

Attitudes, Values and Peer Pressure

Attitudes, Values and Peer Pressure Overview

- Over 80% of smokers start in teenage years
- Smoking status of parents is thought to be most influential factor on young people
- Whether our peer group smokes is another big factor
- Some evidence to show nicotine receptors are stimulated when we are children making us more likely to be a smoker
- We are surrounded by media images and influences that can subconsciously influence our views on smoking

Whether we smoke or not is ultimately our choice. It is a mixture of our own thoughts and external influences which will lead us towards smoking or indeed prevent us from trying it. Often our first experiences can help form initial memories of smoking - for example stinging eyes, sore throat, thick blue air or admiring someone for looking glamorous or grown up. Often when we think of these first memories they are quite negative and yet most people go on to at least try a cigarette. It's quite common for young people to hold quite contradictory views on smoking for example they may have very negative thoughts about past experiences but may still smoke when out with friends.

So why do young people smoke.....

Young people can often hold the view that they will be able to stop when they want and that their smoking is only short term. They don't believe they will get addicted to nicotine and smoking will not pose a threat to their health as they will stop before that point. When tobacco is inhaled it delivers a concentrated dose of nicotine reaching the brain within 7 seconds. This releases two chemicals (noradrenaline and dopamine) which both act as stimulants, this results in developing symptoms of nicotine addiction, possibly very quickly. Before you know it you are becoming a weekly or possibly daily smoker. Novice smokers may not recognise the signs of dependence and may think that any anxious or jittery feelings are soothed by a cigarette - which leads to the myth that cigarettes calm you down. This is not true as the reason you feel better is because it relieves symptoms of your dependence on nicotine, not stress. Remember nicotine is a stimulant and so speeds up the body's cardio and physiological systems. As with most drugs, over time, smokers need greater amounts of nicotine to get that feeling of contentedness - leading to a heavy, regular smoking habit.

Young people are still growing and establishing themselves as individuals, while this is happening they can be heavily influenced by those around them. Research suggests that young people who live with parents who smoke are 4 times more likely to smoke themselves. This is particularly so if the parents smoke in the house around the children. It is thought the reasoning behind this is two-fold. The act of smoking becomes a norm and an accepted behaviour which children may subconsciously aspire to. The second reason is that smoking around children can open up physiological pathways to nicotine receptors that may be stimulated later in life making them more likely to start smoking.

A strong influence also comes from their peer group and the media. Young people strive to 'fit in' with those around them and so are keen to join in with what is happening to avoid being left out - sometimes this includes starting to smoke. There is often the belief among young people that it was not peer pressure as nobody made them, it was most definitely their choice

however, peer pressure can just be that need to 'fit in', young people need to recognise this.

Perhaps young people think that everyone smokes but the national statistics would suggest that 86% of young people **do not** smoke. This challenges what young people believe to be a social norm. As mentioned above the media can have a huge influence on the views held by young people. Photos of famous, successful, glamorous people smoking can lead young people to aspire to this or believe they can emulate their smoking behaviour to become successful, attractive or popular themselves.

Packaging

How can we support young people to make a positive choice

It is important that young people explore all these issues surrounding tobacco and find out how they personally feel about it. The way in which we can do this is by;

Giving young people the opportunity to explore their own experiences and thoughts in a safe environment

Sessions should always encourage young people to explore and share their views, whether in a group work situation or personal writing pieces. Confidentiality should be stressed to give young people the confidence to take part fully.

