



YOUTH VAPING SURVEY TOOLKIT

Overview

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide insights on how to partner effectively with youth and to provide an outline for others to conduct convenience surveys in partnership with youth. This toolkit will provide guidance in creating surveys, questions to ask, as well as how to communicate and engage youth partners.

Background

The Association for Nonsmokers-Minnesota (ANSR) regularly engages youth in policy and advocacy at the local and state level. At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, a group of driven high school students in Minnesota created a convenience survey about tobacco use among their peers. Those who vape are more likely to have weaker lung health and there is now emerging evidence that individuals who vape experience worse COVID-19 outcomes (1). Vaping among high school students has exploded in recent years, wiping out a decade of progress from tobacco prevention initiatives and policies and reversing the decline in tobacco use rates among youth. According to the 2019 Minnesota Student Survey, approximately one in four eleventh graders vape (2) COVID-19 has caused youth to become more isolated from their peers and community. The purpose of this survey was to gather data on the changes in tobacco use as a result of the pandemic.

(1) Association Between Youth Smoking, Electronic Cigarette Use, and COVID-19 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2020.07.002>

(2) Minnesota Department of Health (2019). Minnesota Student Survey. Retrieved from <https://www.health.state.mn.us/data/mchhs/surveys/mss/index.html>

Survey Implementation Process

All in-person events were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic which led to reinvention on how to support youth groups. In discussion with the Mounds View High School (MVHS) student group, it was decided to create a survey to learn more about youth vaping use before and during the pandemic. The MVHS student group collaborated with ANSR throughout the entire process.



The students created and approved survey questions, as well as brainstormed ways to share the survey. They found that using online platforms such as Snapchat, Instagram, etc. would be the best way to get real and genuine answers.

ANSR and MVHS conducted and evaluated three convenience sample surveys to Minnesota high school students in spring, summer and fall of 2020. Each survey was held to identify vaping perceptions and habits during the COVID-19 pandemic. The surveys were conducted by a group of high school students, with funding from the Minnesota Department of Health and the Ramsey County SHIP grant.

Results



The results of the spring survey were consistent with the 2019 Minnesota Student Survey, with approximately 20% reporting vaping. The majority (76%) of individuals who reported vaping did not want to quit or did not have an opinion about quitting. Results from the summer survey showed similar findings. Again, vaping rates aligned with the 2019 Minnesota Student Survey Data, with

approximately 24% reporting vaping and again, majority (73%) of individuals who reported vaping did not want to quit or did not have an opinion on quitting. Results also found that among 49% of respondents who reported vaping, stress increased how often they vaped.

Peer to peer advocacy is the best way to collect genuine survey responses. The first two surveys were predominately youth disseminated, which led to more honest feedback. Whereas the fall survey, much of the recruiting came from schools and other adults. This is a contributing factor as to why the data looked different from the first two surveys. For example, in the summer survey, 66 of the 280 respondents say they vaped, while in the fall survey, 71 of 523 respondents had said they vaped. Similar to how commercial tobacco smokers may not disclose their smoking status to their doctor in fear of judgement, youth may not disclose their vaping status in a survey that was sent to them by a school official. Overall, there were higher levels of trust between peers which led to more candid responses.

Results show that youth vaping use is still a problem and that the vaping epidemic hasn't declined in lieu of the COVID-19 pandemic.

How to Implement Your Own Survey

When implementing your own survey, it is important to identify your goal. What knowledge are you hoping to gain? Who are you hoping to reach with? Your goal should be the driver of the survey. It is important to develop this first and build off of it.

It is also important to identify steps needed to implement a sound survey. How will this project be funded? Who will be engaged? How will youth be engaged?

The step-by-step guide provided below is a model to create our survey process. Steps may look different for your organization based on the goals of the project and funding sources.

Steps	Questions to Ask to Help Guide You
1. Goal Setting	Who's idea was it to perform this survey? Why is this topic important? How do we base questions on this? Who is the audience? How long will this survey stay open? What questions will help you find your intended information? Do you need to collect zip codes? What products are you focusing on?
2. Youth Participation - question creation and dissemination plan	How can we engage youth throughout this process (beginning, middle, and end)? How can we be mindful of their time and schedule? Do you already have youth you actively engage in tobacco prevention?
3. Question Approval - from funders	Are there specific questions your funders require you to have on evaluations?

4. Import Questions into Survey Monkey	What is the best way to create this survey? Is Survey Monkey available for me? What other platforms are available to create a survey? Are there logic options for the questions?
5. Disseminate Survey	What is the best way to share this survey? What works best for the youth involved? What social media platforms are most popular among youth?
6. Evaluation	What is the best way to sort the data (Excel, etc.)? What can we use to create visuals that are easy to read? What information do we want to share?
7. Materials Approval – from funders	Get approval on the data informational sheet and add funding disclaimers.
8. Share	Who participated in this survey? What partners should be informed? Can we use this to drive policy work? What decision-makers should have this information?

Sample Questions

Three surveys were conducted in spring, summer, and fall of 2020. Survey questions were modified to reflect the timeframe being studied. Because our first survey was sent in spring 2020, we asked questions about pre-COVID and the stay-at-home order. In the second and third survey, we did not include pre-COVID questions and included a question asking about most popular flavors used. A logic question was used in each survey to allow for a separate set of questions for those who responded that they vaped and those who responded they had not vaping.

Below are sample questions to help conduct your own research. Blanks have been left open for you to set your timeframe. Please use these questions as a guide and add or modify questions as you see fit.

