

TOOLS FOR SCHOOLS

*to help prevent commercial
tobacco and nicotine use
among students*



Association for Nonsmokers-MN

September 2023



School Partners,

The Association for Nonsmokers-Minnesota (ANSR) is dedicated to reducing the human and economic costs of commercial tobacco, nicotine and other drug use in Minnesota. Our core commitments are: to protect young Minnesotans from a lifetime of addiction; to ensure that all Minnesotans can breathe clean, smoke-free air everywhere; and to reduce health inequities and other disparities in relation to commercial tobacco, nicotine and other drugs. ANSR is here to support your school district with evidence-based strategies and programming regarding vaping and commercial tobacco use.

In this Tools for Schools Toolkit, you will find information on evidence-based strategies for schools, including youth education and advocacy, curriculum, treatment options, and support over suspension strategies. We also share information on other assistance ANSR can provide: newsletter drop-ins, model policies for schools, staff and student presentations, and commercial tobacco impact information.

We have included information on vape detectors in schools. ANSR does not consider the use of vape detectors to be evidence-based or effective in preventing the initiation of youth vaping or helping youth who are addicted quit.

We are more than happy to discuss further, feel free to reach out for more information. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

The ANSR Team

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Vape Detectors

They are not evidence-based.

There are currently no peer-reviewed studies about the efficacy of vape detectors. One of the main issues with vape detectors is that they merely track the problem, rather than work towards prevention or treatment. They can even be counterproductive. Some consequences of vape detectors include:



- Surveillance measures focus on punishment rather than prevention;
- Negative impact on trust and relationships between students, teachers and administrators;
- False sense of security;
- False positives and false negatives as vape detectors are not always accurate and can lead to confusion and may undermine effectiveness;
- Distracts from comprehensive approaches that address the teen vaping crisis;
- Schools may not be prepared to handle the tobacco product waste problem that may arise from vape detectors; and
- The unintended consequences of implementing such measures may create fear and anxiety among students, which impacts their learning environment.

Source: Public Health Law Center: <https://www.publichealthlawcenter.org/commentary/230727/7/27/23-how-spend-juul-settlement-funds-champion-our-children-target-commercial>

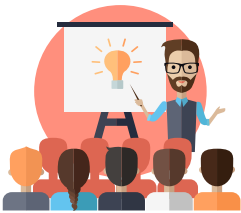
Supportive School and Community Activities

What CAN your school district do to prevent student tobacco and nicotine use? Rather than install vape detectors, these evidence-based activities can help reduce youth use and build relationships in your community.



Updating School Policy and Student Handbook

Best practice policy models and handbook language recommendations. This includes implementing Support over Suspension strategies in schools. (see page 12 for more information on Support over Suspension).



Staff and Student Trainings

In-person or virtual training with staff and students on basics and emerging trends for vapes, target marketing, and the power of youth leadership.



Starting a Youth Group

Partner with youth in the community to work on these issues together. Youth can be the most powerful messengers due to their unique perspectives and peer-to-peer skill-building.



School Board Presentations

Presentations and discussion with school board members around the issue and the case for Support over Suspension and updated school policies. In-person or virtual. Make sure to include your youth partners!



Community Presentations

Presentations and discussion with community members around commercial tobacco and vaping issues. In-person or virtual. Make sure to include your youth partners!

Newsletter Drop-ins

Whether it is in a school newsletter or for social media, ANSR can help create newsletter drop-ins and social media posts. Newsletter drop-ins and social media posts can help spread awareness about commercial tobacco-related issues and get the conversation started in your district. Some topics could include:

Flavored tobacco products and e-liquids

Nicotine pouches

Vape detector ineffectiveness

How to talk to your kids about vaping

Vaping and mental health

Tobacco industry targeting

Vape waste and environmental impacts

Youth quit resources

Example 1: "Vapes Shops are the New Candy Stores"

Remember the saying “like a kid in a candy store?” Big Tobacco took that phrase and ran with it when brainstorming ways to recruit new users. The tobacco industry knows that kids don’t want to consume tobacco or nicotine that actually tastes like tobacco—nearly 80% of Minnesota middle and high school students responded ‘definitely not’ when asked if they would use a tobacco-flavored e-cigarette. Instead, the industry sells products in sweet and fruity flavors like Blue Razz, Gummy Worm and Cotton Candy to entice young people and get them hooked. The flavors that once belonged in candy stores are now making their way into kids’ lungs.

Candy and fruit flavors aren’t the only culprits, either. The tobacco industry also knows that the cooling effect of menthol makes smoking easier to start and harder to quit. For years, the industry has targeted youth with menthol advertising, event sponsorships and free samples. In 1978, the makers of Newport cigarettes said “...the base of our business is the high school student.” This still holds true almost fifty years later. Tobacco products, especially e-cigarettes, come in a number of minty, fresh flavors to mask the harshness of smoking and make the products taste better. Of Minnesota students who had used e-cigarettes in the past 30 days, 35% had used menthol-flavored e-cigarettes. These products undoubtedly appeal to youth by making smoking more convenient.