Suggested Activities;

- **'Memories of Tobacco'** - Everyone is asked to think about when they first remember anything to do with tobacco or smoking. This could be done as an open group discussion, pairs, small groups or individually. Memories should be captured on a piece of paper (perhaps shaped as a speech bubble/cloud to represent a thought). All memories can be put up on the wall so everyone can read them. A discussion can start with the following key questions - how people felt at the time, what do they feel about it now, does it affect your view of smoking, are the majority of memories that people mentioned of a positive or negative nature? See **'Lesson Plan - Memories of Tobacco'**.
- **'Advertisements'** - Discuss the power of advertisements using the examples of old and new adverts given in this pack (or any from your own research). Discussions should centre around thinking about, what is the advert trying to do, who is it aimed at, should tobacco advertising be allowed and do any of them shock you? Discuss the idea of celebrities smoking - are they a good role model, are they surprised by any of them who smoke, should they smoke in public, how does it make them look?
- **Tobacco Advertising and tobacco Packaging Presentation** - deliver the presentation and open up the themes contained within it for discussion.
- **'Tobacco Industry Quotes'** - The tobacco industry quotes can either be printed out and laminated or can be copied on to flip chart paper. Split the participants into groups of 4 and ask them to discuss the quotes. Particularly asking them what they think each quote means and how it makes them feel. What do they think the tobacco industry thinks of young people? Why do they purposefully target young people?
- **'Why do young people smoke'** - Again split into groups and give the groups either a selection or all of the following questions to discuss.;
 - Why do young people smoke?

- Why do older people smoke?
- What are the positive/negative effects of smoking?
- Why do young people chose not to smoke?
- Why do people give up smoking?
- What alternatives are there to smoking?

Ask the group to feedback paying particular attention to why young people don't smoke and what alternatives are available.

Encouraging forming alternative positive identities and provide positive role models

This involves looking at the media and people around them. As mentioned above, peers, family and media have the biggest influence on young people who wish to start smoking.

Suggested Activities;

- **Television / Media** - A Discussion can start with looking at smoking on television or films. Ask what the young people think smoking adds to the film/programme? Would it be the same storyline if smoking were removed? What is it's purpose? Is it a good role model for younger people? Think about the way cigarettes are sold - wall of colours etc. behind the counter - is it appealing/attractive to young people? Is it accessible and affordable? Discuss the Government making this illegal in the near future - will it have an impact on tobacco sales?
- **Drama** - Take a scene from a television programme and look at how adding or removing smoking from it might alter the messages given - this could be done as drama or a poster making activity. Ask them to explore what other young people might think of their piece of drama/art.
- **Positives** - Have examples of television programmes that do not have smoking on screen and pictures of celebrities who do not smoke (sports idols, attractive people etc) and ask young people why they think they are still successful and what if that famous person/programme did openly smoke/show smoking what impact would it have? Show that there are lots of popular people/programmes to support that do not smoke.

Provide young people with information on the health impacts of smoking

- See Impact of tobacco use, Section X

Provide young people with information on the social and global impacts of smoking

- See Tobacco and the Environment, Section X

Give young people the skills to be more resilient, assertive and confident

It is important that young people are supported through making difficult decisions in their lives, this includes the decision whether or not to smoke. This can be an emotional time for young people when they are torn between what they believe is right or wrong and what their friends are doing. How young people think they are viewed in their social circle can be very important to them and so may find themselves doing something they wouldn't normally do - just to fit in. The need for popularity, acceptance and impressing people may all lead to situations where young people may try smoking and subsequently become addicted. If young people are given the opportunity to think

about these situations before they arise and are equipped with coping strategies - they have a better chance of making a choice or decision that is right for them. Young people need to learn to be confident, assertive, self assured and resilient in order to feel they can stand out from the crowd and stand up for what they believe in.

Suggested activities;

- Smoke out Activity Pack - various activities
- Coping strategies Activity Pack - in the Y-Step toolkit, various activities
- 'Assertiveness' - Begin an open discussion with what young people think assertive behaviour means. Ask the young people to give examples of assertive behaviour - prepare some prompt examples to begin the discussion if needed. Split the class into groups and ask that they consider the case studies. Explore what they think the person in the scenario should do and also what they would do if it was them. What is the right thing to do? What is the alternative? How could you be assertive in this situation? What might the consequences be? How do you think it would make you feel? Have a group discussion about how these case studies could be linked to real situations that they have encountered - how did they handle it? How might they have coped differently? What strategies might help in the future if they face similar situations?

