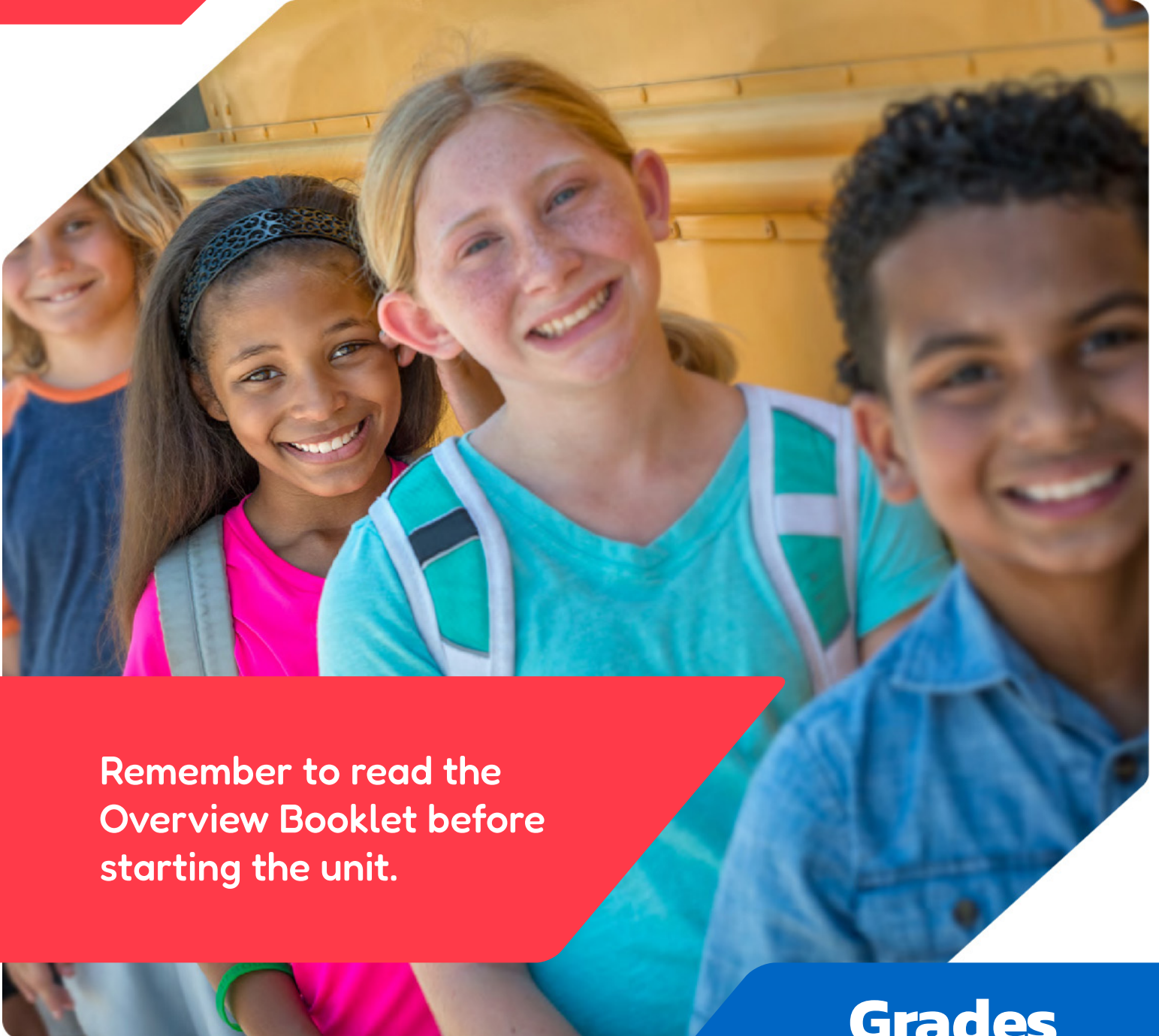




RIGHT DECISIONS

**BE
NICOTINE
FREE**

RIGHT NOW



Remember to read the
Overview Booklet before
starting the unit.

**Grades
5&6**

MESSAGE TO EDUCATORS

It is a fact that most young people do not use tobacco or nicotine products.¹ Tobacco product use is started and established primarily during adolescence and nearly 9 out of 10 adults who smoke cigarettes daily first try smoking by age 18.¹ Your students are at an age when they might be considering experimenting with nicotine—some may have already. With your guidance and the activities in this booklet, your students can learn the facts and skills to help keep them tobacco and nicotine free.

This booklet is part of the **Right Decisions Right Now: Be Nicotine Free** educational program designed to help prevent young people from using nicotine (cigarettes, vapes, smokeless tobacco, nicotine pouches or any other nicotine product). Developed by Lifetime Learning Systems, Inc.; updated and adapted to a digital format by BKFK; references and footnotes updated by Young Minds Inspired (YMI); and funded by R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company, **RDRN: Be Nicotine Free** is an evidence-based program that was tested in middle- and junior-high schools in 2006 with students in grades 5 through 9, followed by a replication study conducted in 2007.

The program includes digital activities and a unit quiz for grades 5 and 6 on the **RDRN: Be Tobacco Free** website, at www.rightdecisionsrightnow.com/grades-5-6/. Instructions for implementing the activities and quiz are included. In addition, reproducible activities and a unit quiz for grades 5 and 6 can be found on pages 18 through 29 of this booklet, along with instructions for implementing them.

Before starting the unit, read the Overview Booklet for background information about the program, its components, and how it works. The Overview Booklet also contains facts about tobacco and nicotine use among young people, a developmental chart (with tips for teachers), resources and references, and information you can share with your students about peer pressure and peer influence.

To use this program most effectively with your 5th and 6th grade students, complete all of the activities on the website, and/or in the booklet, in the order in which they are presented.

The activities are divided into three categories:

■ **Keeping Healthy** – This section includes a survey to determine students' perceptions about tobacco and nicotine, their understanding of its effects, and their experience with it. In addition, it includes activities to educate students about the health consequences of tobacco and nicotine use. Research shows that the students in these grades don't embrace health consequences as older students do. Therefore, there are additional support lessons to supplement the activities and reinforce the health messages.

■ **How Friends Fit In (Interpersonal Skills)** – In this section, students explore their relationships with others. The activities focus on peer relationships and how peer pressure, influence, and acceptance affect their lives. There are also activities on refusal skills to help equip students with strategies for saying "no."

■ **How I Am (Intrapersonal Skills)**

This section has students look at how they act, feel, and think. Topics covered include self-esteem, social image, decision-making skills, and personal values (what is important to each student). The activities are designed to provide students with a chance to practice decision making and to empower them to make healthy choices.

Digital and print activities with the same number and title are based on the same content, but in some cases, wording and format will vary based on manner of presentation.

The quiz should be used after students complete the activities and lessons. It is designed to help you assess their understanding of the content. The digital version of the quiz includes True/False, Choices and Consequences, and Fill-in-the-Blanks questions. The print version of the quiz includes multiple-choice questions and short answer responses.

This program also contains nicotine-free pledges for students and parents. PDFs of the pledges can be found on the website at www.rightdecisionsrightnow.com/resources/pledge-forms/. Print versions of the pledges that you can copy and distribute are included in this booklet.

Posters and extension lesson ideas are included in the program to complement this unit. Information about how and when to use these components to supplement these lessons can be found in the Overview Booklet.

Also Available:

Supplemental videos and accompanying teacher's guides are available at www.rightdecisionsrightnow.com. Look for the video icon in this booklet for suggestions on when to incorporate the three video segments into your lessons.



Remember to read the Overview Booklet before starting the unit.

The educational resources listed or linked to in this publication are provided as a convenience. R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company (RJRT) is not responsible for the content of those materials. The statements and views in those materials do not necessarily represent the views of RJRT or its management.

¹ CDC. *Smoking & Tobacco Use. Fact Sheet—Youth and Tobacco Use: Estimates of Current Tobacco Use Among Youth*. Referenced 2024. www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/youth_data/tobacco_use/

ACTIVITY
ONE

TAKE A TOBACCO AND NICOTINE SURVEY

Skills: Assessing risks and consequences**Suggested Time Consideration:** 25 minutes

This student survey is designed to help you launch your tobacco and nicotine prevention unit and generate class discussion about tobacco and nicotine.

Part One of the activity asks students about their experiences with tobacco and nicotine. It consists of questions taken from the CDC's *National Youth Tobacco Survey (NYTS) 2023 Questionnaire* – a survey that can be used to estimate current use of tobacco products and selected indicators related to tobacco use among U.S. middle school and high school students. These surveys are periodically done by the government to assess tobacco and other nicotine product use. The complete survey and report are available online at <https://www.fda.gov/tobacco-products/youth-and-tobacco/results-annual-national-youth-tobacco-survey#2023%20Findings%20on%20Youth%20Tobacco%20Use> (Referenced 2024).