Flavors encourage kids to start using tobacco products and keep them coming back for more. According to the 2020 Minnesota Youth Tobacco Survey, 78% of Minnesota middle and high school students who experimented with tobacco reported that the first product they ever tried was flavored with menthol or another flavor. It is time to end the sale of flavored tobacco products to protect our kids from Big Tobacco’s predatory schemes and the lifetime of nicotine dependence that may follow that first (most likely) flavored use.

Example 2: Tips for Talking to Your Child About Vaping

Talking to teenagers is hard, especially when it comes to talking about substance use. Even so, parents are the most powerful influence in their child's life. It is important to discuss vaping with your child early and often to protect their health and set them up to make informed decisions. Here are a few ways to foster an open conversation about vaping that will leave you both feeling empowered:

Before you talk:

- Find the right time and place – Leading with “We need to talk” or sitting your child down in a formal setting may immediately come across as confrontational. Pick a moment that is calm and casual, maybe when you drive past a vape shop or are having family dinner.
- Consider where they're coming from – Think about the many influences that may affect how your child feels about vaping: their friends, advertisements they see on social media or TV, their peers at school, other adults in their life, etc. Ask yourself, when you were a teenager, how would you want your parents to bring up a tricky topic like vaping?
- Know the facts – Your child may ask you questions about vaping during your conversation or expect you to have some background on the topic. There is a lot of misinformation out there, so it is important to learn the basics from trusted sources. The CDC and the American Lung Association are great places to start.

While you talk:

- Don't lecture – Your child likely already knows that you disapprove of drug use. To avoid their defenses and increase your chances of being heard, position your talk as a conversation between you two, not a lecture from parent to child. As soon as they feel talked down to or ashamed, they may resist or shut down. Avoid phrases like “you should,” “you can't,” and “I disapprove.”

- Lead with questions and truly listen – Instead of beginning with statistics or health information, start by asking your child a simple question about vaping. This opens the door for dialogue and shows that you truly care about their perspective. Try some of these open-ended questions to get the conversation going, and when they answer, don't tell them how they should feel or why you think they're wrong:
 - *What are your thoughts on vaping?*
 - *How do you feel about how your school handles vaping?*
 - *It seems like I see news stories about vaping everyday. Why do you think vaping has become so popular?*
- Be ready to hear that your child may vape – There is a possibility that your child has experimented with vaping. If they feel like they will be punished, they may not share this information with you. If they do, rather than getting angry or turning to discipline, thank them for being honest and explain that you are concerned because you care about them and their health.
- Blame the industry, not your child – Big Tobacco intentionally targets children with advertising and enticing flavors. Their goal is to get them hooked for life. Remind your child that you are on the same side when it comes to the tobacco industry and that it isn't their fault for being interested in vape products.

After you talk:

- Thank them – Let your child know that you appreciate their honesty. Ending with trust will make it easier for them to come to you with other questions or when they need advice.
- Follow up – This isn't a one-and-done conversation. Things are always changing—new products hit the market, your child makes new friends, new data comes out about vaping. Keep an open line of conversation between you and your child and take the initiative to bring the topic up again if they don't.

Social Media Posts

SOMETHING TO HIGHLIGHT:

SCHOOL IS NO PLACE FOR BIG TOBACCO

The tobacco industry is always coming up with clever new ways to hook students, like **disguising their products as school supplies**.



Social Media Posts

A FRESH REMINDER:

SCHOOL IS NO PLACE FOR BIG TOBACCO

The tobacco industry is always coming up with clever new ways to hook students, like **packaging their products to look like mints.**



Social Media Posts

WRAP IT UP:

SCHOOL IS NO PLACE FOR BIG TOBACCO

The tobacco industry is always coming up with clever new ways to hook students, like **wrapping their products to look like candy**.



School Presentations

ANSR can come to you to provide in-person or virtual presentations to staff and/or students.

Here is a breakdown of what they look like:

Youth Presentations: Unpacking Myths and Facts about Vaping*

- Evolution of vaping products;
- What's in an e-liquid;
- Nicotine and the brain;
- Nicotine and stress;
- Environmental impacts of vapes;
- Tobacco industry targeted marketing; and
- The importance of youth advocacy

These presentations can be done in a peer-to-peer model as well. Having peer leaders facilitate the sessions can be effective in communicating the message.

Staff Presentations: Unpacking Myths and Facts about Vaping*

- Evolution of vaping products;
- What's in an e-liquid;
- Youth e-cigarette use;
- Nicotine health impacts on the brain and stress;
- Tobacco industry targeted marketing;
- How we can talk with teens about vaping; and
- What can we do as adults to help

*The 'Unpacking Myths and Facts about Vaping' workshops were developed by Tobacco-Free Alliance and can be viewed at their website [here](#)

School Policy Resources

COMMERCIAL TOBACCO-FREE K-12 SCHOOL MODEL POLICY



The use or promotion of commercial tobacco products¹ on school grounds and at off-campus school-sponsored events is detrimental to the health and safety of students, staff, and visitors.