moking in films and in the media

- The entertainment media depict smoking on a regular basis. Images of smoking are commonplace in films, television shows and magazines, and can influence the attitudes and behaviours of young people. Other forms of media such as the internet represent a growing concern in this respect.
- Tobacco companies have known for a long time what a huge influence they can have by portraying smoking in the movies. Evidence of ties between tobacco companies and film studios in the 1950s. Their stars would appear in tobacco advertising leading to cross promotion of tobacco brands and films. By the 1970s there was paid placement for film studios to include tobacco.
- World Health Organisation aims to reduce exposure to tobacco images in all ways, including films. They recognise that smoking in the movies is a powerful promotional force and that there is a shifting in the resources of the tobacco companies so that as many countries ban advertising - tobacco companies increase advertising through other methods - such as in the movies.
- Evidence suggests that exposure to smoking in films means those watching them are more likely to start smoking. Dose response > see it and are more likely to start smoking.
- The length of time that smoking is on screen may only be two minutes - so it is not an important/necessary part of the film.
- 10 year international study is being carried out in USA - 'media influences on adolescent

smoking behaviour' led by Dr James Sergeant, Director of the Cancer Control Research Programme at Norris Cotton Cancer Centre. They are looking at smoking occurrences in 532 box office hits. Study counted number of instances of smoking in the movies and asked 10-14 yr olds if they had seen these movies. The group of young people were split into 4 quartels - people in quartel 4 (who had seen most of the films) were more likely to smoke.

Tobacco company advertising

- Young people are exposed to the positive images of smoking generated by tobacco industry marketing. The ban on tobacco advertising in the UK has greatly restricted the more traditional forms of marketing (e.g. billboards); however, ubiquitous distribution, increasingly elaborate point of sale displays, attractive pack liveries and evocative brand imagery continue to provide key marketing opportunities that influence young people.
- In 1999 the WHO Director General Dr Gro Brundtland stated that the time had come for tobacco products to be judged for what they are - nicotine delivery devices - rather than what they are made out to be by the tobacco industry. Cigarettes are one of the most highly engineered consumer products available and regulation of the tobacco industry is long overdue. For decades the tobacco industry has subverted science and used false advertising and promotional tactics to veil nicotine addiction as an act of free choice.
- In 1999-2000, the House of Commons Health Select Committee carried out an inquiry into the UK tobacco industry and the health risks of smoking. Their final report, published in June 2000, concluded: "We believe that the extraordinarily dangerous nature of the product being marketed means that tobacco companies cannot expect to operate in the same commercial environment as most other industries."
- In recent years the European Parliament has introduced 2 Directives to regulate tobacco products. The Labelling Directive aimed to improve public knowledge about the composition and health effects of tobacco products and became UK law on 31 December 2002. Whilst the Directive on Advertising and Promotion, which sought to restrict tobacco advertising in the media, at point of sale outlets, and through brand sharing and sponsorship, became law on 31 July 2005.

The 'school effect'

- Schools have the potential to influence their pupils' behaviour through the schools social organisation and culture (non-formal school characteristics) as well as through formal curriculum.
- For male pupils, attitude to school, quality of staff/pupils relationships, school-level affluence, and its interaction with school level poor quality of staff pupils relationships were

all associated with school level smoking rates and successfully explained the 'school effects'.

- It is likely that there are additional effects of peer influence and small geographical area effects.
- However peer influence in itself subject to the school effects and evidence to date suggests that area effects are smaller than school effects.
- Changing school characteristics may have an effect on smoking and so supports a health promoting school approach.
- The investment in social environments has the potential to strongly influence male smoking and to a lesser extent female smoking.
- Influence possible even for senior secondary pupils and likely to apply to other health behaviours.

