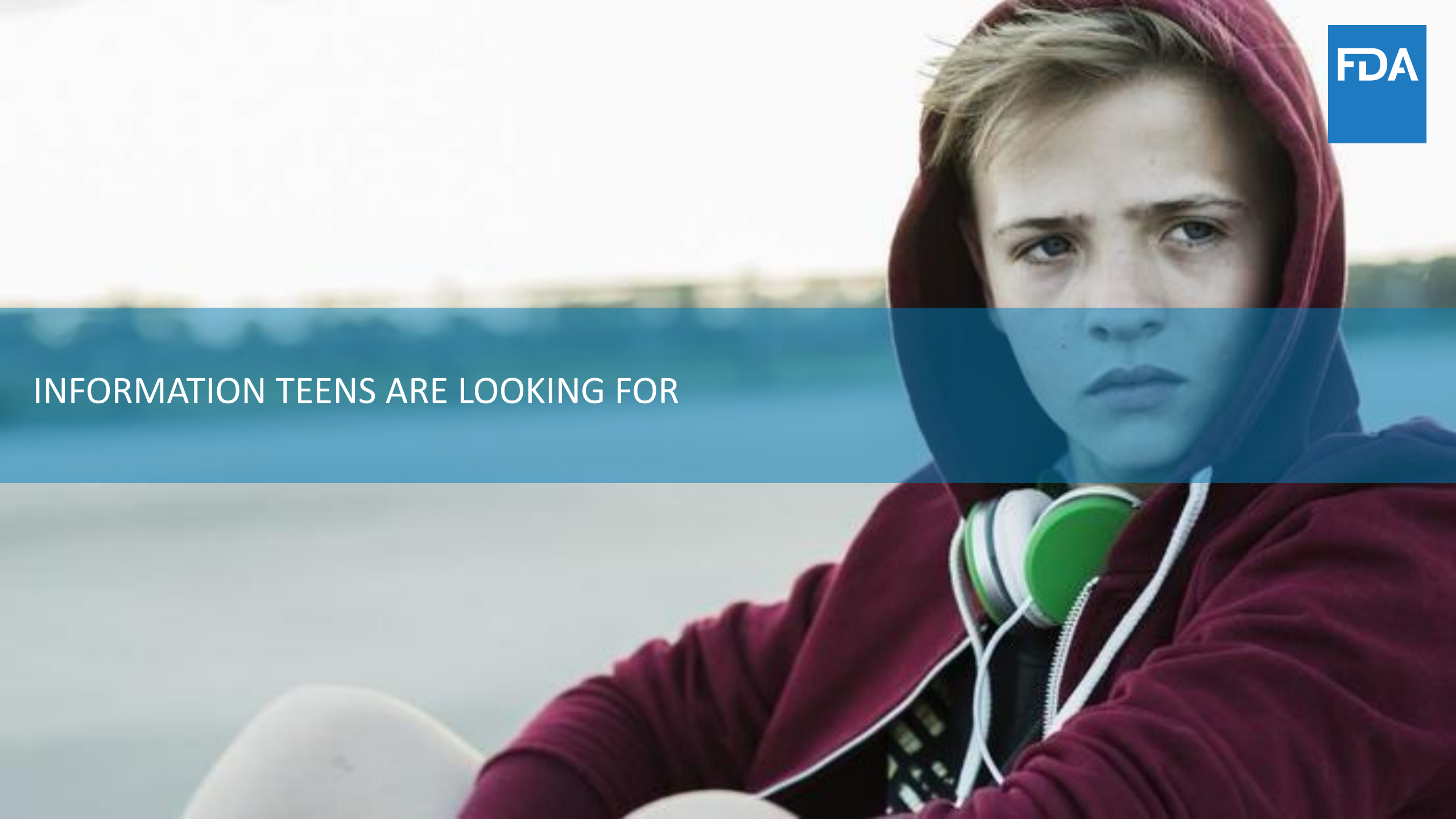


“One of the biggest problems with vaping, is you get so wrapped up into it and you get so addicted, I would think to myself, “Why am I hitting it right now? ... there's no reason, there's no explanation.”

- Isabela, 21



INFORMATION TEENS ARE LOOKING FOR



ENGAGING WITH TEENS SINCE CAMPAIGN LAUNCH



Total Likes:
5.2 million



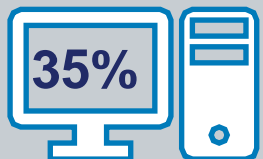
Total Shares:
415,000



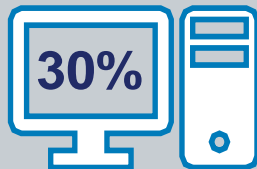
Total Comments:
100,000+



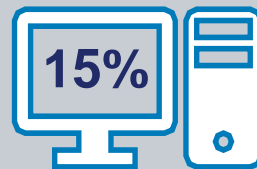
Teens think
vaping is safer
and proven for
cessation