Under federal law, smoking is prohibited in any kindergarten, elementary, or secondary school or library serving children under the age of 18 years if federal funds are used in the school.² Many states also have laws that restrict commercial tobacco use, including electronic cigarettes, in public K-12 schools.³ However, federal law and many state laws do not cover outdoor school grounds.



www.publichealthlawcenter.org



American Heart Association.

THE AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION'S TOBACCO-FREE SCHOOLS TOOLKIT



Generously supported by
 CVSHealth FOUNDATION

The Public Health Law Center's Commercial Tobacco-Free K-12 School Model Policy is a national resource for states, school districts, and schools that are creating or strengthening a commercial tobacco policy.

This model policy has an emphasis on alternatives to suspension and expulsion measures.

The American Heart Association's Tobacco-Free Schools Toolkit was designed to help school districts respond to the youth tobacco/ vaping epidemic. The toolkit assists schools in creating a tobacco-free environment that helps prevent students from using tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, and support students who need help quitting. It includes:

- Sample school policy language
- Sample letter to parents / caregivers
- Announcements for sporting events
- Social media messages

Support Over Suspension

Support Over Suspension refers to policy and systems change that addresses commercial tobacco use by removing punitive measures and replacing them with programs that are designed to focus on offering education and treatment in the school setting instead.

Why is it Important?

- Suspensions are counterproductive;
- Research shows students who receive one or more suspensions a year are more likely to experience mental health issues, use drugs and alcohol, and exhibit antisocial behavior;
- The most effective approaches to helping youth quit tobacco use are through counseling and education; and
- Once addicted, it may be incredibly difficult for youth to quit. This often explains why students with an addiction continue to use these products in school despite policies prohibiting their use and possession.





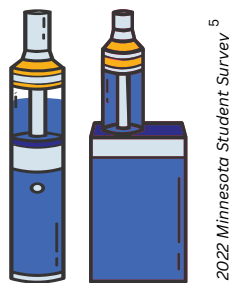
Support Over Suspension

Did you know?

A law was passed in Minnesota that raised the minimum legal sales age of tobacco products¹ from 18 to 21 and eliminated all criminal penalties for underage possession, use, or purchase of commercial tobacco products. This law also increased fines for retailers who sell to underage youth.²

What does this mean when I find someone underage possessing or using commercial tobacco?

- Under Tobacco 21 law, this law makes commercial tobacco products less accessible to students without the use of these methods. Under this law, people under 21 cannot receive a ticket or other criminal penalties for possessing commercial tobacco products (including on school grounds).
- Schools should follow their tobacco-free policy when addressing underage commercial tobacco use in schools and on school property. This may be a good time for schools to revisit their policy and determine if it needs to be updated.
- There are several programs available that offer education, peer support groups, and commercial tobacco treatment opportunities that are a great way to support students who may be experiencing addiction to vaping or other commercial tobacco products (see page 2).



2022 Minnesota Student Survey⁵

From 2019 to 2022, reported youth vaping declined:

- Grade 8:** 6% reported vaping
- Grade 9:** 7% reported vaping
- Grade 11:** 14% reported vaping

Are you interested in updating or reviewing your tobacco-free policy?

Visit the Tobacco-Free Schools Guide below.³

Wondering where you can dispose of student vapes?

Check out the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency below.⁴

Why were possession, use, and purchase (PUP) penalties taken out of state law?

- PUP penalties have not been proven to reduce commercial tobacco use.
- These penalties divert focus from addressing irresponsible retailers and the commercial tobacco industry which has a long history of targeting youth.
- There is clear consensus from national health organizations that commercial tobacco policies should not include these penalties.

What are commercial tobacco products?

Commercial tobacco products include cigarettes, cigars, hookah, smokeless or spit tobacco, and vape products.¹

It does not include the sacred and traditional use of tobacco by American Indians and other groups.



Sources:

1. **FDA Tobacco Product Definition:** <https://www.fda.gov/tobacco-products/products-guidance-regulations/products-ingredients-components>
2. **Tobacco 21 and Other Statutory Changes:** <https://www.publichealthlawcenter.org/sites/default/files/resources/MN-Tobacco-21-FAQ.pdf>
3. **Tobacco Free Schools Guide:** <https://www.ansrmn.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/K-12-Schools-Tobacco-Free-Policy-Guide-2021.pdf>
4. **Minnesota Pollution Control Agency:** <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/w-hw4-65.pdf>
5. **2022 Minnesota Student Survey Data:** <https://education.mn.gov/mde/dse/health/mss/>

Tobacco 101

A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO ANTI-TOBACCO LESSON PLANNING









This free, web-accessible seven-lesson guide contains multimedia and interactive lessons for teaching young people about tobacco, the tobacco industry, and how they can use their voice to create a healthier community. These lessons include discussions, hands on activities, videos, community surveys, and the opportunity to make plans to create policy change. The guide is a fun, interactive tool to help you develop young tobacco prevention advocates.