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

Out of sight sales (Tobacco and Primary Medical Services Act (Scotland) 2010)

- Research has demonstrated that there is a positive, consistent and specific relationship between exposure to tobacco advertising and the subsequent uptake of smoking among adolescents.
- Adolescents appear to be more receptive to tobacco advertising than adults.
- A 2007 study found that those trying to buy under age experience urges to purchase cigarettes when confronted with cigarette pack displays in retail stores.
- Point of sale advertising is crucial to the tobacco industry. It is an extremely effective method of encouraging experimentation by young people through the marketing attached to packages. Studies have found that cigarette point of sale advertising and marketing materials are more prominent in stores where adolescents frequently shop. In Scotland from 2011 this will be illegal.
- Research has shown that tobacco companies have exploited the lack of rules regarding the display of tobacco products at the point of sale in order to maximise the presentation and appeal of certain brands and to reduce the visual impact of health warnings on tobacco packages.
- Tobacco companies themselves have highlighted that point of sale bans will have a negative impact on tobacco consumption and harm tobacco sales, which is consistent with claims by health groups that such bans are desirable to advance public health goals.

Take smoking out of films

World Health Organisation, along with tobacco control groups in America suggest that the film

industry has to take some responsibility and urges them to:

- Certify no pay-off (no £ or gifts etc for using tobacco images)
- Stop identifying tobacco brands (i.e. no billboards in the background of films)
- Requirement of strong anti tobacco ads before film or on DVD if smoking in film
- Implement an adult rating system if films include tobacco - make the rating for adults - 18 only which would reduce exposure

YSTEP Lesson/Learning Activity Plans Leading to Curriculum for Excellence outcomes:

Activity/Time	Resources	Curriculum for Excellence outcomes and Level:

Useful Websites

The information in these factsheets is sourced from a range of reputable organisations. Contact details are given below, should teachers require more detailed information on

any topic area, or wish to download additional teaching resources.

www.canstopsmoking.com

Developed by Health Scotland, this website provides information on the reasons behind why people smoke and what support is available if they are looking to quit. Local smoking cessation services can be found on this website.

www.ashscotland.org.uk

ASH Scotland is the leading voluntary organisation campaigning for effective tobacco control legislation. For 30 years, ASH Scotland has played a key role in raising awareness about tobacco use and its harmful effects and has contributed to the implementation of effective public health policies to help smokers to quit and to protect children from tobacco.

www.healthscotland.com

The national health improvement agency for Scotland.

www.ash.org.uk

ASH is a campaigning public health charity working for a comprehensive societal response to tobacco aimed at achieving a sharp reduction and eventual elimination of the health problems caused by tobacco. Includes visual and presentation resources available to download in PDF for teachers.

www.tobaccoinscotland.com

Working with key partners, ASH Scotland developed Tobacco Information Scotland to provide the best possible gateway to smoking and tobacco-related information in Scotland.

www.bbc.co.uk/health

Good interactive site for children, including the 'Body Tour' (www.bbc.co.uk/health/kids/btourshtml). Useful information source for teachers/older adolescents on a range of addictions (www.bbc.co.uk/health/addictions).

www.gasp.org.uk

Web catalogue containing 350 stop smoking and tobacco control resources, including leaflets, books, activity packs, training materials, displays, models and posters.

www.mindbodysoul.gov.uk

Targeted at 14- to 16-year-olds, but there are several relevant sections for younger children, e.g. 'Scary facts about smoking', 'Vanity facts' and 'What's in a cigarette'?

www.quitbecause.org.uk

A guide for young people on how to give up smoking.

www.clearingtheairscotland.com

A Scottish Government website which provides the background and detailed guidance for the smoking ban in enclosed public places.

www.tobaccoagechangescotland.co.uk

Information on the change in age legislation.

www.roycastle.org/kats

Lively and interactive site supporting Kids Against Tobacco initiative, which was developed by the Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation.

www.tobaccopapers.com

In 1999, the House of Commons Select Committee acquired access to internal documents of the main advertising agencies of the UK tobacco industry as part of their investigation into the conduct of the tobacco industry. Contains an interesting case study on the Tobacco Market and Young People.

www.who.org

The World Health Organization is the United Nations specialised agency for health. Includes *The Tobacco Atlas*.

www.globalink.org

A US site with a tobacco encyclopaedia.