Part Two of the survey includes open-ended questions that ask students what they think or know about the prevalence and health consequences of tobacco and nicotine use, quitting, and why young people use tobacco and nicotine products.

Collectively, the two-part survey will give you insight into your students' perceptions about tobacco and nicotine use and their prior knowledge of the facts, which can help you more effectively implement the unit and address their questions and concerns. Once students complete the survey, use the facts listed in the answer key to help dispel misperceptions students may have about tobacco and nicotine use, and to reinforce the message that most young people are tobacco and nicotine free.

Since the survey asks students about their personal experience with tobacco and nicotine, it should be done independently and anonymously.

The topics presented in the survey will be addressed throughout the program materials. For example, students will be provided with facts related to the health consequences of tobacco and nicotine use. In addition, they will be given information about why some adolescents use tobacco and nicotine, and why most choose to remain tobacco and nicotine free. They will also be provided with refusal skills that they can use if they are ever pressured to use tobacco or nicotine.

Before starting the activity, explain to your class that they are going to take a survey that asks them questions about tobacco and nicotine to help you understand what they know or think about it. To begin, ask students:

- *Do you think it is legal for young people to purchase tobacco or nicotine products? (Explain that it is illegal to sell tobacco or nicotine products to minors in every state.)*

- *Do you think there are health consequences related to using tobacco? (Explain that students will learn more about health issues in this unit.)*

Copy and distribute the activity. Tell students not to put their names on the pages because you want to collect them afterward and you want the sheets to be anonymous. Encourage students to answer the questions as honestly as they can. Once they are done, let them know that you are going to share some information with them. They can listen and should feel free to volunteer answers if they feel comfortable. Once you have completed all activities, please dispose of all student tobacco surveys.

ANSWERS PART ONE

Answers will vary

- 1-4. Review the answers students provided for these questions. This will give you a sense of your students' experience with tobacco and nicotine, but should not be shared with the students.
5. Explain to students that some young people try tobacco because of a lack of self-efficacy in the ability to refuse offers to use tobacco or nicotine,³ or they don't know how to tell their friends they don't want to try it. Explain to students that people their age are sometimes pressured to use these products, and that pressure can be difficult to handle. Let them know that in this unit, they are going to learn some ways to say "no" and cope with peer pressure.
6. Explain to students that according to the Surgeon General, symptoms such as coughing, shortness of breath, nausea, and phlegm production can start to develop in young people who smoke.³ Using nicotine in adolescence can harm the parts of the brain that control attention, learning, mood, and impulse control. Read to your students the following passage from the Surgeon General's Report "Preventing Tobacco Use Among Young People":

Most young people who smoke regularly are already addicted to nicotine, and they experience this addiction in a manner and severity similar to what adult smokers experience. Most adolescent smokers report that they would like to quit smoking and that they have made numerous, usually unsuccessful attempts to quit. Many adolescents say that they intend to quit in the future and yet prove unable to do so. Those who try to quit smoking report withdrawal symptoms similar to those reported by adults.³

³U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Preventing Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta, Georgia: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health; Washington, D.C., 2012. Referenced 2024. www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/reports/preventing-youth-tobacco-use/full-report.pdf

ACTIVITY ONE (CONTINUED): TAKE A TOBACCO AND NICOTINE SURVEY

PART TWO

Answers will vary, but share the following with your students.

1. Only about 1 of every 100 middle school students (1.0%) reported that they had smoked cigarettes in the past 30 days. However, about 1 out of every 30 middle school students (3.3%) reported that they had used electronic cigarettes (vapes) in the past 30 days.¹

2. Ask students to volunteer answers about why they think young people use tobacco and nicotine.

Explain to your students that some of the reasons young people try these products are:^{3,4}

- They don't feel good about themselves (low self-esteem and self-image).
- They aren't doing well in school (low achievement in school).
- They don't know about the health consequences of tobacco and nicotine.
- They think lots of people smoke and use e-cigarettes or smokeless tobacco (overestimating the number of people who smoke and use nicotine products).
- They don't realize that they can become addicted (underestimating addictive potential of nicotine).

Ask students: *Why do you think most young people do not use tobacco or nicotine?*

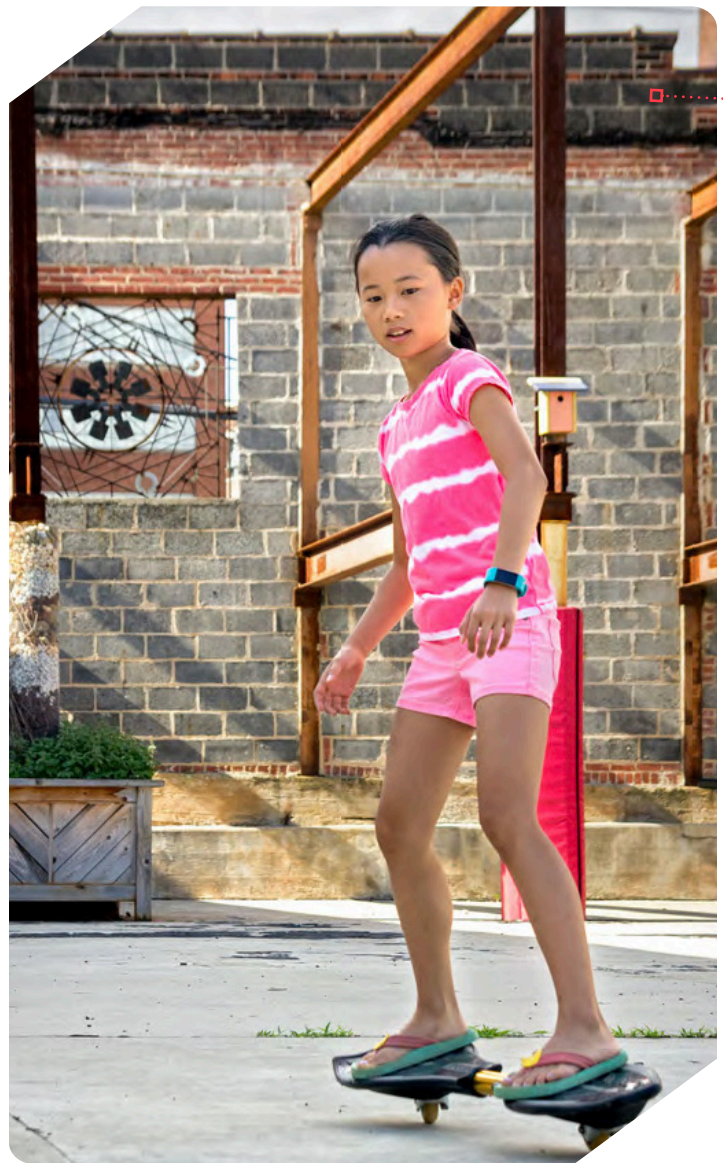
Explain that most people choose to be tobacco and nicotine free. Some reasons include:^{3,4,5}

- *Their friends don't use tobacco or nicotine products.*
 - *They know about the health consequences.*
 - *They want to be tobacco and nicotine free.*
3. If students volunteer stories, remind them not to use names. Listen to their concerns and explain to students that feeling pressure from friends happens, but that they will learn some ways to deal with the pressure.
4. Again, answers will vary. Write students' answers on the board, and explain to them that they are going to learn more about health consequences in Activity Two.
5. See answer 6 in Part One. Additional information on addiction is included in the Support Lessons. You can also see the booklet for grade 7.

6. Answers will vary. However, explain to your students that according to a poll, most kids strongly dislike being around smokers.²

For additional information on factors that influence young people to either abstain from or experiment with tobacco and nicotine, review the Overview Booklet.

To end the lesson, display the "Nicotine: Myth or Reality?" poster and review the content with your students. The poster will reinforce the message that most young people are tobacco and nicotine free.



¹CDC. Guidelines for School Health Programs to Prevent Tobacco Use and Addiction. MMWR 1994; Vol. 43, No. RR-2: 1-18. Referenced 2024. www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/RR/RR4302.pdf

⁵Milton, M.H., Maule, C. O., Yee, S. L., Backinger, C., Malarcher, A. M., & Husten, C. G. Youth Tobacco Cessation: A Guide for Making Informed Decisions. Atlanta, Georgia: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2004. Referenced 2024. <https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/11319>

ACTIVITY TWO

TOBACCO AND NICOTINE USE – THE HEALTH CONSEQUENCES

Skills: Assessing risks and consequences

Suggested Time Consideration: 25 minutes



This activity outlines many of the health consequences of smoking cigarettes and using nicotine products like vapes and smokeless tobacco. It is designed to teach students the facts because most young people who start smoking or vaping underestimate the health consequences.⁶ As a result, the CDC recommends that schools provide instruction to students about the short- and long-term negative physiologic and social consequences of tobacco use.⁶ However, the CDC also notes that “programs that only discuss tobacco’s harmful effects or attempt to instill fear do not prevent tobacco use.”⁶ Therefore, a comprehensive approach to tobacco and nicotine prevention is important to help keep students tobacco and nicotine free.