Visit <http://www.ansrmn.org/tobacco101> to access Tobacco 101 today!

☰ Guide Outline

- Lesson 1: Tobacco 101—Intro to Tobacco
- Lesson 2: Marketing and Advertising: What You See is Not Always What You Get
- Lesson 3: Child Labor in the Tobacco Industry
- Lesson 4: Flavored Tobacco, Menthol and E-Cigarettes
- Lesson 5: People Power vs. Tobacco Industry
- Lesson 6: What is the Tobacco Industry Doing in my Neighborhood?
- Lesson 7: Sharing Our Findings: Taking Action
- Lesson 8: Price Discounting
- Lesson 9: Electronic Cigarettes (Vapes): A Deeper Dive
- Lesson 10: Environmental Impacts
- Lesson 11: Mental Health and Nicotine

What is included in this guide:

-  Downloadable resources
-  Video and other multimedia links
-  Activities for a variety of learning styles
-  Hands-on student engagement
-  Student-led discussion and learning
-  Supplemental materials

Who this guide is for:

- Middle school teachers
- High school teachers
- Advisors of student leadership groups
- Scout leaders
- Youth group leaders
- Other adults interested in youth advocacy

Youth Treatment Services



My Life, My Quit™

Youth ages 13-18 can access free and confidential tobacco treatment services through **My Life, My Quit (MLMQ)**™ supported by the MN Department of Health.

- FREE continuing education offered for school staff, on tobacco treatment for youth at “CoursesThatClickMN.com”;
- MLMQ can be used as an alternative to suspension program; and
- Posters and other promotional materials can be accessed here:
https://mylifemyquit.com/Resource_pages/resources



This is Quitting is a free and anonymous text messaging program from Truth Initiative designed to help young people quit vaping.

- This is Quitting is tailored based on age (within 13 to 24 years old) and product usage to give teens and young adults appropriate recommendations about quitting; and
- Free promotional materials are available to promote This is Quitting within schools and local communities can be access here: <https://truthinitiative.org/this-is-quitting-resources>



Three Quick Steps to Help Students Quit Nicotine

- 1. Ask students** about their use of nicotine-containing products, including e-cigarettes/vapes.
- 2. Advise them** that quitting nicotine will help them stay healthy and be more successful in school.
- 3. Connect them** with free quit support.

70% of MN high schoolers and middle schoolers who use e-cigs report signs of nicotine dependence

How to Connect Students to Free Quit-Nicotine Support

- **Let them know about free, confidential coaching.** My Life, My Quit™ offers this free support by phone or text.
- **Set up a call.** You can have My Life, My Quit reach out to the student. On MyLifeMyQuit.com, go to Provider Web Referral (<https://direc.to/hYet>)
 - Let the student know that they will receive a call within 24 hours to help enroll them in My Life, My Quit.
- **Have the student text.** The student can sign up at MyLifeMyQuit.com or by texting "Start" to 36072.
- **Follow up with the student.** Offer additional support and on-going encouragement.

Did a student violate your school's commercial tobacco-free policy?

Encourage them to complete My Life, My Quit as an alternative to suspension or other penalty. When the student completes My Life, My Quit (five coaching sessions), they will receive a certificate of completion to provide to school administrators.

Learn more: [Implementing My Life, My Quit™ as an Alternative to Suspension](https://direc.to/hW85) (<https://direc.to/hW85>)

Want to learn more about vaping and how to help your students quit nicotine?

Here are two ways to learn more about these important topics:

1. Get free, quick and easy continuing ed credits on CoursesThatClickMN.com
2. Check out the [School Toolkit for E-cigarette Use Prevention and Cessation](https://direc.to/hW86) (<https://direc.to/hW86>)



Support Programs & Toolkits



Minnesota Department of Health School Toolkit for E-cigarette Use Prevention and Cessation. Includes:

- Factsheets
- School curriculums
- Sample tobacco-free policies
- Messaging for parents, youth and teachers
- Advisories for parents
- Free signage and more!



INDEPTH is a FREE interactive program that teaches students about nicotine dependence, establishing healthy alternatives and how to kick the unhealthy addiction that got them in trouble in the first place. How it works:

- Schools connect with the American Lung Association
- Facilitators completed an online INDEPTH training
- Facilitators prepare and implement the INDEPTH program



As part of the Don't Blow It: Anti-vaping Campaign, Essentia Health developed a toolkit that can be used by teachers and community groups to educate students and the general public about the dangers of vaping.

Support Programs & Toolkits



The Stanford Medicine Tobacco Prevention Toolkit is theory-based and evidence-informed curriculums and resources created by educators, parents, youth and researchers aimed at preventing middle and high school students' use of tobacco and nicotine. The toolkit includes:

- You and Me, Together Vape-Free Curriculum
- Our Healthy Futures Curriculum: Alternative-to-Suspension Curriculum
- Smokeless Tobacco 101
- Hookah 101
- Factsheets and posters



Vape, Educate is an online course originally designed to be completed by middle and high school students. It can be purchased and used as an educational program for teachers, parents, and other community members. The program is intended to be used as a tool that provides supplemental material to educate students about vaping.



