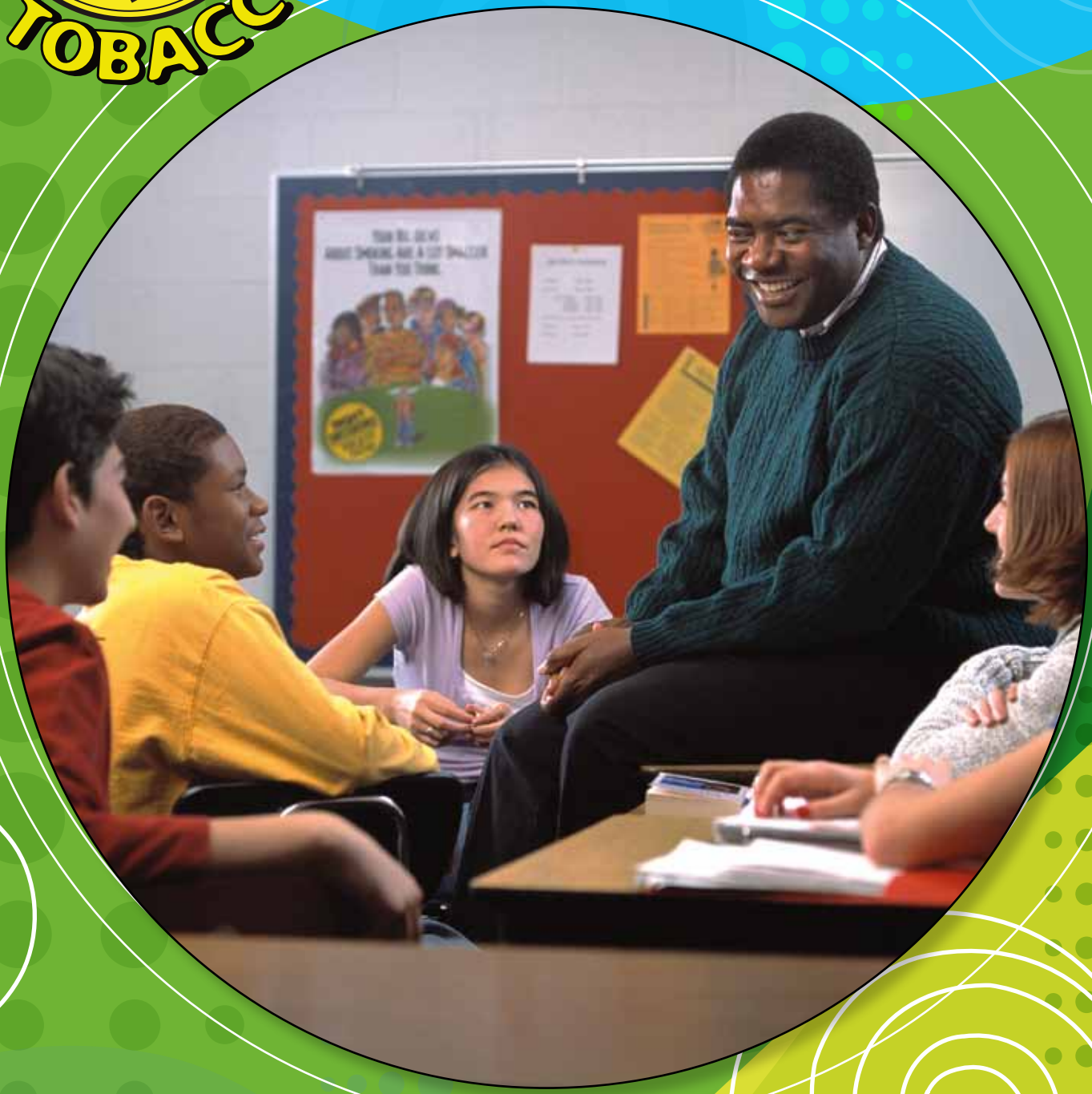
RIGHT DECISIONS RIGHT NOW BE TOBACCO FREE

Overview Booklet for Grades 5-9



Youth Tobacco Prevention Program

Message to Educators

The middle school years are a time of change for adolescents. They are exploring new interests, developing their own identities, and relying more on friends and peers than parents for ideas, affirmations, and approval.[1] Equipping students with life skills they can carry into adulthood is one of the best ways you as an educator can help them grow. The enclosed materials have been developed to help you empower your students to make decisions that will positively impact their lives and their health. And, one of the decisions you can help your students make is to be tobacco free.

The goal of the ***Right Decisions, Right Now: Be Tobacco Free*** educational program is to prevent young people from using tobacco (cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, and any other forms). Developed by Lifetime Learning Systems, Inc., and funded by R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company, ***RDRN: Be Tobacco 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 goal of the program is to inoculate nonusers against experimentation with tobacco, while providing instruction on risk and protective factors to decrease the number of adolescents moving from experimentation to addiction. Youth should not smoke or use smokeless tobacco. The reasons are quite clear:

- The health consequences are well known and well documented through research by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the U.S. Surgeon General.
- It is illegal to sell tobacco products to minors in every state, and in many states it is illegal for minors to possess tobacco products.

Children and youth can be swayed negatively by their peers and can lack the skills they need when it comes to making the decision to be tobacco free. Educators, parents, and others who are most influential in the lives of children and youth need to talk about tobacco prevention, the health consequences of tobacco use, the factors that contribute to experimenting with and using tobacco products, and ways to avoid use. This program provides a well researched, systematic way to have that important dialogue.

With your guidance and support and the lessons in this program, your students will be better informed and empowered to be tobacco free.

What You'll Find in This Program

- **This Overview Booklet, which contains:**

• Introductory Information:

Intended Audience ..... page 4

How to Use the Program ..... page 4

Program Objectives ..... page 4

Acknowledgements ..... page 4

• Information on Tobacco Use:

Why Teaching Tobacco Prevention in Middle School Is Important ..... page 5

Information on the stages and phases of cigarette smoking and common factors that influence adolescents ..... page 6

Did you know? (facts about tobacco use) ..... page 6

Stages and Phases of Cigarette Smoking ..... page 7

• Using the Program:

Implementing the *Right Decisions, Right Now* program ..... page 8

About the teacher's guides and student activities ..... page 8

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Distributing the parent/guardian brochure ..... page 12

Assessment tools ..... page 12

Educator evaluation forms ..... page 12

• Additional Information:

Information on the decision-making process, peer pressure, peer influence, and peer acceptance ..... page 13

Your school's policy ..... page 14

Tips for students who want to quit tobacco ..... page 15

Extension lesson ideas ..... page 15

A chart of developmental stages middle-schoolers experience, with tips for educators on dealing with adolescents ..... page 16

• References:

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Bibliography and Resources ..... page 21

Glossary of tobacco-related terms ..... page 21

• Reproducible Pledges:

A Tobacco-Free Student Pledge ..... page 22

A Parent and Guardian Pledge ..... page 23

- **Three instructional booklets, each consisting of a teacher's guide, reproducible activities, and a unit quiz for the following grades:**

  Grades 5 and 6 Grade 7 Grades 8 and 9

- **Three wall posters**

  Tobacco: Myth or Reality?