Teens state
they plan to
continue using
tobacco



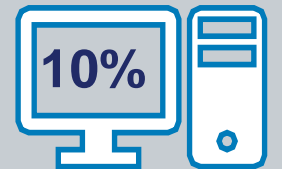
Teens ask for
sourced info on
health effects



Teens have
seen or felt
harmful effects



Teens ask
for help with
quitting

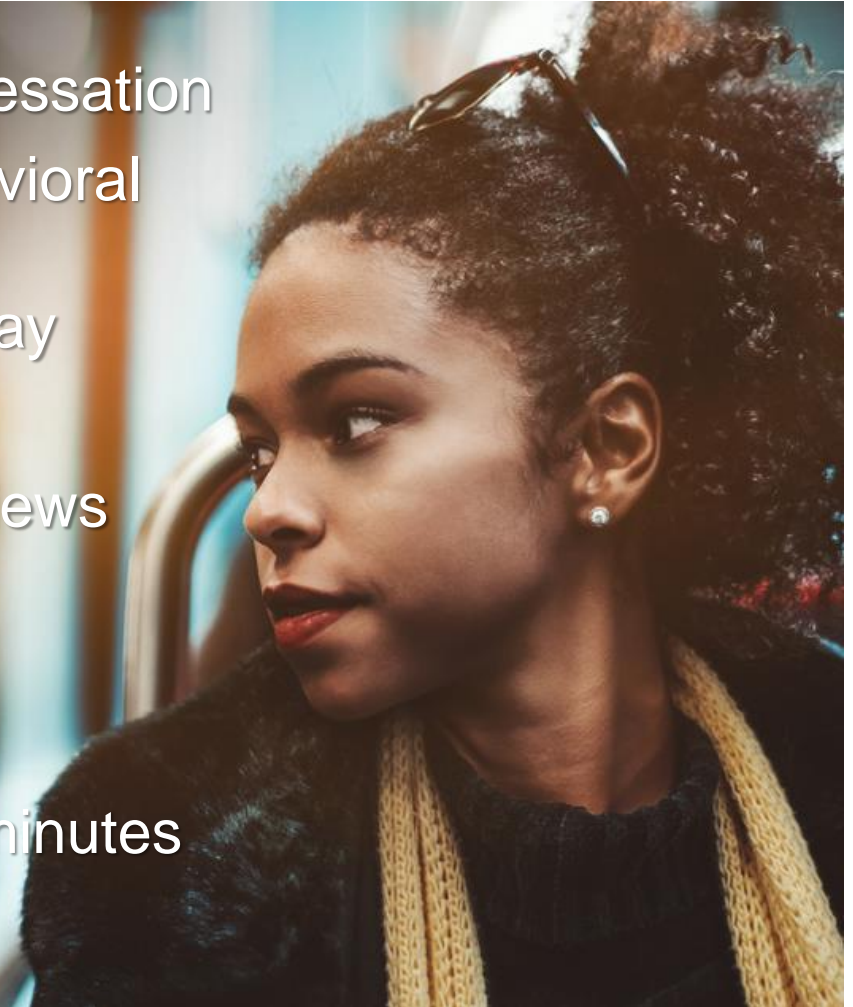


CTP partners with NCI, linking teens to new e-cigarette cessation content on SmokeFree Teen, giving comprehensive behavioral techniques help teens deal with cravings, navigate peer pressure, prepare to quit, and make it through their quit day

Since July 2019, there have been over 2,6 million page views

The most time is spent on these pages:

- How to Quit Vaping – over 4 minutes
- Acquire tips for managing stress and anxiety – over 4 minutes
- Manage nicotine withdrawal – over 5 minutes



A woman with dark hair pulled back, wearing a light-colored top, is looking out a window. The background shows a blurred outdoor scene with a building and a fence. A semi-transparent blue horizontal band is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the title text.

PERCEPTIONS OF QUITTING, HARM AND ADDICTION AMONG TODAY'S SMOKERS

- Quitting cigarettes remains very hard
- Definition of quitting has been completely redefined by E-cigarettes
- Steady drumbeat of contradiction allows for inaction
- Nicotine and addiction misperceptions persist
- Harm and addiction beliefs are intertwined

PERCEIVED BENEFITS OF SMOKING ARE BARRIERS TO QUITTING

- **Participants mentioned that they smoke during stressful situations to help them alleviate anxiety**
 - The more stressful life becomes however, the less smokers believe they can give up what they perceive as the calming effects of smoking
- **Participants derive a sense of community from smoking, frequently smoking and socializing with friends**
 - Fear of missing out with their social crowd keeps them smoking
- **Smoking offers the opportunity to decompress after a workday and serves as a reward for getting through the day**
 - It's also something they really enjoy and is a central part of their identity



Stress relief



Social connection



Reward

QUITTING HAS BEEN REDEFINED

QUITTING DOESN'T ALWAYS MEAN QUITTING ANYMORE

Overwhelming majority had NEVER made quit plans or selected a quit date. Most described quit attempts as “spur of the moment.”