Kognito Friend2Friend Student trainings engage students through interactive experiences to help them gain awareness, knowledge and skills about important topics related to mental health. Student trainings take 30-35 minutes each to complete and are for students in grades 6-12, covering topics like substance use, mental wellness and caring schools.

Youth Engagement Tools

ESCAPE THE VAPE

Escape the Vape is a PSA video contest where Minnesota 6th-12th graders can use their voice to raise awareness about the dangers of vaping and expose the shadowy commercial tobacco marketing tactics behind it. Students create and upload their 30-second, vape-bashing masterpiece, and have the chance to win \$500 for them and \$500 for their school or organization, along with other great prizes. #mnjointheescape



Take Down Tobacco has free online advocacy training to get the knowledge, skills and tools needed to fight tobacco use in your community and take your advocacy to the next level. This comprehensive training program is geared towards middle and high school students equip them with skills to create change in their communities and fight for the first tobacco-free generation.

Trainings include:

- Take Down Tobacco 101
- The Rise of Vaping
- Messaging Matters
- Mastering the Media
- Informing Decision-Makers
- Activities that Take Down Tobacco

Helpful Resources and Factsheets

- Swiss Cheese Model of Commercial Tobacco Prevention
- Flavored Commercial Tobacco Products
- E-Cigs: The Vape Saga Continues
- Vaping and Mental Health
- What's in Your Backpack?

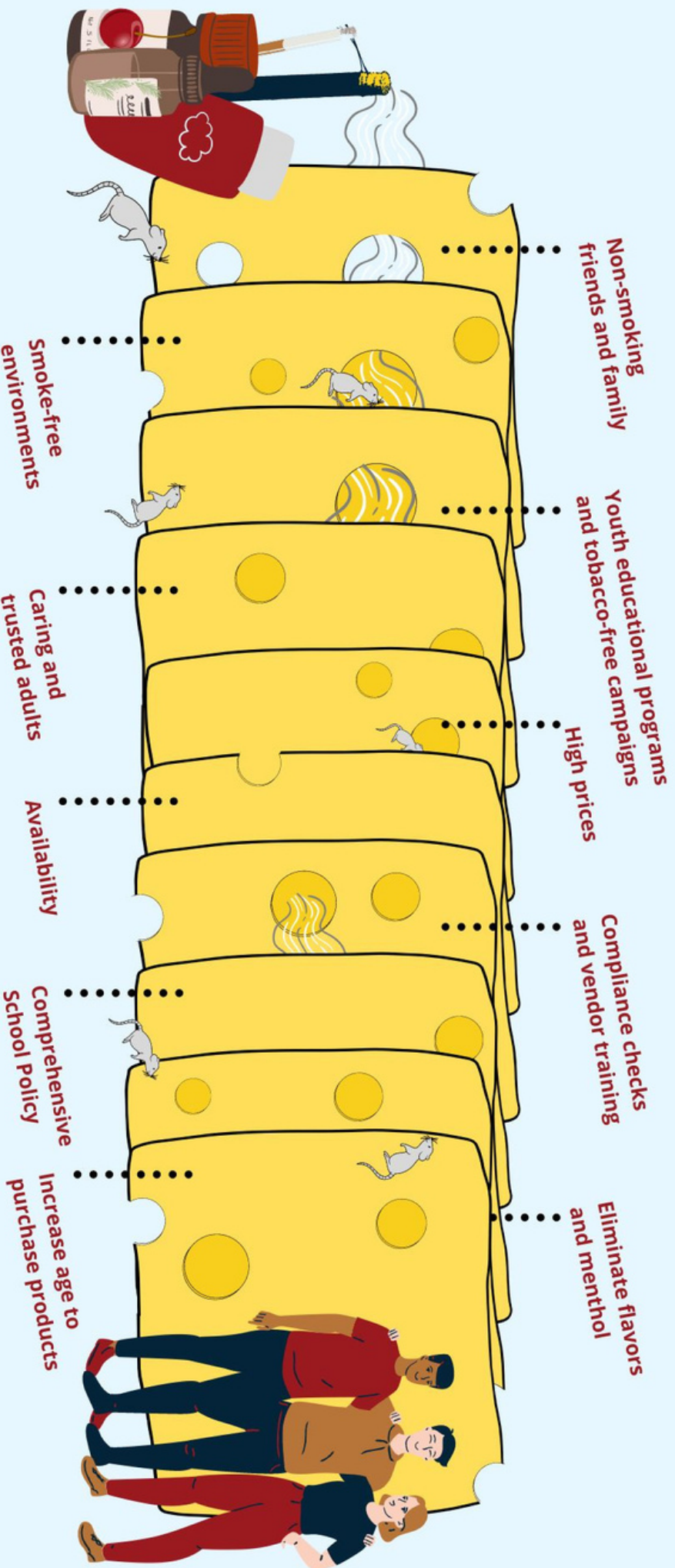


The factsheets included on the following pages can be helpful to gain insight on the issue at hand: commercial tobacco use among students. They can be used in presentations and shared with decision makers, parents and others to inform and educate on the topic with the goal of supporting youth.