  Look what tobacco will do. (images of health consequences of tobacco use)

  How to Say "No" (refusal skills)

- **A reproducible brochure for parents and guardians**

Intended Audience

This program has been developed for students in grades 5 through 9.

How to Use the Program

Right Decisions, Right Now: Be Tobacco Free includes three booklets with a teacher's guide, activities, and a reproducible quiz for grades 5 and 6 (combined), grade 7, and grades 8 and 9 (combined). In order to maximize use of the materials, we recommend the following approach:

Grades 5 & 6

If your school has both 5th and 6th grade students, use the activities and lessons found in the corresponding booklet beginning with 5th grade, and again in 6th. A research study showed that smoking initiation doubled from 6th to 8th grade.[2] And, since the CDC indicates that 6th grade, or age 11, is the beginning of the age range when children are most likely to try smoking for the first time,[3] 6th grade students should greatly benefit by reviewing the lessons. Sixth graders will also bring new experiences to the table, and they may be exposed to more young people who have tried or use tobacco products.

Grade 7

The booklet for grade 7 should be used with 7th grade students in its entirety.

Grades 8 & 9

There is one booklet designed for grades 8 and 9 that has nine activities followed by three "Support Lessons." If your school ends at 8th grade, complete the first nine lessons with your students, and then supplement the unit by implementing the "Support Lessons" later in the year to reinforce students' understanding of the material. Likewise, if your 9th grade students did not participate in the program in the 8th grade, complete all of the lessons in the booklet with them as outlined above.

Ninth grade is a critical transition year as students are about to enter high school. According to the CDC, tobacco use increases in high school. Therefore, 9th graders who complete the first nine lessons of the program in 8th grade, should be taught the "Support Lessons" to reinforce the information they learned previously. Also, reinforcing life skills before students enter high school is intended to encourage them to make the right decisions and be tobacco free.

There is a survey about tobacco for each grade, which students should take to launch the unit. This will enable them to assess their thoughts about and experience with tobacco (if any), and will provide you with an understanding of their perceptions.

The remaining activities have been organized in a specific sequence to provide students with factual information about tobacco that they can reference when completing the subsequent lessons—enabling them to make more informed decisions based on facts.

A reproducible quiz at the end of each booklet will help you assess your students' understanding of the material presented.

To get optimum results from this program and to effectively work towards the goal of keeping adolescents tobacco free, all of the activities in the unit should be presented and completed with your students in the order in which they are presented.

Program Objectives

- To provide middle school educators with an evidence-based youth tobacco prevention and life skills program
- To deliver health and life skills lessons in a multi-faceted framework
- To educate students about the health consequences of tobacco use and to provide statistics and facts about tobacco use among young people
- To equip students with decision-making and coping skills to help build their self-esteem and encourage them to make informed choices
- To explain and help students examine the difference between peer pressure and peer influence, and the desire for peer acceptance
- To help students develop and practice assertive refusal skills
- To empower students to see themselves as responsible individuals who can make the right decisions for themselves
- To offer parents and guardians information about preventing tobacco use among adolescents, and provide guidelines for communicating with their children about not using tobacco and promoting positive decision-making skills

Acknowledgements

This program was created with contributions from a group of experts, including:

Dr. Charles H. Flatter – Professor of Human Development and Director of the Institute for Child Study, Maryland

Dr. Cassandra Cook, PhD – Clinical Psychologist, Private Practice, New York City

Dr. Richard Kolbell, PhD, ABPP (American Board of Professional Psychology) – Clinical and Forensic Neuropsychologist, Oregon

Erik Kolbell, LSW – Licensed Psychotherapist, New York City

Why Teaching Tobacco Prevention in Middle School Is Important

Why is it important to integrate tobacco prevention lessons into your curriculum? The answer is simple: because cigarette smoking is the leading preventable cause of death in the U.S.[4] Educating young people is the first step to preventing the onset of tobacco use in youth. By providing them with evidence-based facts related to the health consequences of tobacco use, you can teach them how to make good decisions that will impact their future.

Research shows that young people are most likely to try smoking for the first time between the ages of 11 and 15, or grades 6 through 10.[3] Yet at the same time, the CDC reports that "many children and adolescents do not understand the nature of tobacco addiction and are unaware of, or underestimate, the important health consequences of tobacco use."[5] Therefore, it is important to educate students about these topics. In addition, teaching adolescents skills that help them build self-esteem, develop useful decision-making strategies, and form functional refusal techniques can help them make healthy decisions. This includes the decision not to succumb to peer pressure or the influence of other sources and to be tobacco free.

According to the CDC, tobacco-use prevention education should be "intensified in middle/junior high school, when students are exposed to older students who typically use tobacco at higher rates."[6]

The ***Right Decisions, Right Now: Be Tobacco Free*** youth tobacco prevention program has materials for teachers and parents, and information and activities for students including:

- instruction about the negative physiological (health) and social consequences of tobacco use.
- lessons on refusal skills; and lessons to develop students' skills in assertiveness, goal setting, problem solving, and their abilities to resist pressure from peers to use tobacco.
- information to help students understand that most adolescents don't use tobacco and why some young people start using tobacco; and activities to help them find more positive activities to meet their goals.

The content and components were chosen based on research on youth tobacco prevention programs and a formal research testing of the materials with teachers and students.

A list of recommendations for school tobacco prevention programs from the CDC can be found in "Guidelines for School Health Programs to Prevent Tobacco Use and Addiction." See **www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00026213.htm**.

As the research on adolescents indicates, some reasons young people may abstain from using tobacco include:[7, 8, 9]

- They understand the short-term health consequences.
- Their friends don't use tobacco.
- They know how to say "no" to peer pressure and peer influence.
- They know their parents disapprove of their using tobacco.
- They want to be tobacco free.

Reinforcing these concepts will support your tobacco prevention program.

In contrast, research also indicates that low self-esteem, the inability to resist peer offers of tobacco, and the perception that using tobacco will help them bond with peers are factors that influence a young person's decision to use tobacco.[8] Therefore, equipping young people with skills that address these areas is important—they're also skills students can apply to other risk behaviors. Additional information about tobacco use can be found in the next section.