Across the board, many participants redefined “quitting” via the following behaviors:

- Cutting down on the number of cigarettes smoked
 - They often felt that reduction of use was the same as quitting, and better for their health
- Using multiple types of tobacco products
 - They switched between products so it's hard to find exclusive smokers anymore
- Only smoking “socially”
 - Hanging out with friends or family is a major trigger, especially when alcohol was involved
- Switching to vaping
 - Can quit cigarettes but to ‘quit quit’ they’d have to lose nicotine too

19- to 24-year-old participants generally predicted they would still be smoking in two years, but had more confidence that they would quit in five to 10 years due to:

- Hitting a specific milestone
 - Finishing stressful time in college, settling down, have more stable life and finances.
- Young adult women were clear in their resolve to absolutely stop smoking during a future pregnancy.
- Young adults reported having the least access to quit methods compared with other subgroups.
 - Usually due to lack of financial resources or inadequate health insurance.
- Ironically, these participants agreed it is harder to quit as you get older.

“I feel like it gets easier because of the more innovative technologies [that will be] available in 10 years ... like different types of patches or medications ... vapes are literal [sic] water, like, just a way to get you out of the habit.” (19- to 24-year-old, Las Vegas)

CONTRADICTING INSTINCTS

THERE'S A STEADY DRUMBEAT OF CONTRADICTION

Smokers across focus groups...

- Yearn for encouragement in their quit journey
- Crave social support to help quit
- See failed quit attempts as part of their identity
- Want to quit
- Acknowledged the value of a quit plan or quit date

But also...

- Hide quit attempts from loved ones for fear of failure
- Don't want to lose their social network of smokers
- Like the comforting rituals associated with smoking
- Know that only major events would motivate them
- Simply wait to feel ready in the “spur of the moment”

A photograph of a man with dark hair, wearing a green button-down shirt, looking off to the side with his hand behind his head. The background is a bright, blurred outdoor scene.

MISUNDERSTANDING NICOTINE

- **Almost all focus groups described nicotine as the addictive chemical** found in cigarettes.
- **Participants were split on whether they believed nicotine naturally occurred** in the tobacco plant or was added during the process of making cigarettes.
- **Most participants acknowledged that nicotine was a key factor** in why they keep smoking
- **Participants most often mentioned a calming or relaxing feeling**, the release of dopamine or other reward signals in the brain
- Some incorrectly believed nicotine caused **negative health effects such as cancer and respiratory disease**

SMOKING CESSATION EDUCATION POSTERS

**QUITTING
TAKES
PRACTICE**



**KEEP
TRYING!**



Quitting smoking is a process. Keep going at EveryTryCounts.gov




CTP-196

Quitting cigarettes isn't a perfect process.

"I had to try more than once to quit. But I never gave up. With each try I learned more about quitting, and myself."
- Mel, 22

Keep going with your quit process at EveryTryCounts.gov



CTP-194

Usted no fracasó en su intento de dejar de fumar.

Simplemente aún no ha terminado.

Cada vez que lo intenta, se acerca más a la meta de dejar de fumar para siempre. Siga intentándolo con EveryTryCounts.gov/espanol



CTP-187-S

Dejar el cigarrillo no es un proceso perfecto.

"No dejé de fumar en mi primer intento, pero sé que no fracasé. Simplemente es parte del proceso."
- Sofia, 22 años

Continúe con su proceso para dejar de fumar en EveryTryCounts.gov/espanol



CTP-195-S

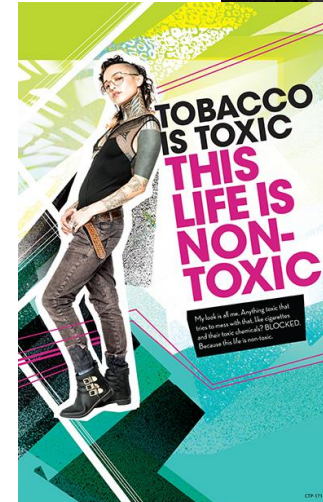
CTP'S TOBACCO EDUCATION RESOURCE LIBRARY

Free print materials, web and social media content are available in English and Spanish to download and order on CTP's Tobacco Education Resource Library.

<https://digitalmedia.hhs.gov/tobacco/>

Content includes resources on:

- Harms of vaping
- Harms of tobacco use
- Federal rules and regulations
- Tobacco control research



THANK YOU

FDA

More Information:

Free Tobacco Resources at:

<https://digitalmedia.hhs.gov/tobacco/>

The Real Cost Vaping Prevention Ads can be found at:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/knowtherealcost>

THANK YOU

FDA

Contact us at:
TheRealCost@fda.hhs.gov