1. What grade are you in?

- a) 8th grade
- b) 9th grade
- c) 10th grade
- d) 11th grade
- e) 12th grade

2. In your opinion, do you think people [age] are vaping more or less since [timeframe]?

- a) More
- b) Less
- c) No opinion

3. Have you vaped in the last [XX] days?

If yes, move onto specific product usage questions. If no, move to the end survey questions (logic question)

- a) Yes
 - b) No
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If Answered **NO** to question 3, the following questions were asked:

4. What have been your sources of stress lately? Select all that apply.

- a) COVID-19
- b) Work
- c) Friends
- d) Family
- e) School
- f) Nothing
- g) Other (please specify)

5. What are you doing to cope with your stress?

- a) Please specify

6. How did you hear about this survey?

- a) Please specify

7. Did you participate in our previous survey held in [XX]?

- a) Yes
 - b) No
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If Answered **YES** to question 3, the following questions were asked:

Answers to questions [XX]-[XX] refer to the time frame of [XX].

4. What products have you used in [XX]? Select all that apply.

- a) Mods (ex. Blu, tank systems)
- b) Disposables (ex. Puff Bars)
- c) Pods (ex. JUUL, Suorin)
- d) Dab pens/carts for marijuana use
- e) Other (please specify)

5. For the products you checked, how often did you use them? (Ask this about each product checked in question 4)

- a) At least five times a day
- b) At least once a day
- c) Two to four times per week
- d) Once a week
- e) One to two times all [XX]

6. What flavors have you been using? Select all that apply.

- a) Tobacco flavor
- b) Mint, menthol, and wintergreen flavors
- c) All other flavors (ex. Fruit, candy, etc.)

7. Where have you vaped? Select all that apply.

- a) School
- b) Home
- c) Party
- d) Park
- e) Car
- f) Other (please specify)

8. Where have you gotten your vape products? Select all that apply.

- a) Friends
- b) Stores
- c) Online
- d) Family
- e) Other (please specify)

9. On a scale of 1-5, 1 being strongly agree and 5 being strongly disagree, Do you agree or disagree with this statement:

Since [XX], I have wanted to quit vaping.

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) No opinion
- d) Disagree
- e) Strongly disagree

10. What have been your sources of stress since [XX]? Select all that apply.

- a) COVID-19
- b) Work
- c) Friends
- d) Family
- e) School
- f) Nothing
- g) Other (please specify)

11. Did your stressors change how often you vaped?

- a) Yes, increased how often I vaped
- b) Yes, decreased how often I vaped
- c) Stayed the same
- d) Other (please specify)

12. How did you hear about this survey?

- a) Please specify

13. Did you participate in our previous survey held in [XX]?

- a) Yes
- b) No

Principles of Youth Engagement



When given the opportunity, youth can be powerful contributors and leaders in tobacco prevention. They have inside knowledge on their peers and trends in tobacco use.

Providing youth leadership opportunities allows youth to mobilize around issues, such as tobacco prevention, and contribute to change within their community.

It is also important to build authentic relationships with youth. Relationships built on trust can lead to greater involvement

and achievement of goals among all individuals involved. Having an equal power balance allows for youth voices to effectively be heard.

Youth engagement must lead with health equity. Health equity is about removing barriers that prevent access to things like structures, systems, etc. to ensure an equal outcome. Here, striving for health equity means removing barriers that prevent youth from having a seat at the tobacco prevention table. This means it is important to meet youth where they are at (3). Some ideas are:

- Holding meetings during a convenient time for youth (ex. after school)
- Compensating youth for their time
- Creating opportunities for youth to develop their skills

Supporting youth leads to overall greater youth engagement.



Supporting Youth

When conducting research on a specific population, it is important to include the target population in all stages: planning, implementing, and evaluating. It is critical to have youth at the table because they bring unique experiences, expertise, and perspectives that may otherwise be overlooked. ANSR strives to include populations targeted by the tobacco industry in all policy levels and when conducting important research. This research pertained to youth and we worked collaboratively with a group of high school students.



Including youth throughout the survey process is an important tool because they are more aware of peer habits. This project has also allowed ANSR to better support the youth that are involved in this work by allowing ownership and leadership in sharing, which led to a large response rate. It also allowed for youth to become peer educators about tobacco harms and how they can influence healthier habits.

MVHS students shared what they look for when joining new clubs or activities and what keeps them involved in the group after joining. Below are a few examples of what they shared and what to think about when forming a tobacco prevention youth group:

- Allowing students to take on responsibility that prepares them for the future.
- Providing new experiences and areas to grow.
- Tangible effects and real meaning behind the work done.
- Providing a space to educate students about vaping so that they can educate others on the topic.
- A group that is organized and has set activities as well as options on what we can participate in.
- If you are able, pay the youth. Adults are paid to be there, so should we.
- Hold regular check-ins, even if there aren't any new updates. Playing games and connecting is still important to maintaining connection.

Resources

My Life My Quit	My Life, My Quit TM: My Life, My Quit is Minnesota's free youth quit support. To learn more, go to www.MyLifeMyQuit.com or text 'Start' to 36702.
Tobacco 101	Free tobacco education created by Association for Nonsmokers-MN containing discussions, hands-on activities and videos.
Taking Down Tobacco	A free program created by the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids with free courses, recordings, and fun prizes.
The Real Cost of Vaping	Free vaping curriculum created by Scholastic for middle and high schoolers with readings, interactive games and activities.
Vape, Educate	An educational toolkit on vaping and marijuana which includes module learning.
Don't Blow It	A free toolkit created by Essentia Health on vaping education for high school students.
In Depth	A free toolkit created by American Lung Association that provides vaping education to middle and high school students through webinars, worksheets and interactive activities.

Contributors

This toolkit was developed and created from a collaboration of Association for Nonsmokers - Minnesota staff and youth partners.

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