Distribute the page and review the information with your class. Ask your health teacher or school nurse to join you for the activity. Have a dictionary or a health textbook on hand so students can look up unfamiliar terms and share them with the class. After reading the page, take a class poll to see which of the health consequences students knew, and which facts were unfamiliar to them.

During the discussion in Activity One about reasons young people use tobacco or nicotine products, students might have said that young people think

smoking or vaping makes them look “cool.” Explain to students that there is nothing “cool” about the health consequences of tobacco or nicotine use. They are real and serious – so, making the decision to be tobacco and nicotine free a smart one.

End the lesson with a class discussion about decisions students make to be healthy and positive. Ask them what it means and why they think it is important to have a healthy, active lifestyle and good eating habits. Ask them how using nicotine would negatively affect a healthy lifestyle.

For a complete list of health consequences related to tobacco and nicotine use, visit www.cdc.gov/tobacco.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY:

Ask students to create posters presenting the facts about tobacco and nicotine. Students can use the facts and statistics from this activity and research additional health consequences on the Internet or in the school library. Ask each student to explain the words and images in his/her poster to classmates. Hang the posters around the classroom and invite other classes to stop by and view the posters at your “Be Nicotine Free” art gallery.



⁶CDC. (2008, June). *Healthy Youth! Health Topics. Tobacco use: School Health Guidelines. Summary*. Referenced 2017. www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/tobacco/pdf/tobacco_summary.pdf

ACTIVITY THREE

TOBACCO AND NICOTINE – USING IT IS UNHEALTHY!

Skills: Assessing risks and consequences

Suggested Time Consideration: 25 minutes



In this activity, students will review the health information that they learned in Activity Two and reinforce their understanding of the facts. Before distributing the activity, read the following scenario to your students:

Janelle's parents are not home. Her friends call and ask her to go to the movies with them. Janelle knows her parents would not let her go, but her friends beg her to go with them. They tell her she could be back before her parents get home and they would never know.

Ask your students:

- What choices does Janelle have? (Write their answers on the board.)
- What are the possible risks and consequences for each of these choices?
- Are there any negative consequences associated with Janelle's options?
- Are there any health risks involved?
- What do you think is the right decision?
- Can you think of any situations in which there are possible health consequences to consider when making a decision? (e.g., use of drugs or alcohol)

Next, explain to your students that this example was used to get them to think about evaluating choices and consequences before making decisions. There are health risks to consider with some decisions (e.g., using tobacco or nicotine products), which you will discuss in this activity.

Distribute the activity sheet to your students. Have them work in groups to assess the risks and health consequences for the smoking scenario at the top of the page and then complete the question in the **"You Decide!"** section. Have a class discussion to review students' answers.

Facts about the health consequences associated with using tobacco and nicotine are important for students to understand. Before moving on to the **"Take a Look"** section, use the "Look what tobacco will do" poster with the images displaying health consequences associated with tobacco use (e.g., diseased gums and lung) and read it with your group.

The diseased images are included to bring the message home—using tobacco products can seriously impair a person's health. Students will need to refer to the poster images to complete this part of the activity.

ANSWERS:

Answers may vary. Explain to students that it is harder to breathe with diseased lungs, making it tough to walk, climb, exercise, and get around. It is important to have a healthy heart because it pumps blood throughout the body that carries oxygen we need to live.

Your students need the facts about the health consequences of using tobacco to make smart decisions on saying "no" to tobacco. Seeing a picture of a diseased lung or gums might make them think twice before using tobacco. Other students might say "no" to tobacco because of the cosmetic or social reasons, which the CDC indicates successful prevention programs address in addition to the physiological consequences.⁴ Explain to your students that in addition to the health issues presented, using tobacco can also result in stained teeth, foul-smelling hair and clothes, and ostracism from non-smoking peers.⁴


Explain that youth and young adults are also uniquely at risk for long-term, long-lasting effects of exposing their developing brains to nicotine. These risks include nicotine addiction, mood disorders, and permanent lowering of impulse control. Nicotine also changes the way synapses are formed, which can harm the parts of the brain that control attention and learning.⁸



ACTIVITY THREE (CONTINUED): TOBACCO AND NICOTINE - USING IT IS UNHEALTHY

ANSWERS:

As a follow-up exercise, ask students to:

1. Brainstorm a list of other risk behaviors they might encounter with friends or at school (e.g., drinking, stealing, lying, making fun of others, experimenting with drugs, etc.). Direct students to record two possible consequences that could result from deciding to engage in these behaviors.
2. Next, use **role-playing methods** in class to help students think of healthy ways to respond when faced with making decisions about these behaviors. Remind students that the way a person reacts to a given situation will vary based on the individual.
3. Use the supplemental **“Summer Boredom”** video to complement this section. 

SUPPORT LESSONS

Some students may have a hard time embracing the health risks covered in Activities One through Three, or they might think that they only affect older

people who have smoked or vaped for a long time. Remind students that there can be immediate health consequences for young people who smoke, such as shortness of breath, phlegm production, coughing, and wheezing.³ Also, young people who smoke are likely to be less physically fit than those who don't.³

Understanding the Health Consequences of Nicotine Use and Addiction

To reinforce students' understanding of these topics:

- Ask students to recap for you the health consequences of tobacco and nicotine use, and write their answers on the board or chart paper. (smoking: stroke, cataracts, gum disease, shortness of breath, coughing, wheezing, heart disease, cancer; nicotine use: nicotine addiction, mood disorders, and permanent lowering of impulse control, etc.)
- Assign groups of students to research one or more of these health issues and write a few facts about what each one does to a person's body.
- Next, have each student create a list of at least 10 things they likes to do, such as playing specific sports, going to the park, cooking, hanging out with friends, etc. Encourage them to include at least five physical activities.
- Go through the health consequences students researched and describe each one. As you do, have students put an “X” next to each activity on their sheets that

would be difficult or impossible for someone with the health issue to do. For example, start with the immediate health consequences, and then address other risks. Say:

- Smoking is related to chronic coughing and wheezing.⁸ If someone has shortness of breath, or coughs or wheezes a lot, put an “X” next to the things on your list that would be hard for the person to do.
 - Smokers have an increased risk for cataracts⁸, a disease that can cause blindness. Which activities on your list would be difficult for someone who can't see?
 - Smoking causes cancer of the larynx⁸, which is your voice box. Which activities would be difficult for someone who isn't able to talk?
 - Smoking causes coronary heart disease⁸, which includes heart attacks. Which activities would be difficult for someone with heart problems?
- Next, explain that people who use tobacco can become addicted because tobacco contains a drug called nicotine, and when nicotine gets into the body, it changes the way the brain works.⁸ “Nicotine increases levels of a neurotransmitter called dopamine. Dopamine is released normally when you experience something pleasurable like good food, your favorite activity, or spending time with people you care about. When a person uses tobacco products, the release of dopamine causes similar effects. This effect wears off quickly, causing people who smoke to get the urge to light up again for more of that good feeling, which can lead to addiction.”⁸

⁷U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2014. Referenced 2024. www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/reports/50-years-of-progress/full-report.pdf

⁸NIDA for Teens. (2016, May). *Drug Facts: Tobacco, Nicotine, & E-Cigarettes*. Referenced 2017. <https://teens.drugabuse.gov/drug-facts/tobacco-nicotine-e-cigarettes>

SUPPORT LESSONS (CONTINUED)

- Also let your students know that “teen smokers are more likely to have panic attacks, anxiety disorders, and depression.”⁷
- Once you’re done, ask students to look at their lists. Ask them:
 - Are there any items that don’t have an “X” in front of them?
 - Why do you think we did this exercise? (Encourage students to understand the array of health consequences that could result from tobacco and nicotine use, and how hard it might be for someone with these health issues to do the activities they enjoy.)
 - How would you feel if you couldn’t do the activities on your list?
 - What can you do to help make sure you can keep doing these activities? (Be nicotine free.)

To conclude the lesson, have your students role-play how they would respond if someone offered them a cigarette, vape, smokeless tobacco or nicotine pouch. For example, have them act out the following scenario:

- You and your friends are skateboarding, riding bikes, shooting hoops, or doing some other activity you like. One of your friends starts vaping and offers it to you. What would you say? Use what you know about the health consequences of nicotine use to help you respond.