Other helpful factsheets and resources about topics pertaining to commercial tobacco and vaping products can be found on our website! Visit us at: www.ansrmn.org

SWISS CHEESE MODEL OF COMMERCIAL TOBACCO PREVENTION

Effective commercial tobacco prevention happens when interventions are layered together to create a healthy tobacco-free community.



Interventions



Targeted tobacco industry marketing, social media misinformation, and tobacco lobbyists weakening regulations

Source: Adapted from James T. Reason



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(October 2022)



FLAVORED COMMERCIAL TOBACCO PRODUCTS



E-cigarette packaging often has colorful designs and resembles popular imagery familiar to youth.



E-cigarettes come in thousands of flavors such as Rainbow Candy (shown above), Blue Raspberry Ice and Cotton Candy



Cheap cigars come in bright packages and a wide variety of flavors, such as grape, strawberry, blueberry, tropical fusion and chocolate/vanilla swirl.



Photo Credit: Trinkets and Trash

THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY SELLS MANY TYPES OF FLAVORED PRODUCTS

Flavored commercial tobacco products include cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, blunt wraps, e-cigarettes (also known as vapes) and shisha (tobacco used in hookah). These products help the tobacco industry bypass the FDA's 2009 ban of flavored cigarettes other than menthol.¹ Menthol is the only flavor allowed in cigarettes.

COMMERCIAL TOBACCO PRODUCTS ARE OFFERED IN THOUSANDS OF FLAVORS THAT APPEAL TO YOUTH

There are more than 15,000 e-cigarette flavors on the market including a variety of kid-friendly flavors like *Cereal Milk*, *Bazooka Sour Straws* and *Gummy Worm*. E-cigarettes, specifically disposables, are the most popular commercial tobacco product used by youth.²

Cigars, chewing tobacco, blunt wraps, vapes and shisha are sold in fruit, candy, dessert and novelty flavors. Popular flavors include chocolate, piña colada, apple, grape, berry, cotton candy, bubble gum, mango, mint/ wintergreen and menthol.

These are “truly candy-flavored tobacco products” as the same chemical flavorings used in commercial tobacco products are also used in popular candy and fruity drinks.³

Tobacco companies add menthol to commercial tobacco products to cool the throat and make them taste better.⁴

FLAVORED PRODUCTS ARE MARKETED TO YOUTH, LGBTQ+ COMMUNITIES AND AFRICAN AMERICANS

The tobacco industry uses flavored products to attract the next generation of smokers.⁵

Young people are much more likely to use flavored commercial tobacco products than adults, and most young users said they would no longer use the product if it was not flavored.⁶

In fact, 85% of youth who vape use fruit, candy or menthol flavored products.⁷



Non-medical nicotine lozenges, nicotine pouches and nicotine gummies like these pictured above are the second most prevalent nicotine product used by adolescents.

MORE ABOUT MENTHOL FLAVORED COMMERCIAL TOBACCO



The tobacco industry heavily targets African Americans with menthol cigarettes by advertising in popular magazines.



Photo credit: Trinkets and Trash

The tobacco industry also attracts customers by offering price discounts, as seen below.



Photo credit: Trinkets and Trash

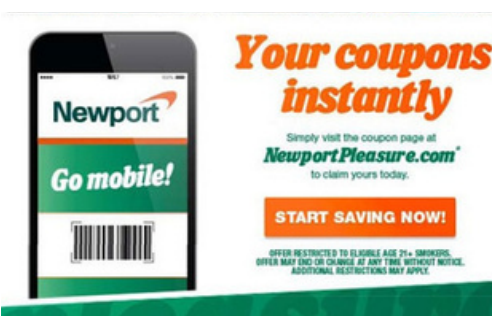


Photo credit: Trinkets and Trash

References are available at ansrmn.org/flavors

The tobacco industry has a long history of aggressively targeting certain populations with menthol product marketing including racial and ethnic minority groups, particularly African Americans; youth; women; and LGBTQ+ people.^{9,10}

FLAVORED PRODUCTS, LIKE MENTHOL, MAKE IT EASIER TO START AND HARDER TO QUIT

Flavored commercial tobacco is a threat to health equity. For example, because of industry targeting, 85% of African Americans who smoke, smoke menthols.¹⁰ Menthol flavored tobacco is easier to start and harder to quit¹³ than quitting non-menthol cigarettes, and African Americans who smoke menthols may be even less successful quitting than those in other communities.^{14,15}

Compared to non-menthol, menthol cigarettes are associated with moving to regular smoking among youth and young adults.¹¹ People who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) who smoke are more likely to smoke menthol cigarettes than heterosexual people who smoke.¹²