This program includes lessons and activities for each of the middle school grades. As students grow and develop during this time period, their needs change. This program addresses those needs and accommodates students' cognitive abilities. In addition, posters are included to enhance students' learning potential as a way to accomplish the overall goal—to prevent tobacco use in youth now and in the future.

Stages and Phases of Cigarette Smoking

Part of the maturation process includes making independent decisions, including those related to risk behaviors like tobacco use. Most students don't use tobacco. Some never start; others experiment or try it, and then quit. However, a percentage of young people become regular users.

Research studies have outlined the stages and phases adolescents go through from experimenting with cigarette smoking to becoming regular smokers. For each stage, there are common factors that influence a young person's decision to smoke or be tobacco free. According to the CDC, the progression occurs in the following stages:[9]

- The *preparatory stage*, when a person's knowledge, beliefs, and expectations about tobacco use are formed.
- The *initial/trying stage*, when a person tries the first few cigarettes.
- The *experimentation stage,* which is a period of repeat, irregular use that may occur only in specific situations over a variable time.
- *Regular tobacco use*, when a routine pattern of use has developed. For youth, this may mean using tobacco every weekend or at certain times of the day.
- *Nicotine addiction*, which is regular use, usually daily, with an internally regulated need for nicotine.

To help you implement this youth tobacco prevention program, we have included a chart compiling research from various studies on the progression of cigarette smoking uptake and factors that influence adolescents at each stage, including the decision to abstain or stop experimentation. For the purposes of the chart, we have combined the initial/trying and experimentation stages.

This information can help you reinforce the positive factors that influence students to be tobacco free—such as parental support and pride in being tobacco free. Likewise, you can use the information about the factors that may influence young people to use tobacco to help students better understand these issues. While the majority of research is on cigarette smoking, experts suggest that the same prevention programming can be applied to smokeless tobacco.[10]

As you review the chart, keep in mind that every person is different and that most adolescents abstain from using tobacco.

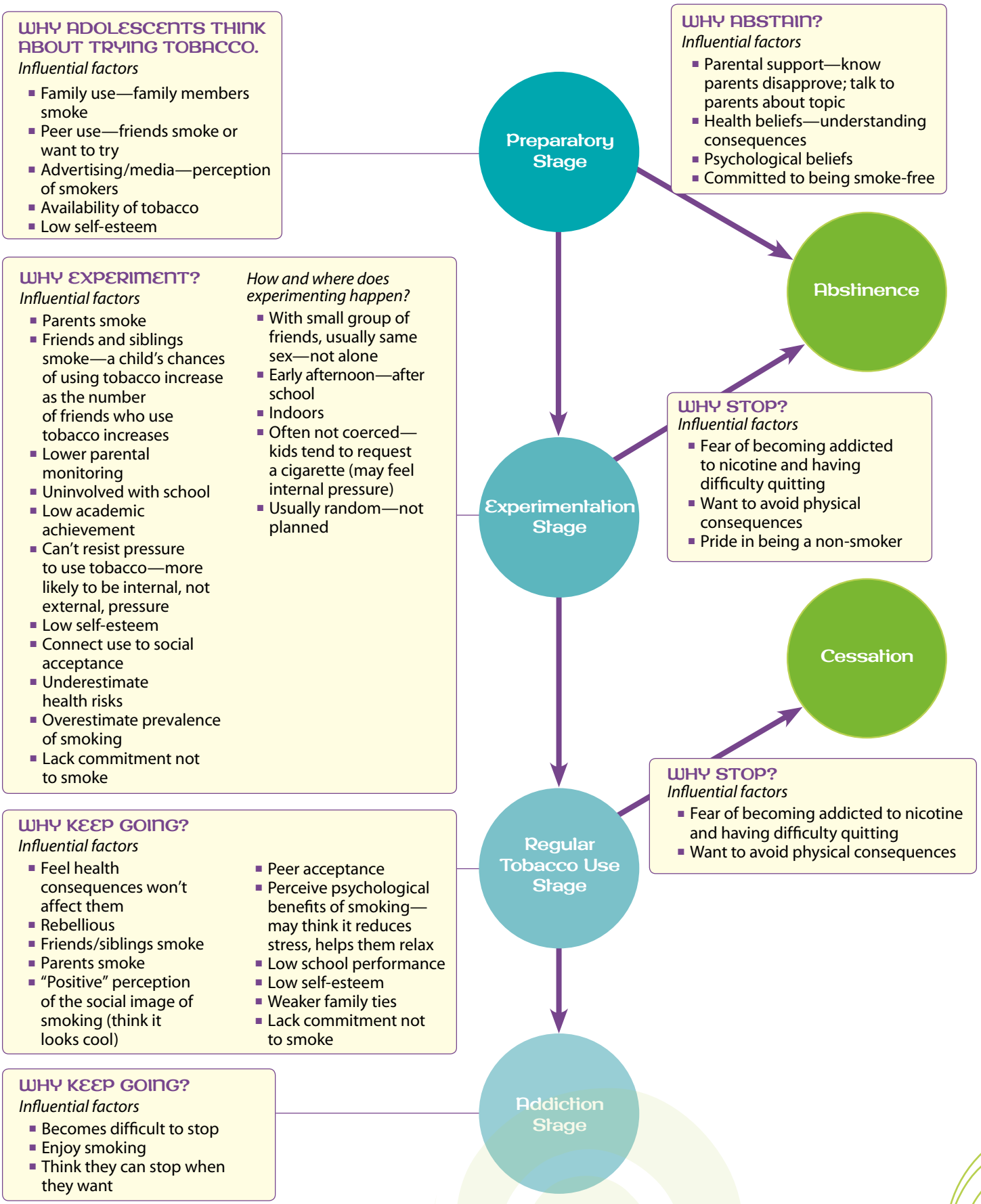
Did you know?

The vast majority of adolescents do not use tobacco. That's something that your students need to know. Young people tend to overestimate the prevalence of tobacco use among their peers and adults.[11]

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

- Each day in the United States, approximately 3,600 youths (ages 12-17) initiate cigarette smoking, and about 1,100 become daily cigarette smokers.[7]
- About 6% of middle school students in the U.S. are current cigarette smokers. In high school, that number rises to 20%.[7] (Current is defined as having used tobacco on at least one day in the 30 days preceding the survey.)
- About 13% of high school boys and 4% of middle school boys are current smokeless tobacco users.[7]
- One study found that smoking initiation doubled from 6th grade to 8th grade.[2]
- Most teenagers who smoke want to stop.[8]
- Quitting is not easy for adolescents because most young people who smoke regularly are addicted to nicotine.[8]

Stages and Phases of Cigarette Smoking[12]



Implementing the Right Decisions, Right Now Program

Before starting the unit, tell your students that they are going to take part in a youth tobacco prevention program that will provide them with facts about the health consequences of tobacco use. It also includes lessons on decision making, self-esteem, and peer relationships. Let students know that the activities represent an opportunity for them to think about and discuss issues and questions that concern them. Encourage students to speak honestly, ask questions, and not to give answers they think you want to hear.