What Students Are Saying about Tobacco Use

In 2015, a national survey of 8th graders yielded the following results.¹¹ Share these facts with your students to help them understand what young people like them really think about tobacco use, and to help dispel any notions they may have that smoking looks cool:

- 82% said they would prefer to date people who **DO NOT** smoke.
- 71% said smoking is a dirty habit.
- 94% **DISAGREED** that smokers know how to enjoy life more than non-smokers.
- 58% said they strongly dislike being near people who are smoking.

After reading these statistics, ask your students:

- What do you think about this information? What do most of the kids who took the survey think about tobacco use? (It’s not cool or attractive, and does not make people popular.)
- Why do you think I read this information to you? (Kids may say that they smoke to look cool, but most kids think smoking is repulsive.)



⁷NIDA for Teens. Mind Over Matter Teaching Guide and Series. *Mind Over Matter: Nicotine*. Referenced 2017. <https://teens.drugabuse.gov/teachers/mind-over-matter/nicotine>

¹¹ Miech, R. A., Johnston, L. D., O'Malley, P. M., Bachman, J. G., & Schulenberg, J. E. (2016). *Monitoring the Future National Survey Results on Drug Use, 1975-2015: Volume I. Secondary School Students*. Ann Arbor: Institute for Social Research, The University of Michigan. Referenced 2017.

HOW FRIENDS FIT IN (INTERPERSONAL SKILLS)

ACTIVITY FOUR

THINKING ABOUT YOUR FRIENDS

Skills: Understanding peer relationships/ Dealing with peer pressure

Suggested Time Consideration: 30 minutes



Before starting this activity, discuss the concepts of peer pressure and peer influence with your students. (See the Overview Booklet for information you can share with your students.) Emphasize how we often want to “fit in” and “be liked” by others, and how sometimes the easiest way to accomplish this is by behaving like everyone else. At times, that might mean behaving in a way we would rather not behave. To reinforce the concept, read this example to your students:

A new student comes into the class midway through the year. She notices that she is the only girl wearing a dress in the whole class. Although she likes to wear dresses, she shows up the next day, and all subsequent days, wearing pants.

Ask your students:

- *Was the girl pressured?* (No—there wasn’t any overt pressure. This is an example of peer influence.)
- *Why did she choose to wear pants?* (She wanted to be accepted. She put pressure on herself to fit in—she was influenced by her peers.)
- *Do you think her decision bothered her?* (Answers will vary, but encourage students to see that the girl is probably disappointed because she may have enjoyed wearing dresses.)
- *Do you think the other students care about what she wears? Do you think it is important to them that she dresses the same way they do?* (Probably not.)

Copy and distribute the activity and explain to students that they are going to fill out a checklist they will use to measure how peer pressure and influence might affect them. Have them complete Part One independently and then stop.

HOW FRIENDS FIT IN (INTERPERSONAL SKILLS)

ACTIVITY FOUR (CONTINUED): THINKING ABOUT YOUR FRIENDS

When the students have finished Part One, gather as a class or in small groups, and encourage discussion. Ask students to think about these questions:

- *Did you find any surprises in your answers?*
- *Did the students in your group answer any of the questions the same way?*
- *Which issues did you find the most important?*

See if patterns emerge that indicate students' sensitivity to peer pressure and peer influence. In particular, do the students see a strong tendency to want to be with other students who hold similar interests, values, etc., as themselves? Open the discussion and ask each group to report on some of the things they learned.

In a wrap-up, acknowledge that the desire to be with those who are most like us is quite common. But also mention that there will always be some ideas and behaviors that students don't hold in common, even with their best friends, and that this is what makes us individuals.

Before students move on to Part Two, explain to them that our friends play certain roles in our lives. They can be people we do things with, people we enjoy talking to, people we confide secrets in, people we like to joke with, etc. Explain to the students that this part of the exercise will help them examine the role friends play in their lives.



When the students have finished Part Two, ask them to talk generally about how important friends are to them. Ask your students:

- *Are there times when you prefer to spend your free time by yourself, or with family members, rather than with friends? Why or why not?*
- *Do you have certain friends with whom you are close enough to keep secrets? (For those who answer "yes," ask them to speak more generally about the role those friends play in their lives.)*
- *One of the questions asked is if you would lie to protect a friend. Can you offer a possible example in which you would lie to protect a friend? (For example: "My friend slept over at my house the other night. She took one of my sister's CDs and told me not to tell. When my sister asked me about it, I said...")*
- *Can you think of a scenario in which you might consider breaking a promise to a friend? (For example: "I told my friend I would come over on Saturday to help him study for the history exam, but then my dad came home with tickets to the ball game. So I decided...")*
- *Think about this situation: There's a really cool group of students at school. You and your best friend have always wanted to hang out with them. Some of the cool people ask you if you want to go to the mall with them, but they don't invite your friend. How do you handle this?*
- *Would you compromise your values and choice to be nicotine free if a friend asked you to use a tobacco or nicotine product?*

To finish this section, acknowledge how important our friends can be to us, and how difficult it can be when we feel that we have to choose between doing something we don't necessarily want to do in order to solidify a friendship, and not doing it. Talk about how truly strong friendships can handle differences of interests, values, etc.

Explain to students that while our interests and behaviors influence us in our choice of friends, sometimes our friends influence us in our choice of behavior. Ask students to complete Part Three. Then, assemble them in small groups and ask them to discuss their answers and address these questions:

- *Why would someone go to a movie she did not want to see?*
- *Why would someone try a vape if he or she didn't want to?*
If you answered "no" to a particular question, why do you think someone might say "yes" to the same question? What might cause someone to say "yes"?

HOW FRIENDS FIT IN (INTERPERSONAL SKILLS)

ACTIVITY FOUR (CONTINUED): THINKING ABOUT YOUR FRIENDS

Then have students work in their groups to complete the “You Decide!” section of the activity. After about ten minutes, reconvene and ask your students:

- Was there a consensus in your group on how the situation should be managed?
- What sort of conflicting feelings might a person experiencing this situation be feeling?
- Were there any easy solutions? Do any solutions have a negative consequence attached to them?

This exercise can offer you an opportunity to talk to your students about how unhappy people can feel when they give up their own desires and values to go along with those of a group. Talk about how difficult it can be to take a position that is unpopular with one’s peers, but how good it can feel when the student exercises his or her independence. Most times, young people are actually quite tolerant of differences among friends as long as the differences don’t outweigh the similarities.

FOLLOW UP ACTIVITY

Present your students with the following two scenarios and repeat the process followed for the “You Decide!” activity.

1. Your friends are going to get a certain haircut, but you’ve been forbidden by your parents, and your friends tease you about it.
2. You’re thinking about joining the school chorus, but other students think it’s uncool.

ACTIVITY FIVE

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Skills: Understanding peer relationships/ Dealing with peer pressure

Suggested Time Consideration: 30 minutes



This exercise and the scenarios that follow are designed to get students to reflect on the effects of peer influence. Explain that peer influence means being influenced by what we observe in other people, rather than by any overt pressure we are made to feel. We are merely reacting to our own thoughts rather than anything someone says or does to us.

Then, read the first situation on the activity page and ask your students:

- What is the dilemma?
- What sorts of things may go through your mind in this situation?
- Has anyone ever been in a similar situation?
- What are the options? (Write the options on the board.)
- What consequences might ensue from each option? (Write the consequences on the board.)
- What do you think you would do in this situation and why?

Repeat this process with each vignette. In discussing these scenarios:

- Acknowledge the difficulty students face with decisions that may be hard for them.
- Reinforce the notion that a student who disagrees with one or two aspects of group behavior can still find a place in the group. Remind students that they chose to be friends before the issue came up, so there are other qualities that they like about each other.
- Explain that if they disagree with friends on important issues like using tobacco or nicotine, they can refocus their friendship on the issues they do agree on.
- Uphold the idea that the ability to think and act independently is by no means easy, but it is to be admired.



Use the supplemental “Skater Boy” video to complement this section.

HOW FRIENDS FIT IN (INTERPERSONAL SKILLS)

ACTIVITY SIX

SAYING "NO"

Skills: Refusal Skills

Suggested Time Consideration: 20 minutes

20
minutes

In this activity, students will examine two illustrations demonstrating peer pressure and peer influence to use tobacco or nicotine. They will answer questions about what the character might be thinking and ultimately will do in each situation. Students can complete this page independently or in groups.

Once everyone has finished, meet as a class to discuss the pictures and students' answers.

Encourage students to talk about the differences between the two illustrations so they are able to ascertain that some pressures are self-generated. They would also do well to explore

why they feel these pressures. Point out the good feelings that might be had by the student who refused the temptation/pressure to participate, and just walked away instead. Reinforce the feeling of inner strength and self-control this student would have for refusing. Ask students to think about how they would handle themselves in each case.

