How to Talk with Students about Nicotine, Tobacco, and Vaping: Helping Students Who Use Nicotine

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• **Goals/Objectives**

- Identify state approved screening tools for identifying nicotine/tobacco use by students (CRAFFT-N).
- Describe how to implement brief intervention strategies related to vaping and nicotine use.
- Identify statewide referral resources for students who vape/use nicotine.
Note: “Current use” is defined as “use during the previous 30 days”

The 2021 MA Youth Health Survey (YHS) data are provisional and subject to revision until they have been thoroughly reviewed and received final approval.
20 Years of Teen Tobacco Use: Any Progress?

Massachusetts High School Youth Tobacco Use Rate: 1999-2019

- 1998: Attorney Generals from 46 states, including Massachusetts, sign the Master Settlement Agreement with tobacco companies, prohibiting tobacco advertising to people under 18.
- 2002: Multiple communities in the Boston Metro area ban smoking in workplaces; Cigarette Tax Raised to $1.51/Pack.
- 2008: MTCP establishes The 84 Program to engage youth in tobacco prevention work.
- 2009: Federal Gov’t bans all flavored cigarettes, but exempts mint/menthol.
- 2011+: Influx of flavored OTP (cigars, cigarillos, smokeless) products flood the market.
- 2015: 1st generation disposable e-cigarettes like Blu and Vuse dominate the market.
- 2017: JUUL becomes most popular e-cigarette on the market.
- 2018: MA state law raises the MLSA of tobacco to 21; Also bans the sale of tobacco in pharmacies.
- 2020: MA law restricts the sale of all flavored tobacco products, including menthol.

2010-Present: Local point-of-sale (POS) policy movement across Massachusetts. Many cities and towns pass flavor restrictions, cigar minimum price laws, capping regulators, pharmacy bans, and other policies that counter industry influence in the local retail environment.
What Might You Notice in a Student Who Uses Vapes/Nicotine?

- **Withdrawal symptoms** may occur within hours of vaping:
  - cravings for vapes
  - feeling restless and jumpy
  - feeling irritable or sad
  - having trouble concentrating
  - experiencing mood swings or fatigue
  - tremors, sweating, dizziness

- Getting “**nicked**” – euphoria with high doses of nicotine

- Getting “**nic sick**” – heart palpitations, nausea/vomiting, lightheadedness with overuse

- Leaving the classroom/campus frequently (bathrooms/outdoors)

Teachers and other staff members may see signs of nicotine use and dependence.
• Nurses and school personnel administering SBIRT screening using the CRAFFT+N are in a unique position to assist students with quitting nicotine use.

• Use Screening with the CRAFFT+N and the Brief Negotiated Interview to discuss nicotine.

• Refer students to additional treatment or education as needed.

Addressing Student Vaping with the CRAFFT+N, HONC, and BNI
SCREENING
Universal screen to identify unhealthy substance use

BRIEF INTERVENTION
Brief intervention to address screening results

REFERRAL TO TREATMENT
Referral for further services as needed
Find out if your students use nicotine by screening with the CRAFFT+N

How Many Days Did the Student Use Nicotine in the Past 12 Months?

- Use the CRAFFT+N to specifically ask about all nicotine use within the last 12 months, including vaping, cigarettes, and smokeless nicotine (Question #4).
- Even if they answer just “1 day” to question 4, nicotine should be addressed.
- If tobacco/nicotine use is endorsed, go to the HONC (Hooked on Nicotine Checklist)
How To Use the Hooked on Nicotine Checklist (HONC)

• The HONC is a validated measure of the loss of autonomy students have over their tobacco and nicotine use.
• Many students may not feel dependent on nicotine, and the HONC may impact how they view their nicotine use.
• Information learned through this tool may be helpful when conducting the brief negotiated interview.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part C</th>
<th>“The following questions ask about your use of any vaping devices containing nicotine and/or flavors, or use of any tobacco products.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Have you ever tried to QUIT using, but couldn’t?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Do you vape or use tobacco NOW because it is really hard to quit?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Have you ever felt like you were ADDICTED to vaping or tobacco?</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Do you ever have strong CRAVINGS to vape or use tobacco?</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Have you ever felt like you really NEEDED to vape or use tobacco?</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Is it hard to keep from vaping or using tobacco in PLACES where you are not supposed to, like school?</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>When you HAVEN’T vaped or used tobacco in a while (or when you tried to stop using)...</td>
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<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>did you find it hard to CONCENTRATE because you couldn’t vape or use tobacco?</td>
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<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>did you feel more IRRITABLE because you couldn’t vape or use tobacco?</td>
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<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>did you feel a strong NEED or urge to vape or use tobacco?</td>
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<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>did you feel NERVOUS, restless, or anxious because you couldn’t vape or use tobacco?</td>
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Circle one: Yes / No
Poll Question:

What makes it difficult to talk with students about their vaping? (You may choose more than 1)

1. I don’t feel confident that I have the tools to help students.
2. Students don’t want to quit vaping.
3. Administration is not supportive for me to work with students regarding their vaping.
4. Other competing health concerns with students such as depression, anxiety, other substance use.
5. Other – post in chat
**SCREENING**
Universal screen to identify unhealthy substance use

**BI**
Brief intervention to address screening results

**RT**
Referral for further services as needed

**Build Rapport**

**Explore Pros and Cons**

**Provide Feedback and Educate**

**Use Readiness Ruler**

**Negotiate Action Plan**
Case Scenario: Emma J., Grade 10

- 15 year old, on JV cross-country and track teams
- CRAFFT+N = vapes every day
- Teaches have noted that she is using the restroom multiple times a day and seems to pay less attention in class
- She has recently lost weight; parents are concerned
- She has become more agitated at school and frustrated with schoolwork. She is having difficulty completing assignments.
- During the HONC administration she endorsed the following statements:
  - Has tried to quit and cut down but couldn’t
  - Is hard to keep from vaping in places you are not supposed to
  - Feels a strong need to vape
  - Feels nervous/anxious because she couldn’t vape
You:

"Thanks for agreeing to chat with me about your screening results, Emma. I’m wondering if you can fill me in a bit more about your vaping - how does it fit into your life right now? Can you talk a bit about when and where you vape?"

"Mmm so you vape most days. And lately it has been a bit harder to find mint vapes."

Emma:

"Um, okay. I usually vape before and after school if I have one. They’re getting harder to find though, especially the flavored ones like mint."

"Yeah, I mean sometimes I’ll share them with friends. But my parents have thrown them out before, and they can be hard to replace."
You:

“Got it. Well maybe you could tell me some of the things that you like about vaping?”

“It's one way that you relax and socialize. What about the other side – what are some of the things that you like a little less about it, or that worry you about vaping, if anything?”

Emma:

“I just use it as a way to relax. It’s fun to do, when I’m watching TikTok or gaming with friends.”

“Umm. Not much. It does kind of suck if I want to vape and I don’t have one. It can make it hard to focus. Or I get a kind of feeling that I really need to vape. And they cost so much!”
You:
“You like some aspects of vaping, and at the same time you’ve noticed that you have to vape regularly to avoid some unpleasant feelings – like losing focus or feeling like you really need to vape.

“Could I ask, Emma, what you know about vaping and your health?”

“So you know about how cigarettes can impact your health. Could I share some information with you about how vaping can impact your health?”

Emma:

“Yeah, I guess I do.”

“It’s not as bad as smoking cigarettes. I mean most of my friends do it.”

“Sure.”
What might you emphasize to Emma about the health effects of vaping?

We would like to hear from you, using a “Chat Waterfall”

In the “chat” function, please type in one point about health effects of vaping that you would tell Emma. We’ll give about 30 seconds to think of one.

If you’re not sure, note “not sure.”

DO NOT CLICK “SEND” YET!

Once you’ve had time to type in your answer I’ll count down and then we’ll all send our responses at once.

Ready?

3 2 1 Send!
Build Rapport
Explore Pros and Cons
Provide Feedback and Educate
Use Readiness Ruler
Negotiate Action Plan

Resources:
MTCP Nurses and Counselors Guide, available at the Massachusetts Health Promotion Clearinghouse, has talking points about nicotine dependence, health, and triggers to vaping.

INTERACTIVE SCRIPTS FOR SPEAKING WITH YOUTH

HEALTH EFFECTS OF VAPING:
Nicotine can increase your heart rate, which you may notice if you play sports or are active. You may get tired more easily or not be able to run as fast.
- What have you noticed for yourself?
High amounts of nicotine may make you feel irritable, sick to your stomach, or jittery. This is called “nic sick.” If it’s been a while since you have vaped, you may begin to feel unwell or have bad cravings to vape.
- What have you experienced?
Nicotine can cause changes to your brain that make it harder to pay attention, or to control impulses or your moods.
- What have you noticed for yourself?
The vapor that comes from vape isn’t water. It’s an aerosol that contains heavy metals, cancer-causing ingredients, and ultra-fine particles that can damage your lungs. Flavorings add other chemicals that may be approved for eating but not inhaling.
- What have you been hearing about the damaging health effects of vaping?

DISCUSSING DEPENDENCE:
After completing the HONC, review answers with the student and discuss their “Yes” responses.

Let’s see how you scored. Any “Yes” response indicates you might be having a hard time controlling your vaping and that you are dependent on nicotine.

Point to an example where the student answered “yes” and explain how that may be a sign of dependence.

- Most vapes have high amounts of nicotine, an addictive chemical that can be hard to quit. Some vape manufacturers add nicotine salts which are more easily absorbed by your body, causing you to take in higher amounts of nicotine. What are your thoughts about this?

- If it’s been a while since you have vaped, many young people find they begin to have bad cravings or feel unwell which is called “withdrawal.” What have you noticed for yourself?

- Young people who vape are four times more likely to go on to smoke cigarettes, even if they think they never will. What are your thoughts about this?
“Get Outraged” Toolkit:
https://www.mass.gov/doc/get-outraged-toolkit/download

Toolkit includes sections for:

- Administrators
- Curriculum Coordinators and Teachers
- School Health Services

Addressing Student Use of E-Cigarettes and other Vaping Products

In Massachusetts, 51.2% of high school students have tried electronic vapor products, and 32% currently use these products (2019 MA Youth Health Survey). Nearly 15% of middle school students have tried electronic vapor products (2019 MA Youth Health Survey).

This toolkit provides tools and resources for Massachusetts schools, community-based organizations, and providers who are working to address the use of e-cigarettes and other vaping products by youth. It outlines opportunities for action that can be taken by various school and community-based organization staff, along with resources and tools to help.

The toolkit was originally created with schools in mind but can easily be adapted by community-based organizations.
You:

“You mentioned feeling the need to vape. One of things about vaping nicotine is the feeling of needing to vape more than you want to getting in the way of your life. For example, some people say they feel more irritable or tense when they can’t vape. What do you think about that?”

“It can be frustrating to think that your vaping is affecting your mood.”

Emma:

“I’ve felt the need to vape when I can’t; that’s annoying. And I've noticed that I feel less anxious when I eventually do vape. I don’t like thinking that it's messing with my mood.”
You:

“Emma if I asked how important is it for you to consider making any changes in your vaping, where would you put yourself on a scale of 1-10?”

“Why did you pick a 4 and not a lower number, like 1 or 2?”

Emma:

“Umm. Probably about a 4.”

“I guess because I like to vape, but it has been harder to get vapes. And it’s expensive. And I don’t want to feel like I have to do it every day. Just when I want to.”
You:

“You want to maintain control, so you get to decide when you vape.”

“What are the benefits of that for you?”

“You're sick of feeling like you need it, having to hide it, and you want to save money. What ideas do you have about how you might accomplish those goals?”

Emma:

“Yeah.”

“I guess just like not losing focus. And it would be great if I didn’t feel I needed to vape during school. I hate hiding in the bathroom. And I’d love to save money!”

“Ummm maybe trying to vape less in the morning on my way to school, or like doing something else when I want to vape.”
You:

“What do you think you could do instead of vaping in the morning?

“So having your friend's support could help. What other ideas do you have about things you could do instead of vaping?”

Emma:

“Maybe I could try telling my friend who drives me to school that I don’t want to vape.”

“Maybe we could just sing along to music – or stop at Dunk’s!”
S
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You:

“You know, there are some programs or people who could help you cut down or quit vaping if you decided to. Would you be interested in hearing about them?”

“Sure. We can review the options together - and then you get to decide if or how you move forward with any of them.”

Emma:

“Okay. But I can’t promise I’d quit.”
Offer assistance, which may include any or all of the following:

1. Meet with student at a future date
2. Give student information about “This is Quitting,” a text-only program that offers support and motivation.
3. Give student information about “My Life, My Quit,” offered by the Massachusetts Quitline. This includes texting with an individual counselor who can offer personalized support and motivation.
4. Ask for student’s permission to contact their primary care provider, if they need help quitting.
“Quitting Vaping” Brochure

- For students who want more information about quitting, including:
  - Information about texting programs that may assist in youth in quitting.
  - Modified questions from the HONC to introduce the idea of dependence.
  - Reasons for quitting given by some students
  - Suggestions for dealing with stress.
- Appropriate for students who aren’t entirely sure they want to quit.
Call or text “Start My Quit” to 1-855-891-9989
mylifemyquit.com

- Designated coaching model for youth 12-17 trying to quit
- Developmentally appropriate cessation needs
- Specifically trained Youth Coach Specialists for all youth participants
- Can access assistance through coaching calls, texts, or the online program
• Program of the Truth Initiative

• Free text program for youth and young adults 13 - 24 trying to quit

• Users receive at least 4 weeks of messages focused on building skills and confidence before and after their quit date

“This is Quitting” Customized for Massachusetts Youth and Young Adults

Text “VapeFreeMass” to 88709
American Academy of Pediatrics


Includes videos for addressing vaping, information about dependence, pharmacotherapy treatment, and updated medical information.

Our next speaker will introduce this resource.
You:
“So just to recap - if you do decide to make a change in your vaping, you’ll try cutting it out in the morning by asking your friend for support, singing or going to Dunks. Would you be open to checking in about this in a week? I’d love to hear how it works out for you.”

“Thanks for being so thoughtful and open today Emma.”

Emma:
“Yeah, I guess so.”

“Sure, you’re welcome.”
For students not interested in quitting or cutting down:

- The student brochure available at the MA Health Promotion Clearinghouse includes a modified HONC and reasons to quit.
- Offer to meet in another month or two to check in.
Poll Question:
What might you try the next time you talk to a student who is vaping? (You may choose more than 1)

1. Ask pros and cons to explore student’s ambivalence.
2. Offer information about health effects of vaping, such as nicotine dependence.
3. Offer to set up a follow-up meeting to continue the discussion.
4. Explore referral options based on student’s interest, such as “My Life, My Quit,” “This is Quitting,” the Stanford Tobacco Prevention Toolkit, or others.
5. Give them the student brochure or other materials.
6. Other (answer in chat)
Thank you for the work you do!

For more information, please contact us at cttrt@umassmed.edu