When presenting the program, use techniques you feel will provide a comfort level for students to have a genuine discussion and complete the activities in an honest and serious way. If you find that some students are hesitant or not participating, encourage them to take a turn, but don't force the issue. It is important for students to know that you respect their privacy. For this reason, the tobacco surveys should be completed independently and anonymously. Students should feel free to volunteer answers to the survey about their experience with tobacco only if they are comfortable. Once you have completed all activities, please dispose of all student tobacco surveys. Likewise, remind students that you expect them to be respectful of their classmates when they are speaking and when they are working in small groups. For example, tell students that you don't want them to use names of other people if they are relaying stories. Also, tell them the personal stories students discuss should not be shared outside the classroom in order to protect people's privacy.

Students may have parents, guardians, or caregivers who use tobacco. In order to facilitate discussion about tobacco, approach it as a health issue, not a moral issue. This advice was given to us by parents in focus groups who expressed concern about this issue. They want schools to focus on teaching students the facts when encouraging them to make the healthy decision to be tobacco free.

ABOUT THE TEACHER'S GUIDES AND STUDENT ACTIVITIES

The activities are organized by grade level to best suit the students' developmental abilities and the issues each group experiences. The lessons also outline the tobacco stages that are relevant to the group. For example, the lessons for the younger students address the preparatory and experimentation stages during which students might be thinking about trying tobacco; whereas the lessons for the older students address escalation and addiction, as pressures they face change and may mount, and the prevalence of friends or peers who use tobacco may become greater.

Grade 7

Grades 5&6

Grades 8&9

Within each booklet, the activities are divided into the following three categories:

- ***Keeping Healthy Section***—This section includes a survey to determine students' perceptions about tobacco, their understanding of its effects and the health consequences, and their experience with it (if any). In addition, it includes activities that address the health risks and consequences associated with tobacco use.
- ***How Friends Fit In Section (Interpersonal Skills)***—In this section, students explore their relationships with others, 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 Section (Intrapersonal Skills)***—This section has students take a look at how they act, feel, and think. The activities focus on self-esteem, social image, decision-making skills, and personal values (what is important to each student). The lessons are designed to provide students with a chance to practice decision making and to empower them to make healthy decisions. Tips for understanding and dealing with stress and conflict are integrated into the activities for Grade 8.
- ***Unit Quiz***—A quiz follows the activities in each booklet to help you assess your students' understanding of the content presented. Each quiz contains multiple-choice and short-answer questions.

LESSON TIMEFRAME CHART

The following chart outlines the number of lessons per category and a suggested timeframe for implementing them with each grade.

GRADE LEVEL/ TOPIC	GRADES 5&6	GRADE 7	GRADES 8&9	TOTAL
Health	(3) 25-min. lessons (1) 60-min. support lesson	(2) 25-min. lessons (1) 30-min. lesson	(2) 25-min. lessons (1) 20-min. lesson (1) 20-min. support lesson	11 health lessons
Interpersonal skills	(2) 30-min. lessons (2) Refusal skills lessons @ 20 min. each	(1) 30-min. lesson (3) 25-min. lessons (1) Refusal skills lesson @ 40 min.	(1) 60-min. lesson (1) Refusal skills lesson @ 30 min.	11 interpersonal lessons including 4 on refusal skills
Intrapersonal skills	(2) 30-min. lessons (1) 25-min. lesson	(1) 25-min. lesson (1) 30-min. lesson	(3) 20-min. lessons (1) 30-min. lesson (1) 20-min. support lesson (1) 30-min. support lesson	11 intrapersonal lessons
Unit quiz	(1) 25-min. lesson	(1) 25-min. lesson	(1) 25-min. lesson	3 unit quizzes

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ADDRESSED IN THE PROGRAM

Right Decisions, Right Now: Be Tobacco Free meets standards set forth by Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL). McREL, a nonprofit organization, publishes *Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education*, which synthesizes standards in all subject areas to provide educators with guidelines and develop expectations of learning for their students. These standards, along with a more comprehensive list, can be found at **www.mcrel.org**.

The activities and lessons in this program will help you to meet the following selected education standards:

Life Skills
Grades K-12

Self-Regulation

Standard 3. Considers risks

1. Weighs risks in making decisions and solving problems

Standard 4. Demonstrates perseverance

1. Demonstrates perseverance relative to personal goals

Standard 5. Maintains a healthy self-concept

1. Has confidence in one's own abilities, including the ability to succeed
5. Uses positive affirmations and self-talk to improve sense of self, build confidence, and complete difficult tasks

Health
Grades 6-8

Standard 5. Knows essential concepts and practices concerning injury prevention and safety

4. Knows the various possible causes of conflict among youth in schools and communities, and strategies to manage conflict
5. Knows how refusal and negotiation skills can be used to enhance health

Standard 7. Knows how to maintain and promote personal health

3. Knows strategies and skills that are used to attain personal health goals (e.g., maintaining an exercise program, making healthy food choices)
4. Understands how changing information, abilities, priorities, and responsibilities influence personal health goals
5. Knows how health is influenced by the interaction of body systems

Standard 9. Understands aspects of substance use and abuse

1. Knows conditions that may put people at higher risk for substance abuse problems (e.g., genetic inheritability, substance abuse in family, low frustration tolerance)
2. Knows factors involved in the development of a drug dependency and the early, observable signs and symptoms (e.g., tolerance level, drug-seeking behavior, loss of control, denial)
3. Knows the short- and long-term consequences of the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs (e.g., physical consequences such as shortness of breath, cirrhosis, lung cancer, emphysema; psychological consequences such as low self-esteem, paranoia, depression, apathy; social consequences such as crime, domestic violence, loss of friends)
4. Knows public policy approaches to substance abuse control and prevention (e.g., pricing and taxation, warning labels, regulation of advertising, restriction of alcohol consumption at sporting events)
5. Knows community resources that are available to assist people with alcohol, tobacco, and other drug problems

Health
Grades 9-12

Standard 5. Knows essential concepts and practices concerning injury prevention and safety

3. Knows strategies for solving interpersonal conflicts without harming self or others
4. Knows how refusal, negotiation, and collaboration skills can be used to avoid potentially harmful situations

Standard 7. Knows how to maintain and promote personal health

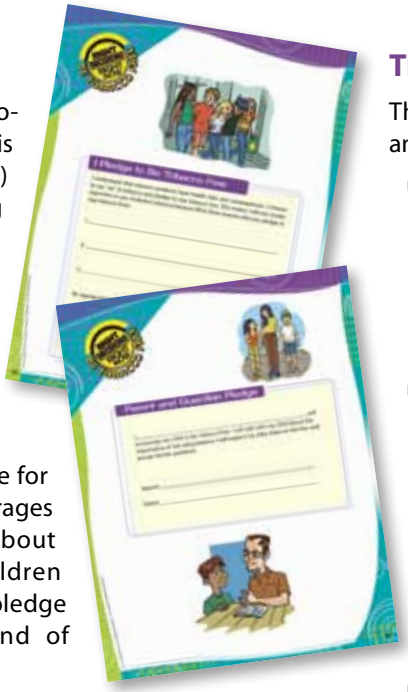
2. Understands the short- and long-term consequences of safe, risky, and harmful behaviors
4. Understands the impact of personal health behaviors on the functioning of body systems

Standard 9. Understands aspects of substance use and abuse

2. Knows how the abuse of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs often plays a role in dangerous behavior and can have adverse consequences on the community (e.g., house fires, motor vehicle crashes, domestic violence, date rape, transmission of diseases through needle sharing or sexual activity)
3. Understands that alcohol, tobacco, and other drug dependencies are treatable diseases/conditions

TOBACCO-FREE PLEDGES

Distribute the reproducible tobacco-free pledge (found in the back of this booklet and each grade booklet) to your students after completing the program. Students are able to write their own reasons why they want to be tobacco free, enabling them to have ownership of the pledge. Congratulate your students for taking the pledge to remain tobacco free.

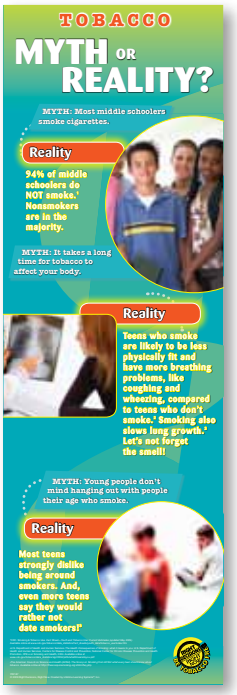


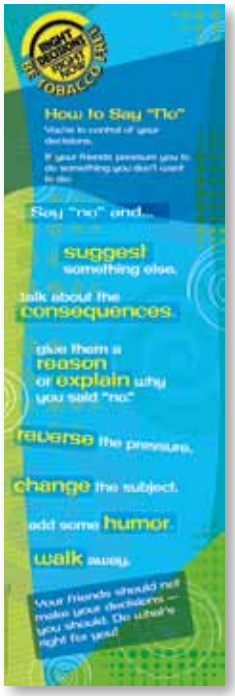
There is also a reproducible pledge for parents and guardians that encourages them to talk to their children about tobacco and support their children in being tobacco free. Send this pledge home with students at the end of the unit.

THE POSTERS

The three posters are designed to complement the program and can be used as follows:

- *Tobacco: Myth or Reality?* – This poster includes facts about tobacco use. Refer to this poster when conducting the lessons in the "Keeping Healthy" section to dispel misperceptions about tobacco use. When done with the unit, display the poster in your classroom, the library, or school hallway.
- *Look what tobacco will do.* – This poster includes images of some health consequences of tobacco use and should be integrated into the lessons in the "Keeping Healthy" section. After students complete the survey, display the poster and review it with your class. Students in Grades 5&6 must refer to the images to complete Activity Three. Seeing visual images related to the health consequences of using tobacco may be the way some students learn the message.
- *How to Say "No" (refusal skills)* – Display this poster with tips for saying "no" in your classroom when working on the lessons related to decision making, peer pressure, and refusal skills. After the lessons, hang the poster in your classroom or school hallway so that students can use it as a reference and reminder.





REPRODUCIBLE BROCHURE FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

Research indicates that adolescents want to talk with their parents about troubling topics and troublesome situations. It further shows that parents may exert a positive influence by discussing health matters with their children.[8] Knowing that their parents disapprove of them smoking or using smokeless tobacco can influence a child's decision to abstain.[8]

To encourage families to talk about tobacco use and how it can affect a person's life, we have included materials for parents and guardians. These materials inform families about this program and provide them with tips for communicating with their children—contributing to the program's comprehensive approach to help youth remain tobacco free.

Copy and distribute the guide to parents and guardians when you start the unit so that they are aware that their children are participating in a tobacco prevention program. Let parents and guardians know that they are integral to the success of the program and encourage them to speak with their children about tobacco prevention.

To distribute the guide to parents and guardians, you might copy it and:

- send it home with students at the start of the unit.
- make it available during parent-teacher conferences or an open house event.
- include it with your school newsletter.
- display copies in the guidance counselor's office for families to take.

According to the CDC, tobacco use by adolescents is associated with other health risk behaviors, such as use of alcohol or other drugs.[8] Therefore, it is in everyone's best interest to work together to prevent the onset of tobacco use in adolescents and create a healthy environment in which students can learn and grow.

ASSESSMENT TOOL

To assist you with evaluating your use and implementation of the program, we have created a self-assessment tool for educators. Visit ***www.rightdecisionsrightnow.com*** for a downloadable checklist that you can use to monitor your work.

PROGRAM EVALUATION FORMS

Once you finish the unit, we'd like to hear your thoughts about the materials. Please complete the evaluation form found online to tell us your opinion of the program components and let us know about your experience with them. To complete the program evaluations, go to **www.rightdecisionsrightnow.com/educators**, click on **materials**, and then click on **evaluation form**.

SUPPLEMENTAL VIDEO AVAILABLE ONLINE

A supplemental video and accompanying teacher's guide are available at ***www.rightdecisionsrightnow.com***. Three video segments related to health, interpersonal skills, and intrapersonal skills have been created for each of the grade booklets. Look for the video icon for suggestions on when to incorporate the videos into your lessons.

Information on the Decision-Making Process, Peer Pressure, Peer Influence, and Peer Acceptance

The topics of decision making, peer pressure, peer influence, and peer acceptance are integrated into the activities for all the grades. Share the following information with your students when the topics appear in the activities.

DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

In this program, the decision-making process is described as a six-step process:

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? How did you know?

When addressing this process with your students, it is important to point out the following:

- *We make lots of decisions every day—some are more complex than others. We don't necessarily go through each step for minor decisions, but for serious or complex decisions, it is important to cover all of the steps. For example, when deciding what socks to wear, we may not consider all of our options, but instead, just pick the first pair we find in the drawer. The only consequence we might consider is whether they match our outfit or not. Deciding whether or not to join the soccer team is more serious. We need to consider our goals, options, and the consequences, such as the time commitment and being part of a team.*
- *Before making a decision, we need to know the facts and what's important to us, or what we want to happen.*
- *We don't always go through these six steps in order. We might go back and forth between goals, choices, and consequences before reaching a final decision.*
- *Learning decision-making skills means learning to accept the consequences. Sometimes there are negative consequences even when we think about our options carefully and make the best decision for ourselves.*

After presenting the steps, have a class discussion to help you evaluate your students' understanding of the information. Ask students:

- *What kind of decisions do you make every day?*
- *What kinds of things would you classify as complex decisions?*
- *What does the word "goal" mean to you?* (Explain to students that goals are things we want to do or accomplish. They might be short-term, like deciding to study for two hours for tomorrow's science test. Or, they might be long-term, like playing soccer with your friends once a week so you can get better and try out for the soccer team.)
- *Do you think goals are important to consider when making decisions?*
- *How do you figure out your choices or options when you have to make a decision?*
- *Do you ask anyone for advice when you have to make a big decision? If so, who do you tend to turn to?*
- *Who or what influences your decisions?*
- *Which would you say influences your decisions most: your friends, your family, or your goals and what's important to you?* (Younger children might feel that their parents are strong influences on their decisions, while older children might feel that they are more influenced by their friends.)
- *What are some things that are important to you?*
- *Do you think honesty, respect, compassion, and responsibility are important?*
- *Do you think these values influence your decisions?*
- *Do you have a role model or a mentor?* (Let students know that having a role model or mentor can be a positive influence—these people can help students overcome self-doubt or other pressures.)
- *Do you think about the consequences of your choices before you make decisions? Why or why not?*
- *Why do you think it would be helpful to consider the consequences before making decisions?*
- *Once you make a decision, do you go back and think about whether or not you did the right thing?*

PEER PRESSURE, PEER INFLUENCE, AND PEER ACCEPTANCE

During adolescence, a child's friends are very influential in both positive and negative ways. As they make more and more decisions for themselves, adolescents need to recognize and understand how their friends, other people, or outside forces influence them both positively and negatively. Adolescents should also be aware of how these forces impact their personal decisions so that they are able to foster positive influences, and avoid negative influences that prompt them to make decisions they will regret later.

In this program, we differentiate between peer pressure and peer influence. Peer pressure is characterized by overt pressure, such as words or gestures. Peer influence is internal pressure a person puts on himself or herself without any overt pressure from peers. While the two terms are generally interchangeable, we have separated them to help students recognize the difference between external influences and internal pressures. Ask your students: *What does the word peer mean? What is the difference between peer pressure, peer influence, and peer acceptance?*

Explain to your students:

- *Peer*

  According to Merriam-Webster online, a peer is "one that is of equal standing with another; one belonging to the same societal group especially based on age, grade, or status."[13] *For adults, a peer could be someone they work with. For you, it might be a friend, someone in your class, your grade, or your school. The word "friend" is often considered a synonym for peer.*

- *Peer pressure*

  Peer pressure is obvious and tends to involve teasing, taunting, challenging, or encouraging others. Friends pressure their peers with words and actions to entice them to do things that could be positive or negative. As a result, the people being pressured might do or say something that they don't want to. Or, they might do something that they know is wrong just to avoid the teasing and taunting. Likewise, people might do something good for themselves because their friends prompt them. For example, you might try out for the school musical because your friends continually tell you that you have a great voice and should be in the play. Keep in mind that peer pressure isn't always verbal. Purposely excluding someone from a group or a friendship can also produce pressure.

  People who succumb to peer pressure do things because their friends prompt them.

- *Peer influence*

  Peer influence is less obvious than peer pressure. It happens when people act a certain way or say things because they assume they have to do so in order to be accepted, to be liked, or to maintain friendships. People then put pressure on themselves because of these assumptions. This internal pressure causes people to make decisions they believe will help them "fit in" or be like their friends. Peer influence can affect the way people act and talk. It can also affect their style, taste in clothes and music, and what they consider fun to do. Peer influence occurs when people do things according to the standards of their friends.

- *Peer acceptance*

  Peer acceptance is the desire to feel "accepted," liked, or included by others. Someone who gives in to peer pressure or peer influence wants to be accepted by friends or peers, or feel like he/she fits in.

As you discuss these forces that play an enormous role in the lives of teens, remind them of the following:

- *Peer pressure and peer influence can be positive or negative.*
- *Wanting to conform to group standards is normal for people of all ages. It's common to want to fit in. An adult is not likely to go to a business luncheon wearing pajamas because it does not fit with group standards. You are unlikely to come to school wearing a costume every day.*
- *Peer influence is pressure that we put on ourselves. We want to be accepted and liked, so we try to act in ways that will ensure this. Yet, sometimes this might mean doing something we feel we shouldn't—either because we feel it is wrong, or because it does not fit in with who we are.*
- *Keep in mind your personal goals and what's important to you when you are dealing with peer pressure and peer influence. Think about how your behavior will affect your life in the short- and long-term. And, consider how your actions will affect other people in your life. Will the positive pressure help you? Is giving in to negative pressure worth it?*

Your School's Policy

Review with your students your school's policy on tobacco use so that they are familiar with the rules. Be sure that students are aware of the consequences if they are found using tobacco on school grounds. According to the CDC, "Clearly articulated school policies, applied fairly and consistently, can help students decide not to use tobacco."[5]

Students Who Want to Quit Tobacco

If you have students who come to you and want to quit tobacco, offer them encouragement and guidance. Let them know that they are making a healthy decision. Tell the students to speak to their parents, a trusted adult, the school nurse, family physician, or the guidance counselor to get help and come up with a plan for quitting. Likewise, if your school or community has additional resources, inform the students. Let these students know that you support their decision and offer assistance if they need it.

Extension Activities

- *Economics/Cost* – Students will assess the costs involved with smoking. A pack-a-day smoker spends about $1500 on cigarettes a year. How much would that be over 5, 10, and 15 years? What else could you do with $1500?
- *What Do You Think?* – Adolescents tend to overestimate the prevalence of tobacco use among their peers. To demonstrate this misperception, write the numbers 0 through 10 on the board. Then, have 10 students stand up. Ask the class if they think 10 out of 10 middle schoolers are current cigarette smokers. Record the votes next to the number 10. Next, ask one student to stand back and ask the class if they think 9 out of 10 students smoke. Record the votes next to the number 9. Then ask two students to step back and ask the class if they think 8 out of 10 middle schoolers smoke. Record the answer and keep the process going until you have 0 out of 10 students. Explain to students that the answer is actually 6% of middle schoolers, which is fewer than one out of 10 (it's about one out of every 16.7).
- *Entertainment/Media Image* – Examine the role of tobacco in the media with the CDC's programs *MediaSharp*[sm] and *Scene Smoking: Cigarettes, Cinema, and the Myth of Cool*. Visit **www.cdc.gov/tobacco** for more information about the programs.
- *Are Anti-Tobacco Use Ads Effective?* – Have students review anti-tobacco, drug, and alcohol ads they may see on television or in print and discuss their reactions. Sample ads from the Office of National Drug Control Policy can be found at **http://adgallery.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov**.
- *What's My Image?* – Have students describe the image they want to portray and how they want others to "see" them.
- *What's the Law?* – This activity will help students understand the legal implications of minors smoking. They will research the laws in their state and the consequences of breaking the laws (on retailers selling tobacco to underage purchasers, and on minors purchasing tobacco). Students should present their findings to the class.
- *Invite a Guest* – Invite a local healthcare professional into your school to speak to your students about the health consequences of tobacco use. You might even reach out to the local health community for a role model who can speak to your class about his/her personal experiences with trying to quit smoking, or about how smoking has affected his/her life.

The Middle School Years—
• What Students Experience
• Classroom Considerations

As an educator, you know that middle school students experience many developmental changes as they grow physically, intellectually, and emotionally. The ***Right Decisions, Right Now: Be Tobacco Free*** program was created with this information in mind.

The charts on the next four pages provide a broad description of emotional, intellectual, and social developmental changes that occur in early- to mid-adolescence.[14] These changes are grouped by grade level for ease of reference. The charts also include tips and suggestions you might find useful in helping your students through their middle school years.

When using such a chart, it is recommended by psychologists to keep in mind the following points:

- Every child develops at his or her own pace; what one child experiences at 11 years of age another might not experience until age 14, if at all.
- Children don't necessarily complete one stage before progressing to the next. There are regressions, false starts, and stalls. Sometimes unanticipated crises (death in a family, move to a new state, etc.) arise that either spur or stunt development.
- Environmental factors (the stability of a neighborhood or a family, for instance) can impact the timing and content of development.
- Boys and girls often develop in different ways and in different timeframes.

GRADES 5 AND 6

Student Developmental Stages	Classroom Considerations
Emotional Development • Slight self-consciousness and an increased desire for privacy appears • Early feelings of conflict between family values and peer values • Getting better at articulating the content of feelings, but connection between feelings and thoughts not fully developed • May begin modeling the behavior of older children • Anxiety about "fitting in" in new school environment	**Emotional Development** • Create opportunities for small group discussions. • Give frequent compliments. • Acknowledge concerns that come with being the youngest in the school. • Have an area for kids to have time alone.
Intellectual Development • Beginnings of more complex thinking, from purely concrete (the car starts when the key is turned) to slightly abstract (electricity from the battery ignites internal movements in the car's engine) • Intense value placed on competency, on being able to do things well • Though they can apply rudimentary abstract thinking to their schoolwork, they may not be able to apply it to dealing with personal dilemmas • Issues of right and wrong generally viewed narrowly • Begin to question the "why" behind rules	**Intellectual Development** • Have occasional one-on-one student-teacher conferences. • Move from concrete to open-ended questions. • Encourage use of Internet for research. • Send children on Internet scavenger hunts. • Employ project-based learning.
Social Development • Less forthcoming with parents about a day's activities • Early experimentation with risk behavior (smoking, drinking, etc.) • Modeling of behavior of older students • Some avoidance of regular family activities	**Social Development** • Provide cooperative learning opportunities. • Maintain clear expectations for social interactions. • Teach students about positive role models from history and current events. • Practice interpersonal skills. • Display group and individual projects.

(Please note that there is no direct correlation between parallel bullets in the two columns.)

GRADE 7

Student Developmental Stages	Classroom Considerations
Emotional Development • *Powerful* desire for privacy • Increased anxiety about "fitting in" and "being accepted" by peer group • Significant shift in academic expectations can trigger stress about student's ability to achieve	**Emotional Development** • Teach deep breathing techniques. • Give students opportunities for free-writing as a means of expressing their feelings. • Use humor to address foolish behavior. • Ensure a balanced gender mix in all classrooms.
Intellectual Development • Increased ability to think abstractly, and in slightly more complex terms • Sense of right and wrong loosens some, with personal moral responsibility shifting (in some cases) from the individual to the group • Increasing curiosity about things outside of the self but the curiosity is often not sustained • Falling off of the idealization of parents that exists in pre-adolescence	**Intellectual Development** • Focus on more complex thinking skills. • Use ZIP cards for review of complex concepts. • Arrange cooperative learning tasks with assigned job responsibilities. • Offer after-school tutorials for students who need extra help. • Pose hypothetical problems that have morally ambiguous solutions and ask students to challenge or defend those solutions.
Social Development • Increased isolation from family, increasingly private about one's activities • May seek out adult relationships outside of family (teachers, coaches, neighbors) • Less attention paid to parents • Peer identification rises; child will begin to dress, speak, act like those in peer group with whom she or he wants to be identified. "Fitting in" is still highly valued. • The prevalence of group mentality • Competition among same sex peers to be found attractive to the opposite sex • Image conscious, may spend long hours preening, getting ready for school • More experimentation with risk behaviors	**Social Development** • Encourage students to apply their knowledge to social issues of importance to them. • Create mixed work teams (e.g., by race, gender, ethnicity, etc.) to build mutual understanding. • Create space for students to share their feelings and concerns with teachers. • Provide opportunities for one-on-one discussions of current assignments. • Create a buddy system for the benefit of incoming students.

GRADE 8

Student Developmental Stages	Classroom Considerations
Emotional Development • Increased sense of differentiation from family; child feels less ambivalent about this separation but more concerned with status among peers • Feelings of desire for members of the opposite sex, but often idealized • Feels more at home with academic life, more willing to consider responsibilities beyond academics	**Emotional Development** • Offer peer counseling/support groups. • Particularly in English class, connect literature to self in discussion. • Incorporate journal writing into lessons.
Intellectual Development • Enhanced intellectual abilities • Beginning to question and analyze life more extensively and more abstractly • Greater abstract thinking, particularly noticeable in math skills • Increased ability to separate thoughts from behaviors; *respond* to situations instead of merely *reacting* to them • Increased tendency to shift moral responsibilities to peer group • Curiosity about things outside of the self can be more sustained	**Intellectual Development** • Differentiate instruction. • Ask students to apply complex thinking skills to real-life problems ("You're lost in the woods, how do you find your way home…" or "You have to create a budget for a family of four…"). • Set up literature circles. • Support academically- or artistically-based student organizations and encourage students to join at least one that is reflective of their interests and values.
Social Development • Activities with the opposite sex (dating, "hanging out," after school events) begin in earnest; dating often done in groups rather than pairs • Sexual activity may begin • Popularity becoming more important; may engage in "attention-getting behaviors" in order to win approval of others • More pronounced, more overt drug and alcohol use, as well as tobacco use • Group mentality continues	**Social Development** • Provide books on current topics, including conflict resolution, peer pressure, bullying, etc. • Reprimand in private, praise in public. Address the behavior, not the student. • Have students work in groups with children who are of different temperaments, skill speeds, etc., than themselves. • Create situations where students have to practice democratic behavior. • Create groups, by gender, where students can safely explore issues of body image, health and hygiene, sexuality, etc.

GRADE 9

Student Developmental Stages	Classroom Considerations
Emotional Development • Greater conflict with parents may arise due to burgeoning sense of independence and personal responsibility • Concern about the importance of high school and the "stakes" attached to academic performance • Feelings of inferiority imposed by upper classmen on freshmen; or feelings of invincibility, of elevated status that comes with being "oldest kids in the school"	**Emotional Development** • Build journal writing time into the curriculum. • Emphasize education for education's sake, not as a "ticket to a good job." • Review conflict resolution techniques.
Intellectual Development • Increased cognitive development allows child to think about issues such as "the meaning of life" and their purpose in it • Thought patterns are more flexible, less rigid • More personally responsible moral code begins to develop • Thoughts often turn toward the child's future, college, career, etc.	**Intellectual Development** • Teach the importance of journaling. • Have regular student-teacher conferences. • Challenge students to justify statement of opinion intellectually. • Encourage critical thinking by asking questions that can have more than one defensible answer.
Social Development • Image conscious; attention to clothes, grooming, overall appearance, style, attractiveness to opposite sex • More curiosity about sexuality in general; more dating • May have broadened conflicts with parents • Increased interest in experimentation with risk behaviors • More personal code of behavior begins to emerge, with more responsibility taken for personal actions	**Social Development** • Instill in students a nascent sense of themselves as future leaders of the school; impose responsibilities and reward them when they are executed properly. • Model appropriate behaviors. • Label inappropriate behaviors that are immature. • Design a peer counseling program. • Emphasize what it means to show respect for members of the opposite sex. • Engage in role plays where behavioral choices have to be made.

Footnotes

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[8]U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Preventing Tobacco Use Among Young People: A Report of the Surgeon General.* Atlanta, Georgia: 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, 1994. Available online at http://profiles.nlm.nih.gov/NN/B/C/F/T/_/nnbcft.pdf

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[11]U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Reducing Tobacco Use: A Report of the Surgeon General.* Atlanta, Georgia: 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, 2000. Chapter Three. Available online at www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/2000/complete_report/pdfs/chapter3.pdf

[12]Adapted from multiple sources, including:

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b. CDC. Smoking & Tobacco Use. *Fact Sheet—Youth and Tobacco Use: Current Estimates (updated May 2009)*. Available online at www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/youth_data/tobacco_use/index.htm

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Bibliography & Resources

There are additional organizations and resources that can provide information on these and other lifestyle behaviors. The listing in this booklet does not imply that the organization endorses the program contained herein, nor does it constitute an endorsement of the organization by R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company.

WEB SITES

www.cdc.gov/tobacco - The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has a variety of resources for educators, parents, and students on tobacco.

www.nida.nih.gov - The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) has information for adults and students about tobacco and other drugs. For information on addiction, see:

- NIDA Research Report Series - Tobacco Addiction: *NIH Publication No. 09-4342, Revised 2009.*

http://teens.drugabuse.gov - NIDA's site for teens has information on drugs, including tobacco.

www.childrentoday.com/articles/330.php?wcat=80 - *No Butts About It: Talking to Your Kids About Smoking*, by Teri Brown, online article.

www.cbn.com/LivingTheLife/Features/DrLindaHelps/CigaretteSmoking.aspx - *Cigarette Smoking Increases Stress*, by Linda S. Mintle, Ph.D., online article.

www.KidsHealth.org - KidsHealth has information for children and adults on a variety of health topics, including *Kids and Smoking*, by Barbara P. Homeier, MD, online article.

CESSATION INFORMATION

www.cdc.gov/tobacco/quit_smoking/cessation/youth_tobacco_cessation/index.htm - The CDC's *Youth Tobacco Cessation: A Guide for Making Informed Decisions.*

www.smokefree.gov - An online smoking cessation program "You Can Quit Smoking Now!"

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Glossary of Tobacco-Related Terms

addiction - A chronic, relapsing disease characterized by compulsive drug seeking and abuse and by long-lasting neurochemical and molecular changes in the brain.[1]

cessation - Quitting tobacco.[2]

emphysema - A lung disease in which tissue deterioration results in increased air retention and reduced exchange of gases. The result is difficulty breathing and shortness of breath.[1]

leukoplakia - A lesion of the soft tissue that consists of a white patch or plaque that cannot be scraped off.[3]

nicotine - An alkaloid derived from the tobacco plant that is responsible for smoking's psychoactive and addictive effects.[1]

secondhand smoke - A complex mixture of gases and particles that includes smoke from the burning cigarette, cigar, or pipe tip (sidestream smoke) and exhaled mainstream smoke.[4]

smokeless tobacco - The two main types of smokeless tobacco in the United States are chewing tobacco and snuff. Chewing tobacco comes in the form of loose leaf, plug, or twist. Snuff is finely ground tobacco that can be dry, moist, or in sachets (tea bag-like pouches).[3]

tar - The total particulate matter in smoke, excluding water and alkaloid compounds such as nicotine, as measured by using a standardized protocol on a smoking machine.[5]

tobacco - A plant widely cultivated for its leaves, which are used primarily for smoking; the *N. tabacum* species is the major source of tobacco products.[1]

withdrawal symptoms - A variety of symptoms that occur after chronic use of an addictive drug is reduced or stopped.[1]

1. www.nida.nih.gov/ResearchReports/Nicotine/glossary.html
2. www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/cessation/quitting/index.htm
3. www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/smokeless/smokeless_facts/index.htm
4. www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/secondhand_smoke/general_facts/index.htm
5. www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/tobacco_industry/low_yield_cigarettes/index.htm

I Pledge to Be Tobacco Free

I understand that tobacco products have health risks and consequences. I choose to say "no" to tobacco and pledge to stay tobacco free. This means I will not smoke cigarettes or use smokeless tobacco because (fill in three reasons why you pledge to stay tobacco free):

1._____

2._____

3._____

By signing below, I pledge to be tobacco free:

X _____

Date _____

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Parent and Guardian Pledge

I,_____, will encourage my child to be tobacco free. I will talk with my child about the importance of not using tobacco. I will respect my child, listen to him/her, and answer his/her questions.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

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Thank you for using the Right Decisions, Right Now: Be Tobacco Free program. We hope that you and your colleagues found the materials helpful in encouraging your students to be tobacco free.

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