Ask students to share the advice they would give to the boy about not smoking. Write these answers on chart paper so that you can keep it on display as a reminder to your students about why they should stay tobacco and nicotine free.

ACTIVITY SEVEN

SAYING "NO" TO TOBACCO AND NICOTINE

Skills: Refusal Skills

Suggested Time Consideration: 20 minutes

20
minutes

To provide students with tips for resisting peer pressure, this activity includes suggestions on how to say "no" to friends. It complements the poster and demonstrates concrete examples of what adolescents might say if pressured to use tobacco or nicotine.

Display the refusal skills poster that came with the program, and review the tips with your students. Then, copy and distribute the activity sheet. Read the introduction and chart together. Have students complete the chart independently. While students are writing their responses, list the "Ways to Say 'No'" on the board or chart paper.

Once everyone has completed this section, bring the students together for a class discussion to review the different strategies for saying "no" to negative peer pressure.

Ask students:

- Which strategies listed on the activity do you think would be easy to use if you were pressured to use tobacco or nicotine? (Tally the students' responses next to the examples.)
- Are there ideas that you would be more comfortable using than others? (Again, mark the answers next to your list on the board or chart paper.)
- How else could you say "no" to friends who might pressure you to smoke or vape or use other nicotine products? What would you actually say in this situation?
- Are some ways to say "no" better for certain situations than others? For example, if a friend asked you to lie on his behalf, would you use the same method of saying "no" as you would if a friend asked you to use tobacco or nicotine?

Encourage students to keep this list someplace where they can refer to it periodically if they need tips for saying "no."

HOW TO SAY NO!

You're in control of your decisions.
If your friends pressure you to do something you don't want to do:

- 1 Add some humor.
- 2 Give them a reason or explain why you said "no".
- 3 Reverse the pressure.
- 4 Talk about the consequences
- 5 Change the subject.
- 6 Walk away.
- 7 Say "no" and ... suggest something else.

Your friends should not make your decisions – you should.

Do what's right for you!

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ACTIVITY EIGHT

DECISION MAKING

Skills: Decision Making

Suggested Time Consideration: 30 minutes

30
minutes

In this activity, students will be introduced to the decision-making process. While the process is described on the student activity page, you can also refer to the Overview Booklet for additional information to share with your students.

Distribute the page and read the introduction with your students. Then, ask them to think of a decision they made recently. Encourage them to choose one of some magnitude greater than, say, what color socks to wear to school that day. Using the chart on the activity, students will evaluate how they applied the decision-making process, and how they felt about the decision they finally made.

Ask for volunteers to share their decisions with the class.

Then, using a separate sheet of paper or a second copy of the activity, students should go through the decision-making steps for the hypothetical situation provided in the **“You Decide!”** section. Ask them to go through the same process they went through the first time, and then discuss their answers as a class.

There are three things you want to emphasize here:

1. There are health consequences for young people who use tobacco or nicotine products. According to the Surgeon General, symptoms like phlegm production, coughing, and wheezing have been found in young people who smoke³. Using nicotine in adolescence can harm the parts of the brain that control attention, learning, mood, and impulse control.
2. Two, choices are freely made, even if we feel pressure. Only we can be held responsible for our choices and their consequences.
3. And three, there is a rational and systematic way of looking at the decisions we make. We should not make them impulsively. The more thought we give to them, the more empowered we will feel when we make them, and the more confident we will feel about our ability to live with their consequences.



Use the supplemental **“Pop Quiz”** video to complement this section.



HOW I AM (INTERPERSONAL SKILLS)

ACTIVITY NINE

WHAT I SEE IN ME

Skills: Building self-esteem/Understanding personal values

Suggested Time Consideration: 25 minutes



As noted in Activity One, researchers have found that low self-esteem is a strong influential factor in the decision to experiment with tobacco or nicotine. This activity includes a chart with which students can think about their own self-esteem.

Distribute the activity and explain to students that self-esteem is a term that describes how we see ourselves, and how much we either do or don't accept ourselves as we are.

The statements in the chart come in three clusters: 1 through 4 are related to self-image; 5 through 10 are related to how the student wants to be perceived by others and what role peer pressure might play in his or her life; 11 through 14 target broad issues of self-acceptance.

Ask students to give careful thought to each statement, and then check the column that best applies. Explain to students that the responses they give might be different today than they were six months ago, or might be different six months from now. You might help them out by offering some concrete examples. For instance, for number 7, set up a scenario in which a young person has moved to a new town in the middle of the school year. How hard will it be for that person to make new friends? Ask students why some students will find it difficult and others will not.

After the students have completed the survey, give them time to reflect on their responses and then open up the class for discussion. Acknowledge how difficult it can be to discuss these sorts of issues openly, and reinforce honesty and forthrightness as they open up about these sensitive issues. Ask your students to consider the following:

- *Did you have trouble deciding on any of the statements?*
- *Can you come up with specific examples from your own life that relate to some of the statements?*
- *Can you share examples of how you have changed certain behaviors or self-perceptions to feel good about yourself?*

Next, have students look at their sheets to see if they checked "disagree" for any statement in 1 through 4, or 10 through 14. Likewise, did they "agree" with any statement in 5 through 9? If so, open the discussion to talk about things they might be able to do to "switch columns." For example, if it's hard for them to meet new people, what could they do to become more comfortable with it? They could hang around with a friend who is more outgoing than they are so that they meet new people with the friend.

Emphasize to students that lots of people have something about themselves that they would like to change. Maybe they wish they were less shy, better at sports, better singers, etc.

Ask your students if they think some people believe using tobacco or nicotine will make them feel better about themselves. Explain that some young people who experiment with nicotine products do so because they have a low self-image, or they don't feel good about themselves.¹ Explain that this is not a healthy choice to make to feel better about yourself. Discuss alternative, positive choices people their age could make to feel good about themselves.

When you want to bring the conversation to a close, emphasize how all people have things about themselves they feel good about and things they want to change. Stress the fact that the students may have more power to make positive changes than they realize.



ACTIVITY TEN

THAT'S ME

Skills: Building self-esteem/Understanding personal values

Suggested Time Consideration: 30 minutes

30
minutes

As children mature, their image becomes more important to them. They become more concerned with how they appear to others, and what they like in others. When you introduce this exercise, you may want to choose a well-known celebrity and ask students to come up with adjectives to describe that celebrity. Remind students that although all adjectives are descriptive, they don't all carry judgments. For instance, a celebrity could be labeled "cool" or "handsome," but could also be described as "blue-eyed," "brown-haired," or "left-handed."

This is an exercise in helping students assess their own views about themselves. The activity sheet contains 30 adjectives. Some are fairly neutral (short-haired, right-handed) and others are value-laden (athletic, stubborn). Ask students to circle the adjectives that, in their estimation, best describe them. You can also let them add other adjectives to the page.

Students should then list 10 adjectives that their friends would use to describe them. Explain to the students that these may or may not already be on the list of 30, and they may or may not

be adjectives that they have used to describe themselves. What you want them to do is come up with the 10 most important characteristics their friends would choose to describe them.

Finally, in the "Write About It!" section, students should write a few sentences about a decision that made them feel good about themselves and why. For example, maybe they chose to join a team, help a friend with homework, or study for a big test.

Students may be sensitive to sharing the adjectives that they used to describe themselves. However, ask for volunteers to share some of the words on their lists and highlight the positive words. Next, to conclude the lesson, have volunteers discuss the decisions that made them feel good about themselves. Encourage students to see how everyone is different and that we can be proud of different things. Ask students what types of decisions they think they'll be making in the next few months that will make them proud. End by telling them that you will be proud to see them make the decision to be tobacco and nicotine free.



UNIT QUIZ

Skills: Building self-esteem/Understanding personal values
Suggested Time Consideration: 25 minutes



When you are done with the lessons and your students have completed the activities, copy and distribute the unit quiz to help you assess your students' understanding of the content. The quiz includes two parts: Part One has 10 multiple choice questions, while Part Two consists of five short answer responses. In Part Two, students are asked to provide three items for each response. This format allows you to base your students' scores on a 25 point scale—10 points for Part One, and 15 points for Part Two.

ANSWERS:

Part One

- B.** Most middle schoolers are not current cigarette smokers or vapers
- E.** Both A and B
- D.** nicotine
- B.** False
- A.** True
- A.** True
- D.** nearly every organ in your body
- C.** your goals, choices, and consequences
- A.** True
- A.** My friends who vape teased me about not trying it. So, after school I tried a vape with them even though I didn't want to.

Part Two

Answers for Part Two will vary. Students should include at least three of the items listed below in their responses.