COMMUNITIES CAN TAKE ACTION TO RESTRICT THE AVAILABILITY OF FLAVORED PRODUCTS

States and local communities can adopt sales restrictions to address menthol cigarettes and other flavored commercial tobacco products that appeal to youth. Six states and more than 170 U.S. cities or counties have restricted the sale of all flavored commercial tobacco products including menthol cigarettes.¹⁶ Limiting the sale of products, setting a minimum price or creating a minimum pack size are some of the ways communities can protect their youth by making flavored products less accessible and less appealing.¹⁷

Despite a 2020 FDA ruling banning the sale of certain pod-based flavored e-cigarettes, thousands of flavored products were left on the market, including all disposable e-cigarettes, the most popular device type used by young people.

The public is waiting for the FDA to act on its April 2022 proposed rule to ban menthol in cigarettes and cigars. While this is a much-needed step for curbing commercial tobacco use, the final ruling will likely take years and leaves out all other menthol flavored commercial tobacco products.



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ANSR is dedicated to reducing the human and economic costs of commercial tobacco, nicotine and other drug use in Minnesota.



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E-CIGS: THE VAPE SAGA CONTINUES

Thousands of flavors, millions addicted

The popularity of youth e-cigarette use (aka vaping) led the U.S. Surgeon General to declare an “epidemic” in 2018 (1). Fueled by reusable pod mod vaping devices and coordinated social media marketing campaigns, particularly by the brand JUUL, vapes have continued to evolve. Teens have replaced their JUULs with cheaper, disposable devices with even higher nicotine salt levels than reusables that come in countless flavors, shapes and colors.



Above: Examples of popular disposables like these can have nicotine equivalents of more than 15 packs of cigarettes per device (9).



YOUTH ARE DRAWN TO:

the big hit (or buzz) of nicotine

ease of concealability

more than 15,000 flavors



SO, WHAT'S AN E-CIGARETTE?

E-cigarettes are battery-operated devices that heat a mixture of flavoring, liquid nicotine, and chemicals, called e-juice, which produces a nicotine aerosol that’s inhaled. Whether it’s a pod mod vape, disposable vape, tank mod, or other e-cigarette device, all e-cigarettes are regulated as tobacco products regardless if they contain nicotine extracted from the tobacco plant or developed in a lab (synthetic nicotine).

E-cigarettes are not approved as a quit smoking tool.

FDA-approved quit aids such as gum, patches and lozenges are available for adults at www.QuitPartnerMN.com.

Teens can go to www.MyLifeMyQuit.com for free quit help.

quit partner™
MY LIFE MY QUIT

FACT: E-cigarettes are marketed to youth.

The commercial tobacco industry historically targets kids with flavored tobacco. It continues this practice with candy, dessert and fruit flavored e-cigarettes with names like "Unicorn Poop" and "Twinkie." With more than 15,000 available flavors, it's not surprising that more than 8 in 10 youth users vape flavored e-cigarettes (2).



Back to School vaping promotional email (10).

FACT: Vape aerosol contains harmful chemicals like nicotine, ultra- fine particles, heavy metals, and other cancer-causing chemicals (3)

FACT: Nicotine is highly addictive and can harm brain development.

- Nicotine interferes with brain development and can have a long-term effect on mental health (4).
- The e-liquid flavors in vapes can cause health harms regardless of the nicotine content and can damage your lungs when inhaled (5).

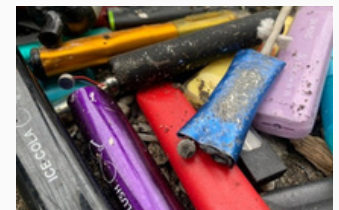
FACT: Sales of disposable e-cigarettes increased by nearly 250% between February 2020 and September 2021 (6).

FACT: Use remains high among MN youth and signs of dependence have increased (7).

- Almost 20% of MN high schoolers and almost 3% of MN middle schoolers reported vaping in the past 30 days, an almost 50% increase since 2014.
- Seventy percent of current MN student users reported signs of dependence like reaching for their vape without thinking about it or feeling like they really need to use it.

FACT: E-cigarettes create plastic, hazardous, and electronic waste (8).

- Ninety-nine BILLION pounds of e-waste are discarded every year.
- Discarded devices increase single-use plastics and introduce hazardous and toxic chemicals into the environment.



Examples of discarded vapes (11).





AT WHAT COST?

VAPING AND MENTAL HEALTH

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE FACING TWO RELATED CRISES

The 2022 National Youth Tobacco Survey shows that about 1 in 10 middle and high school students use e-cigarettes, and more than 1 in 4 who use e-cigarettes vape daily.¹ At the same time, symptoms of anxiety and depression in young people have doubled from pre-pandemic levels.²

These two crises are not isolated. Though more research is needed about the connections between vaping nicotine and mental health, numerous studies expose the worrying connections between them.