- List three reasons why most middle schoolers do not use tobacco or nicotine.
 - They want to be nicotine free.
 - They know about the health consequences.
 - They are concerned about the non-health consequences (e.g., getting in trouble).
 - Their friends don't use tobacco or nicotine products.
- List three reasons why some young people try tobacco or nicotine.
 - They don't know how to say "no" to their friends.
 - They don't feel good about themselves (low self-esteem).
 - They aren't doing well in school.
 - They don't understand the health consequences.
 - They think everyone is doing it (overestimating the number of people who smoke/vape).
 - They don't realize they can become addicted (underestimating the addictive nature of nicotine).
 - They think it will make them look cool or grown-up.
 - They think it will help them fit in.
- List three health consequences of tobacco use.

strokes	phlegm production
cataracts (which can cause blindness)	bleeding gums
emphysema	mouth sores
gum disease	shortness of breath
pneumonia	hardening of the arteries
bronchitis	increased risk of infection
chronic coughing	damaged immune system
wheezing	cancer
heart disease	being less physically fit
	impaired lung growth
- List three consequences of nicotine use, that are not related to health.
 - addiction
 - changes to the brain
 - mood disorders
 - changes to learning
 - lack of impulse control
- You want to be nicotine free. List three ways you could say "no" to a friend who offers you a cigarette, vape, smokeless tobacco or other nicotine product.
 - Say "no" and suggest something else.
 - Say "no" and talk about the consequences.
 - Say "no" and give a reason or explain why you said "no."
 - Say "no" and reverse the pressure.
 - Say "no" and change the subject.
 - Say "no" and add some humor.
 - Say "no" and walk away.




NICOTINE FREE PLEDGE

You've now completed the program. Your students have learned about the health consequences of tobacco and nicotine use, refusal skills, and decision-making skills. To conclude the unit, encourage your students to sign the reproducible nicotine-free pledge found in the back of this booklet. There's also a reproducible pledge for parents and guardians that you can send home so that they can commit to helping their children be tobacco and nicotine free.

Encourage your students to fill out the pledge and keep it someplace where they can refer to it as a reminder of their commitment to remain nicotine free. Congratulate students for their effort to stay tobacco and nicotine free!

These pledges are also available for download online at www.rightdecisionsrightnow.com/resources/pledge-forms/.

Congratulate your students who make the decision to be nicotine free.




I Pledge to Encourage My Child to Be Nicotine Free

By signing below, I pledge to encourage my child to be tobacco and nicotine free.

I will talk with my child about the importance of not smoking, not vaping, or using smokeless tobacco, nicotine pouches or any other nicotine products.

I will respect my child, listen to them, and answer their questions.

Signed: _____ Date: _____



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I PLEDGE TO BE NICOTINE FREE

- I understand that nicotine products have health risks and consequences.
- I choose to say "no" to nicotine and pledge to stay nicotine free.
- This means I will not smoke cigarettes, use smokeless tobacco, nicotine pouches, vape or using any other nicotine products because:
[Fill in three reasons why you pledge to stay nicotine free]
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

By signing below, I pledge to be nicotine free:

Signed: _____ Date: _____



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ACTIVITY ONE

TAKE A TOBACCO AND NICOTINE SURVEY



This survey asks you questions about tobacco and nicotine products (cigarettes, vapes, smokeless tobacco and other nicotine products). Maybe you don't know much about tobacco or nicotine. Maybe you know someone who uses it. Just write what you think. Don't put your name on the survey, but answer as honestly as you can. If you do not want to answer a question, leave it blank.

Part One¹²

1. Have you ever tried cigarette smoking, even one or two puffs? Yes No
 - a. Ever tried an e-cigarette or vape? Yes No
2. Have you ever used chewing tobacco, snuff, or dip? Yes No

 None One Two Three Four Not sure
3. How many of your four closest friends smoke cigarettes?

4. How many of your four closest friends use vapes or another product like chewing

 None One Two Three Four Not sure
 - a. tobacco, snuff or dip? Yes No
5. If one of your best friends offered you a cigarette, vape or other tobacco product, would you smoke it?

 Definitely yes Probably yes Probably not Definitely not
6. Do you think it is safe to smoke or use vapes or other tobacco or nicotine products?

 Definitely yes Probably yes Probably not Definitely not
 - a. For only a year or two, as long as you quit after that?

 Definitely yes Probably yes Probably not Definitely not

DID YOU KNOW?

About 4.6% of middle school students reported using a vape in the last 30 days, which means 95% of middle schoolers don't vape.

Part Two

1. Do you think most middle school students smoke? Yes No
 - a. think most middle school students use vapes? Yes No
2. Why do you think young people smoke cigarettes or use vapes or other tobacco and nicotine products?

3. Have you ever felt pressured to use tobacco or nicotine? If you have, what did you do?

4. Do you think there are health consequences with using tobacco and nicotine? if you think there are health consequences, what do you think they are?

5. Do you think it's easy or difficult for people to quit using tobacco or nicotine? Easy Difficult
 - a. Explain why you think it's easy or difficult to quit:

6. How do you feel about hanging out with young people who use tobacco or nicotine?

 I'd rather have friends who don't use tobacco. I'm OK with it. a. Explain why:

¹² Source: National Youth Tobacco Survey (NYTS) 2023 Questionnaire. Referenced 2024. <https://www.fda.gov/tobacco-products/youth-and-tobacco/results-annual-national-youth-tobacco-survey#2023%20Findings%20on%20Youth%20Tobacco%20Use>

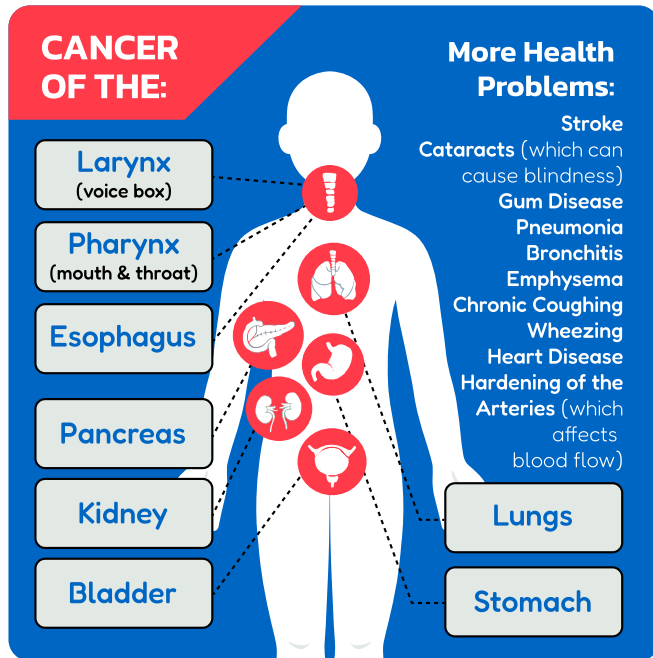
¹³ Smoking & Tobacco Use. Fact Sheet—Youth and Tobacco Use: Estimates of Current Tobacco Use Among Youth. Referenced 2024. www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/youth_data/tobacco_use/

ACTIVITY TWO

TOBACCO AND NICOTINE USE – THE HEALTH CONSEQUENCES



You've probably heard that using tobacco and nicotine is unhealthy. This activity outlines many of the health consequences of smoking cigarettes, vaping and using nicotine products like smokeless tobacco.



Smoking also damages the immune system, which increases a person's risk of getting infections. And, once they get sick, smokers often take longer to recover than people who don't smoke.¹⁴

What About Other Nicotine Products?

Chew, dip, snuff, or spit tobacco—it's all smokeless tobacco. But, it's not a safe alternative to smoking cigarettes.¹⁵ There are health risks with using smokeless tobacco:

- It is a known cause of cancer—increasing a user's risk of oral cancer.¹⁵
- It can cause bleeding gums and mouth sores.¹⁶
- It can lead to nicotine addiction.¹⁵

Chemical Reaction: Count to 10

After smoke is inhaled, it only takes 8 seconds for nicotine, an addictive chemical found in tobacco, to reach the brain.¹⁷ Cigarettes and smokeless tobacco both contain nicotine. Nicotine is absorbed through the lungs with cigarette smoke, and through the mouth with smokeless tobacco.¹⁷ Nicotine affects the brain's reactions¹⁷ and narrows a person's blood vessels, making it tougher for the heart to work.¹⁶

Think Young People Can't Be Affected? Guess Again!

Young people who smoke cigarettes are likely to be less physically fit and have more respiratory (breathing) problems than people their age who don't smoke.¹⁸ Coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, and phlegm production are symptoms that young people who use tobacco report they are more likely to experience than non-smoking peers.¹⁸

And then there's the issue of addiction, making it difficult to stop doing something. The younger a person is when he or she starts smoking cigarettes, the more likely he or she is to become addicted to nicotine.¹⁸ Most young people who smoke regularly are addicted to nicotine, making it hard for them to quit.¹⁸

What Else Is There?

Tobacco causes bad breath and stains your teeth.¹⁶ Smoke can make your clothes and hair stink.¹⁶

What is Secondhand Smoke?

Secondhand smoke is made up of smoke that comes off the burning cigarette and the smoke that the smoker exhales.¹⁹ According to the Surgeon General, "No amount of secondhand smoke is safe...Scientists believe even a little tobacco smoke can be dangerous."¹⁹

Visit www.cdc.gov/tobacco for additional information about diseases and health consequences related to tobacco use.

¹⁴ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2014. Referenced 2024. https://archive.cdc.gov/www_cdc_gov/tobacco/sgr/50th-anniversary/index.htm ¹⁵ CDC. *Smoking & Tobacco Use. Fact Sheet—Smokeless Tobacco Facts*. Referenced 2024. www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/smokeless/health_effects/index.htm

¹⁶ CDC. *Smoking & Tobacco Use. Information Sheets. You(th) and Tobacco—What Youth Should Know About Tobacco*. Referenced 2024. www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/youth/information-sheet/index.htm

¹⁷ NIDA for Teens. *Mind Over Matter Teaching Guide and Series. Mind Over Matter: Nicotine*. Referenced 2024. <https://teens.drugabuse.gov/teachers/mind-over-matter/nicotine>

¹⁸ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Preventing Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta, Georgia: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health; Washington, D.C., 2012. Referenced 2024. www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/reports/preventing-youth-tobacco-use/full-report.pdf

¹⁹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General—Secondhand Smoke: What it means to you*. Referenced 2024.

www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/reports/secondhand-smoke-consumer.pdf

ACTIVITY THREE

TOBACCO AND NICOTINE- USING IT IS UNHEALTHY



When making a decision, you have to think about the risks and consequences before you act. For example, if you think about cheating on a test because you didn't study, what are some of the possible consequences or risks involved? *You could get caught. You could fail or get detention. Your parents might even ground you.*

Now, think about this situation:

You're hanging out with one of your friends after soccer practice waiting for your parents to pick you up. Your friend's older brother comes to meet you. He offers each of you a vape.

Using what you've learned about tobacco and nicotine, what are some of the risks or consequences with taking it and smoking it? Write your answers on the lines below.

Why aren't the risks worth it? _____

Take a look

Take a look at the "Look what nicotine will do" poster. Then answer the following questions.

What did you think of the images of the diseased lung and gums? _____

Why do you think it is important to take care of your heart? _____

If you have never tried tobacco products, would these images keep you from using or nicotine in the future? Yes No

If you do use tobacco or nicotine products, would these images make you want to quit? Yes No



You Decide!

What have you learned that would affect your decision not to use tobacco or nicotine?

Remember, you need to be in the know about risks and consequences to make the right decisions.



ACTIVITY FOUR

THINKING ABOUT YOUR FRIENDS

Part 1: Choosing Friends

Have you ever thought about why your friends are your friends? Many times our friends can be quite similar to ourselves. But sometimes the saying, "opposites attract," applies as well. This is a checklist that will help you think about who you choose as friends and why. Think about each statement carefully. Then, decide how important the statement is to you and put an X in the column that matches your choice.

I want my friends to:	Very Important	Important	Important	Not Very Important	Not Important at All
Be considered "cool"					
Be the same age as me					
Be older than me					
Like the same activities I like					
Be from the most popular group at school					
Listen to the same music I listen to					
Watch the same TV shows I watch					
Be as smart as I am					
Be the same religion as me					
Have the same heritage as me					
Be able to agree about what is important and what isn't					



ACTIVITY FOUR

THINKING ABOUT YOUR FRIENDS

Part 2: The Role of Friends in your Life

Check a box for each statement, or answer the questions to describe how you think or feel.

1. When I have free time, I like to spend it (rank in order, with 1 being most often and 4 being least often):

_____ by myself _____ with a member or members of my family _____ with one or two close friends _____ with a large group of friends

2. When you go on a family outing (picnic, ball game, movie, etc.) would you prefer to:

just go with my family bring a friend along

3. Do you have (or would you like to have) a friend to whom you could confide secrets?

Yes No Yes, but only certain secrets

If you answered "yes," what kinds of secrets would you confide and what kind would you keep to yourself?

4. Would you ever lie to protect a friend?

Yes No only if no one will be hurt by it

5. Would you ever tell someone else a secret that a friend has confided in you? Yes No

6. Would you ever break a promise you made to a friend?

Yes No

Part 3: Friends and their Influence on your Decisions

You may have friends (or people you want to be your friends) who want to do something you don't want to do, but you think they might like you better if you go along with it. What sort of things might you do just because your friends want to? Decide if you agree or disagree with each statement, and then check "yes" or "no."

I would go to a movie I don't particularly want to see.

Yes No

I would go over to another student's house for the afternoon.

Yes No

I would try smoking or vaping just one or two puffs.

Yes No

I would take a sip of beer. Yes No

I would refuse to go to a friend's party if my other friends didn't want to go. Yes No

I would cut my hair in a certain style if my friends did the same. Yes No

I would join in making fun of a shy student. Yes No

You Decide!

A group of your friends is smoking, vaping or using smokeless tobacco and they want you to try it with them. What would you do? Why?



ACTIVITY FIVE

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

What influences your decisions? Maybe it's what's important to you. Maybe it's your family, the law, or knowing what's right and what's wrong. Then there are your friends. Peer pressure can have a big influence on decisions made by people of all ages. Friends can pressure you to do something positive, like volunteer work. Or, they can pressure you to do something negative, like smoke. When your friends push you to do something by challenging, encouraging, teasing, or nagging you, that's peer pressure.

Even if your friends don't use actions or words to pressure you to do something, they can still influence your decisions. When you do something because you think your friends want you to, or you think it will make you look good in front of them, this is peer influence. It's not as obvious as peer pressure, but it can still be as strong. The bottom line is that you need to do what's right for you.

Read each situation below. Think about what you would do in each one and write down your thoughts. Then answer this question: *What do you think will really happen if you don't go along with your friends?*

The Sneaker Dilemma

You hang around with a particular group of friends. When a new style of sneaker hits the market, a lot of your friends go out and buy them. But, you don't have the money for them, and besides, you don't particularly like the way they look. *How do you feel when you realize you are the only one in the group who has not purchased the sneakers? What are the different ways you can manage this situation?*

The New Friend

You meet a new kid in your neighborhood and you hit it off well, but when he shows up at school, none of your friends like him. Some make fun of him behind his back, others just refuse to warm up to him. *You want to remain friends with the new kid, but how do you feel about hanging out with someone your other friends don't like? What do you think your friends expect you to do in this situation?*

After School

You go with a group after school to a friend's house. There is no adult supervision, and some of your friends are there vaping and using smokeless tobacco. They want you to join them, but you are really opposed to it. *What sort of position does this put you in with your friends? Can it jeopardize your friendships? What sort of feelings and thoughts would go through your head? What should you do?*

Old Friends, New Changes

You have had the same set of friends for several years now, and you are all very close, which you like. Lately, however, you notice that some of your friends are changing. Some of them have started stealing, and the others seem to approve. They've lost interest in the things you used to do together, like school sports, and you still want to be on some of the teams. *What sort of changes are going on here, and what effects could they have on you? Can friendships change and still be friendships? What roles might these friends have played in your life in the past, and what roles might they play in the future?*



ACTIVITY SIX

SAYING NO

You've been reading about how friends can influence our decisions and the way we think. Sometimes this can be a good thing, but sometimes it causes us to make the wrong choices.

Look at each picture and then answer the questions.



What do you think Jody should do? Why?

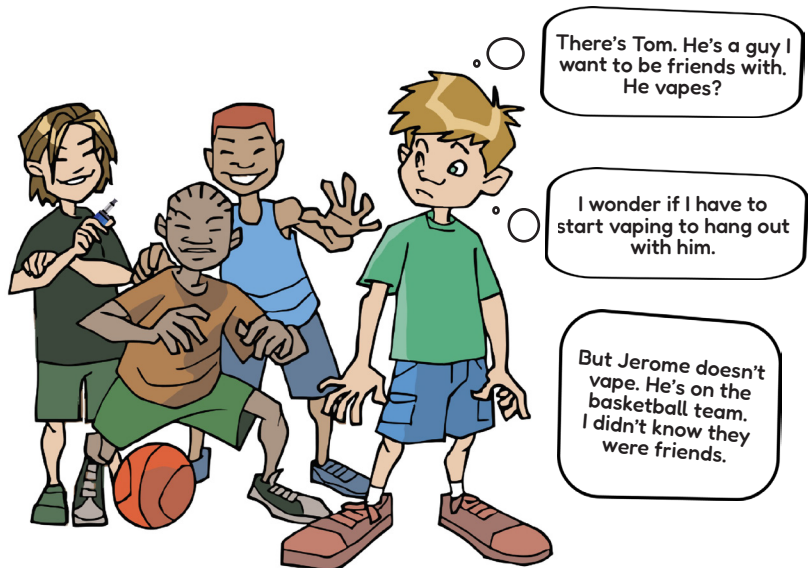
How can she tell her friends that she does not want to vape?