THE "STRESS RELIEF" ILLUSION

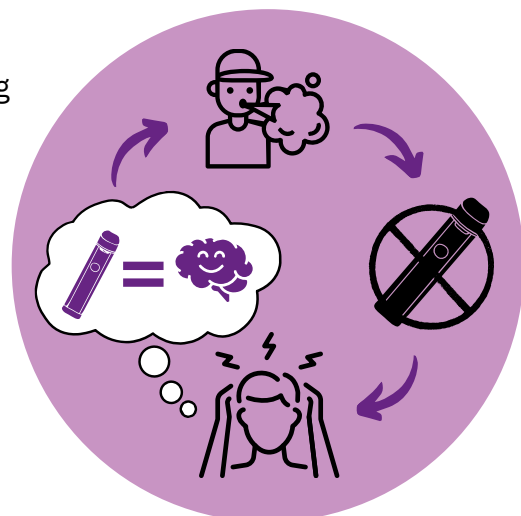
Many young people start and continue to vape because they think vaping will relieve their mental health symptoms. The most common reason youth give for continuing to use e-cigarettes after their first use is "I am feeling anxious, stressed, or depressed."³ The illusion that vaping improves mental health was created by the tobacco industry and pushed through marketing, preying on those looking for relief.

81%

of young people ages 15-24 who had used e-cigarettes said they started vaping to decrease stress, anxiety or depression.²

THE NICOTINE WITHDRAWAL CYCLE

Part of the illusion comes down to biology. When someone hasn't vaped in a while, it doesn't take long for symptoms of nicotine withdrawal like irritability, anxiety, depression and insomnia to begin. Vaping gives the illusion of relief from these symptoms, because consuming nicotine stops feelings of withdrawal. The cycle of symptoms followed by relief can create the false perception that vaping benefits mental health overall, even though it only curbs temporary withdrawal symptoms.² It is a difficult cycle to break and Big Tobacco knows it.



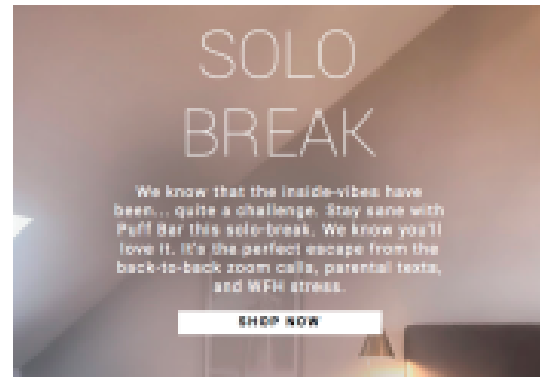


AT WHAT COST? VAPING AND MENTAL HEALTH

BIG TOBACCO LINKS VAPING & MENTAL HEALTH

The tobacco industry's marketing campaigns try to link e-cigarette use to relaxation, pleasure and stress relief. Below are some of the ad slogans and flavors that the tobacco industry uses to convince customers of this connection:

- "Stay sane"
- "Perfect escape"
- "Relaxed and enjoyable"
- Bliss
- Soothe
- Chillax
- Zen



A Puff Bar ad connects vaping to stress relief

This marketing strategy, combined with the experience of the nicotine withdrawal cycle, seems to reinforce the connection between vaping and coping with poor mental health for those that vape. This thinking adds to the stress relief illusion. 45% of those who vape frequently agree it is OK to vape to relieve stress, while only 20% of non-vapers agree.²

THE REAL COST OF VAPING, POOR MENTAL HEALTH

Young people who vape frequently are

2.4X

more likely to be diagnosed with depression than their non-vaping peers.²

- Young people who vape report more days of poor mental health than those who don't.²
- Vaping nicotine can make existing mental health conditions worse.⁴
- Using e-cigarettes is associated with difficulty concentrating, remembering and making decisions.²

QUITTING IS THE BEST STRESS RELIEVER

Of young people who quit vaping...



felt less stressed, anxious and depressed²



felt more in control²

Quitting vaping can relieve mental health symptoms and improve quality of life. Visit www.flavorshookkidsmn.org to learn more about tobacco industry targeting and how to take action.

IS **Big Tobacco** IN YOUR KID'S **backpack?**

Commercial tobacco products are designed to look like everyday items like candy and school supplies. Don't let the tobacco industry hook your kids into a lifetime of addiction.



www.ansrmm.org
651-646-3005

▲ = Commercial Tobacco Product

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| 1. Vape ▲ | 7. Hookah tobacco ▲ | 13. Vape ▲ | 19. Flash drive |
| 2. Mints | 8. Snack | 14. Nicotine gum ▲ | 20. Snack |
| 3. Nicotine pouches ▲ | 9. Hand sanitizer | 15. Gum | 21. Pens |
| 4. Mints | 10. Lip balm | 16. Highlighter | 22. Cigarillos ▲ |
| 5. Nicotine pouches ▲ | 11. Vape ▲ | 17. Vape ▲ | |
| 6. Snack | 12. White-out | 18. Vape ▲ | |

(October 2023)