Do you think her friends will really tell her that she can't hang out with them if she does not vape?

If they do tell her that they don't want her around, what does that say about their friendship?

Do you think Tom will like the boy if he vapes? Why or why not?

What advice would you give the boy about not vaping and about saying "no" to peer influence?



ACTIVITY SEVEN

SAYING "NO" TO TOBACCO AND NICOTINE



Saying "no" to friends who are pressuring you can be hard to do. How you respond to them depends on the situation and what feels right—or wrong—to you. Deciding what to say can be even more difficult if you feel you are on the spot or if everyone is watching. Practicing what to say can help you think about how you might say "no" in different situations.

Take a look at this chart. It lists some ways to say "no," or refusal strategies, and gives examples of what you might say if you felt pressured to use tobacco or nicotine. Read the suggestions and think about whether these ideas might work for you.

In the last column write something you could say for each strategy if you were pressured to use tobacco or nicotine.

Ways to Say "No"	If pressured to use tobacco/nicotine, you might say...	If pressured to use tobacco/nicotine, I might say...
Say "no" and suggest something else.	Not interested. Let's go shoot hoops instead.	
Say "no" and talk about the consequences.	No thanks. Smoking can yellow your teeth.	
Say "no" and give them a reason or explain why you said "no."	No thanks. I don't want to smell like smoke. I also want to be able to run in tomorrow's soccer game.	
Say "no" and reverse the pressure.	No thanks. Why don't you toss the vapes? Most teens dislike being around vapers.	
Say "no" and change the subject.	No thanks. Did you see the game last night?	
Say "no" and add some humor.	No thanks. I'd like to keep my pearly whites.	
Say "no" and walk away.	No thanks.	

ACTIVITY EIGHT

DECISION MAKING



The one thing that you do every day from the time you get up until the time you go to bed is make decisions. Some are pretty simple (*Who will I sit with at lunch today?*), and some are more complex (*Should I try out for the school play?*). When it comes to making a decision, you always have choices or options. You need to think about what you want to happen (your goals), and what will (or could) happen for each choice or option—these are the consequences of your decision.

While you may not think about it, your mind goes through a series of six steps, or questions, when you make a decision. These include:

- 1. Situation:** Why do you need to make a decision?
- 2. Goals:** What do you want to happen?
- 3. Choices:** What are your options or the alternatives?
- 4. Consequences:** What could happen?
- 5. Decision:** What will you do?
- 6. Think About It:** Did you make the right decision?

Think about a decision you recently made. Use this chart to examine your decision. You may want to begin by writing what the decision was, and then go back to look at the situation, goals, choices, and consequences. Keep in mind that not everyone will make the same decisions. What you want to do in every situation is make the right decision for you.

Situation	
Goals	
Choices	
Consequences	
Decisions	
How I feel about the decision I made	

You Decide!

Use the decision-making steps to figure out what decision you would make in the following situation:

Your best friend invites you and some other classmates over to his or her house for the afternoon. While you're there, your friend tells you that he or she has started vaping. "Just one or two puffs a day," your friend says. Each person lights one up. Your friend then offers you a puff. What do you do?



ACTIVITY NINE

WHAT I SEE IN ME

What you think about yourself is really important. It can affect how you act and how others see you. Take this survey to think about what you think of you.

Read each statement in the first column and decide if you agree or disagree with it. Put an X in the column that matches your choice. Then, complete the statements below.

Statement	Agree	Disagree
1. I usually like who I see in the mirror each morning.		
2. I notice a difference in myself when I have been getting a lot of exercise.		
3. I feel good when I stand up for myself.		
4. There is nothing about me that I would want to change.		
5. I would try tobacco or nicotine if my friends wanted me to.		
6. I worry a lot.		
7. It's hard for me to meet new people.		
8. Sometimes I say "yes" when I want to say "no."		
9. When I make a mistake, I feel ashamed.		
10. I'm not embarrassed to ask for help.		
11. I'm good at solving problems.		
12. I feel that I am in control of my life.		
13. I'm usually happy.		
14. Being popular is not important to me.		

One thing I am proud of and wish everyone knew about me is _____

The thing people like most about me is _____

I feel good about myself when I _____

Did You Know?

Feeling good about yourself and believing positive things about yourself can help you make the right decisions. **How?** It can help you stand up for yourself in tough situations.

HOW I AM (INTERPERSONAL SKILLS)



**ACTIVITY
TEN**

**THAT'S
ME!**

There are 30 adjectives listed below. Circle the words that best describe you. If you can think of adjectives that describe you that are not on this page, add them in the blank spaces below. After you have done this, write down 10 adjectives you think your friends might use to describe you.

Circle the adjectives that you think best describe you.

neat	dependable	independent	stubborn	short-haired
tobacco free	faithful	happy	kind	patient
mean	tall	attractive	unpopular	right-handed
funny	shy	smart	respectful	talkative
lonely	well-liked	loner	well-dressed	responsible
athletic	silly	religious	healthy	phony

In the spaces below, feel free to write in any adjectives that describe you that are not listed above.

In the spaces below, write 10 adjectives you think your friends would use to describe you. They may or may not be the same as the words listed above.

Write About It!

On the lines below, write about a decision of yours that made you feel good about yourself.

Describe the situation and explain why it made you feel good. Then, look at the list of words you circled and wrote above. Which words or descriptions are reflected in your decision?

UNIT QUIZ

Name: _____

Date: _____



Part One

Read each statement or question. Then circle the correct answer.

1. Which statement is true?

- A. Most middle schoolers are current cigarette smokers or vapers.
- B. Most middle schoolers are not current cigarette smokers or vapers.
- C. Most middle schoolers use smokeless tobacco.
- D. Most middle schoolers like to hang around with people who smoke.

2. Young people who smoke cigarettes _____.

- A. are likely to be less physically fit and to have more breathing problems than kids who don't smoke
- B. Can become addicted to nicotine.
- C. report that they cough and wheeze more than their peers who don't smoke
- D. Neither A nor B
- E. Both A and B
- F. All of the above.

3. Which chemical in tobacco affects the brain?

- A. tar
- B. snuff
- C. larynx
- D. nicotine

4. True or False? Young people who smoke cannot become addicted to nicotine.

- A. True
- B. False

5. True or False? Many young people say they're going to quit smoking/vaping in the future, and then can't.

- A. True
- B. False

6. True or False? Smokeless tobacco is harmful to your health.

- A. True
- B. False

7. Smoking cigarettes can damage _____.

- A. only your mouth and gums
- B. only your lungs and heart
- C. only your lungs
- D. nearly every organ in your body

8. What best describes what you should think about when making a decision?

- A. your friends
- B. what other people will think
- C. your goals, choices, and consequences
- D. your friends, choices, and consequences

9. True or False? Smoking can cause heart disease.

- A. True
- B. False

10. Which description is an example of peer pressure?

- A. My friends who vape teased me about not trying it. So, after school I tried a vape with them even though I didn't want to.
- B. I asked my friends for a cigarette one day when they were smoking. My friends never pushed me to try it. I didn't want to smoke, but I thought it would help me fit in.
- C. My friends and I never talk about using tobacco or nicotine.
- D. I want to be nicotine free. My friends won't influence this decision.

Part Two

1. List three reasons why most middle schoolers do not use tobacco or nicotine products.

2. List three reasons why some young people try nicotine products..

3. List three health consequences of tobacco use.

4. List three consequences of nicotine use.

5. You want to be nicotine free. List three ways you could say "no" to a friend who offers you a cigarette, vape, smokeless tobacco or other nicotine product.



I PLEDGE TO BE NICOTINE FREE

- I understand that nicotine products have health risks and consequences.
- I choose to say “no” to nicotine and pledge to stay nicotine free.
- This means I will not smoke cigarettes, use smokeless tobacco, nicotine pouches, vape or using any other nicotine products because:

[Fill in three reasons why you pledge to stay nicotine free]

1.

2.

3.

By signing below, I pledge to be nicotine free:

Signed

Date:





**I Pledge to
Encourage
My Child to Be
Nicotine Free**

By signing below, I pledge to encourage my child to be tobacco and nicotine free.

I will talk with my child about the importance of not smoking, not vaping, or using smokeless tobacco, nicotine pouches or any other nicotine products.

I will respect my child, listen to them, and answer their questions.

Signed

Date:

