



RIGHT DECISIONS

**BE  
NICOTINE  
FREE**

RIGHT NOW



Empowering you to  
help young people  
be Nicotine free

**Presenter  
Guide**

<b>Leader Overview</b> .....	page 3
<b>Keeping healthy</b>	
<b>Getting started</b> .....	page 4-6
<b>Preteen Activities</b>	
Activity One: Understanding the Health Consequences of Tobacco and Nicotine Use Fortune-teller.....	page 6-10
Activity Two: Nicotine-Free Bingo.....	page 11-17
<b>Teen activities</b>	
Activity One: Understanding the Health Consequences of Tobacco and Nicotine Use.....	page 18-19
Activity Two: Nicotine-Free Poem.....	page 20-21
<b>How Friends Fit In</b>	
<b>Getting started</b> .....	page 22
<b>Preteen Activities</b>	
Activity One: Friends Play a Role.....	page 23-24
Activity Two: Saying “No” Is the Way to Go.....	page 25-26
Activity Three: Role Playing.....	page 27-30
<b>Teen Activities</b>	
Activity One: Peer Power.....	page 31-32
Activity Two: Saying “No” Is the Way to Go.....	page 33-34
Activity Three: Getting it “Write”.....	page 35-37
<b>How I Am</b>	
<b>Getting started</b> .....	page 38
<b>Preteen Activities</b>	
Activity One: Mirror, Mirror.....	page 39-41
Activity Two: Decisions, Decisions All Around.....	page 42-43
Activity Three: Nicotine-Free Pledge, That’s Me!.....	page 44-45
<b>Teen Activities</b>	
Activity One: My Future Is in MY Hands.....	page 46-48
Activity Two: Decisions, Decisions All Around.....	page 49-50
Activity Three: Nicotine-Free Pledge, That’s Me!.....	page 51-52

It is a fact that most young people do not use tobacco or nicotine products.<sup>1</sup> But research also shows that young people are most likely to try smoking for the first time when they are between the ages of 11 and 13, or in grades 6–7.<sup>2</sup> One study found that the rate of trying a cigarette more than doubled from 6th grade to 8th grade, from 6.6 percent to 13.3<sup>2</sup> percent. While the majority of youth are not using tobacco or nicotine products, some may be, and others may be thinking about it. That's where you come in.

The Right Decisions Right Now: Be Nicotine Free education program is designed to help adults like you share facts and strategies to prevent young people from using tobacco and nicotine products (cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, vapes, or nicotine pouches). The program was created by Lifetime Learning Systems, Inc., digitally enhanced by BKFK, and funded by R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company. References and footnotes were updated by Young Minds Inspired.

The Right Decisions Right Now program covers three topics that each play a role in keeping kids nicotine free:

## 1. Keeping Healthy

In this section, you have the option to do one or two activities, depending on the time you have available, that will educate your group about the health consequences of tobacco and nicotine use.

## 2. How Friends Fit In (Interpersonal Skills)

In this section, young people will explore their relationships with others. The activities concentrate on peer relationships and how peer pressure, influence, and acceptance affect their lives. There are activities on refusal skills to help equip youth with strategies for saying “no” to tobacco and nicotine in all its forms.

## 3. How I Am (Intrapersonal Skills)

This section encourages youth to look at how they act, feel, and think. Topics covered include self-esteem, social image, decision-making skills, and personal values. The activities are designed to provide young people with a chance to practice making decisions and to empower them to make healthy choices.

Each module of the program includes step-by-step directions on how to present the material along with discussion guides and activities for both preteen youth (ages 10–12) and teenagers (ages 13 and up). All you have to do is follow the detailed directions and use the support materials provided. Additional resources, such as videos, posters, and brochures, can be used or sent home to families. Find them on the Right Decisions Right Now website: [www.rightdecisionsrightnow.com/resources](http://www.rightdecisionsrightnow.com/resources).



**RELAX, HAVE FUN, AND KNOW  
THAT YOU'RE MAKING A REAL  
DIFFERENCE IN YOUR COMMUNITY.**

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

<sup>1</sup> CDC. Smoking & Tobacco Use. Fact Sheet—Youth and Tobacco Use: Estimates of Current Tobacco Use Among Youth. Referenced 2024. [www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/fact\\_sheets/youth\\_data/tobacco\\_use/](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/youth_data/tobacco_use/)

<sup>2</sup> Miech, R. A., Johnston, L. D., O'Malley, P. M., Bachman, J. G., & Schulenberg, J. E. (2016). Monitoring the Future National Survey Results on Drug Use, 1975–2015: Volume I. Secondary School Students. Ann Arbor: Institute for Social Research, The University of Michigan. Referenced 2024. [https://monitoringthefuture.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/mtf-vol1\\_2015.pdf](https://monitoringthefuture.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/mtf-vol1_2015.pdf) See also [www.monitoringthefuture.org/data/16data/16cigtbl4.pdf](http://www.monitoringthefuture.org/data/16data/16cigtbl4.pdf)

## MODULE ONE

### KEEPING HEALTHY

**Approx. Time:** 40 minutes

25  
minutes

The primary reason we want young people to be nicotine free is because of the health consequences of using tobacco and nicotine products like cigarettes, vapes, smokeless tobacco and nicotine pouches. The Keeping Healthy module focuses on sharing facts about the short- and long-term negative consequences of tobacco and nicotine use.

## 1. What You'll Do in This Module

This module begins with an activity that will highlight specific health consequences of using tobacco and nicotine and help young people see that these consequences could prevent them from doing things they enjoy, such as playing basketball, singing, or even just hanging out with their friends.

## 2. Preteens

For preteens, the final activity is the game Nicotine-Free Bingo. This will be a fun way for the group to review what they've learned. We've provided bingo-card templates on pages 13-17 for you to print or photocopy

## Teens

Teens will write an acrostic poem to help them recall what they've learned about the health consequences of tobacco and nicotine use and also remind them of reasons why they want to be tobacco and nicotine free.



Depending on the ages of the participants in your group, **choose either the preteen or the teen activities.** All of the activities in this module can be completed in 40 minutes, or you can do each of the activities in two consecutive meetings with your group. If you don't have 40 minutes or aren't able to meet multiple times with your group, we recommend just doing the first activity which can be done in about 20 minutes.

This Leader's Guide will walk you through every step of each activity, so don't feel like you have to be an expert. Be sure to review the activities and the discussion talking points provided in the Leader's Guide before meeting with your group.

Prior to your presentation, speak with the youth leader about your approach to answering questions and interacting with the group. Discuss the logistics of your presentation, such as the setup of the room, audiovisual needs, or any other concerns. To encourage a more open dialogue with the youth, the presentation should not be video or audio recorded. You may want to ask the youth and any adults to put away their cell phones for the duration of the presentation.

If you are not a regular presenter or leader of the group, let the youth know who you are – your name, your connection to the group and your profession. You might also want to provide a fun personal fact, like your favorite flavor of ice cream or your favorite sport or activity. If you have a picture of your self when you were their age, show it as a way to help the youth in your group relate to you. If it's a group or team photo, ask the youth to find you in the picture. Breaking the ice and relating to the students is an effective way to begin the conversation and build trust.

Next, explain that you are there to talk with them specifically about the health consequences of tobacco and nicotine use.

## BE YOURSELF AND HAVE FUN!



## ACTIVITY ONE

### KEEPING HEALTHY

**Approx. Time:** 20 minutes

**Materials Needed:** Copies of the fortune-teller template, pencils (or pens or markers), scissors



This activity will identify many of the health consequences of tobacco and nicotine use.

### Directions:

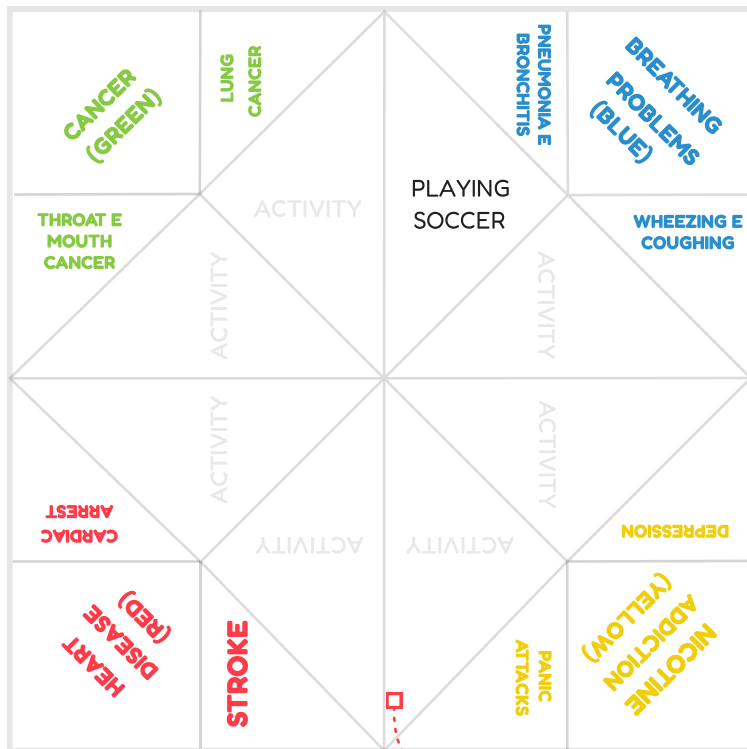
**1.** Hand out the copies of the fortune-teller instructions and template (found on pages 9 and 10). This template is preprinted with the health consequences of tobacco and nicotine use on the outer flaps.

NOTE: If you print the fortune-teller template on page 10 directly from the PDF rather than photocopying it, please make sure your printer is set to print full size, or at 100%. If you print the template to fit the page, the dimensions will be skewed, and the fortune-teller will not fold correctly.

**2.** On the areas on the fortune-teller template labeled "Activity," have the kids write activities that they enjoy. There are eight empty spaces, so encourage the group to think about physical activities, like playing soccer or dancing; social activities, like going to the movies or hanging out with friends; and activities they may do by themselves, such as playing video games, reading, or listening to music.

**3.** Once all of the blank areas have an activity written in them, the kids will cut out the fortune-teller template and fold it, following the directions provided on the template.

- Hint: Practice folding a fortune-teller before you start this activity so that you're able to assist the kids if needed.



**4.** Once the fortune-tellers are complete, read aloud a health consequence. Have the kids open their fortune tellers as many times as there are letters in the color on which the health consequence appears. For example, "Heart Disease" is on a red panel. The kids will open the fortune-teller three times, once for each letter in the word "red."

**5.** Four more health consequences will appear inside the fortune-teller. Have the kids guess which of the four are related to the first health consequence you read. Depending on which way the kids open their fortune-tellers, there are two possible correct answers for each initial health consequence. For "Heart Disease," the kids will see either "Stroke" or "Cardiac Arrest."

### ACTIVITY ONE (CONTINUED): UNDERSTANDING THE HEALTH CONSEQUENCES OF TOBACCO AND NICOTINE USE

6. Tell the kids which two answers are correct, then provide details about them. (See the Discussion Guide below.)

7. Once you've reviewed the facts about a health consequence, have the kids open the fortune-teller panel to reveal one of the activities they wrote. Ask the kids how that activity would be affected by the health consequence you just discussed.

8. Go through the same steps for each of the four health consequences on the outside panels of the fortune-teller

### DISCUSSION GUIDE:

#### Fortune-Teller Consequence 1: Nicotine Addiction

People who use tobacco and nicotine products can become addicted because they contain a drug called nicotine, and when nicotine repeatedly gets into the body, it changes the way the brain works.<sup>3</sup> Without nicotine, the smoker feels irritable and depressed.<sup>4</sup> After using nicotine just a few times you'll crave it, just like the way you crave a sandwich when you're hungry, but even more.<sup>4</sup> Nicotine changes the brain and body, which is what makes it addictive.<sup>5</sup> Once a person becomes addicted, it may be extremely difficult to quit.<sup>4</sup> When people who are addicted to nicotine don't have any, they can get irritable, have frequent headaches, and have trouble sleeping.<sup>4</sup> Teens who use nicotine are more likely to have panic attacks, anxiety disorders, and depression.<sup>6</sup>

#### NOW ASK THE GROUP:

Would the activity you selected be difficult to do if you had frequent headaches, didn't sleep well, or were anxious because you're addicted to nicotine? Share a few activities that you like to do that would be affected if you had frequent headaches, anxiety, depression, or trouble sleeping.



<sup>3</sup> National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). (2017 July). Mind Matters Research Report Series—The Body's Response to Nicotine. NIH Publication Number 18-DA-8052. Referenced 2024. <https://teens.drugabuse.gov/teachers/mind-matters/nicotine>

<sup>4</sup> National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). (2016 January). Research Report Series—Tobacco/Nicotine. NIH Publication Number 16-4342. Referenced 2018.

<sup>5</sup> NIDA for Teens. (2016, May). Drug Facts: Tobacco, Nicotine, & E-Cigarettes. Referenced 2024. <https://teens.drugabuse.gov/drug-facts/tobacco-nicotine-e-cigarettes>

<sup>6</sup> National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). (2009 September). Four Reasons Not to Smoke. Referenced 2024. <https://teens.drugabuse.gov/blog/post/four-reasons-not-smoke>

# ACTIVITY ONE (CONTINUED): UNDERSTANDING THE HEALTH CONSEQUENCES OF TOBACCO AND NICOTINE USE

### Fortune-Teller Consequence 2: Respiratory & Breathing Problems

Young people who smoke have more respiratory, or breathing, problems than nonsmokers.<sup>7</sup> Smoking is also connected with chronic coughing and wheezing.<sup>7</sup> Smoking during teen years slows lung growth and causes lungs to decline at an early age.<sup>7</sup>

#### NOW ASK THE GROUP:

Would the activity you selected be difficult to do if you were short of breath or coughed and wheezed a lot? (If the kids answer that the activity revealed wouldn't be hard to do if they were coughing, dig a little deeper. Even activities like reading, playing video games, and watching TV are a lot less fun when you can't breathe well.)

### Fortune-Teller Consequence 3: Heart Disease & Stroke

Cigarette smoking causes coronary heart disease and stroke.<sup>8</sup> A young smoker's resting heart rate is two to three beats faster per minute than a nonsmoker's.<sup>9</sup> An increased heart rate can cause shortness of breath, lightheadedness, chest pain, and nausea.<sup>10</sup>

Make these health problems real to the kids by explaining in more detail what these health problems can actually do to a person. Example: Stroke can cause brain damage and leave a person partially paralyzed.

#### NOW ASK THE GROUP:

Would the activity you selected be difficult to do if you had heart problems? (Remind the group that lightheadedness, chest pain, and fainting would make even activities that require little or no physical exertion hard to enjoy and would really make activities like baseball, soccer, and ballet hard.)

### Fortune-Teller Consequence 4: Cancer

Smokeless tobacco, which is called chew, dip, spit, or snuff, contains cancer-causing agents. Smoking causes lung cancer and cancer of the larynx, which is your voice box. Cancer of the larynx can cause people to lose the ability to talk.

#### NOW ASK THE GROUP:

Would the activity you selected be difficult to do if you couldn't talk because you had cancer of the larynx? (Share with the group that any kind of cancer would disrupt their regular activities and that cancer is a disease we want to do everything possible to avoid getting.)

### Wrapping Up:

Once you've gone through these four major health consequences of tobacco and nicotine use listed on the fortune-teller, share a few additional risks.

Smokers have an increased risk for cataracts,<sup>7</sup> a disease that can cause blindness. Smokeless tobacco can cause sores in the mouth, tooth decay and gum disease.<sup>11</sup> All of these health issues would prevent you from doing many of the activities you listed on your fortune-teller.

#### NOW ASK THE GROUP:

How would you feel if you couldn't do the activities on your fortune-teller? (Encourage discussion by sharing an activity you enjoy that you would miss doing and how that would make you feel.)

What can you do to help make sure you can keep doing these activities? (Be tobacco free.)

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

<sup>8</sup> CDC. Smoking & Tobacco Use. Fast Facts and Fact Sheets. Health Effects of Cigarette Smoking. Referenced 2017. <https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/11319>

<sup>9</sup> Milton, M.H., Maule, C.O., Yee, S.L., Backinger, C., Malarcher, A.M., & Husten, C.G. Youth Tobacco Cessation: A Guide for Making Informed Decisions. Atlanta, Georgia: U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2004. Referenced 2017. [www.cdc.gov/tobacco/quit\\_smoking/cessation/pdfs/youth\\_tobacco.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/quit_smoking/cessation/pdfs/youth_tobacco.pdf)

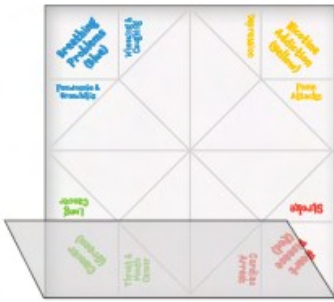
<sup>10</sup> CDC. Heart Disease. Referenced 2018. <https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/facts.htm>

<sup>11</sup> CDD. Smokeless Tobacco: Health Effects. Referenced 2018. [https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/fact\\_sheets/smokeless/health\\_effects/index.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/smokeless/health_effects/index.htm)



# HEALTH CONSEQUENCES OF TOBACCO AND NICOTINE USE FORTUNE-TELLER

1. In the blank triangles, write eight activities that you enjoy doing, one in each of the blank triangles. They could be physical activities, like dancing and playing soccer or football, or less physically active things, like hanging out with your friends, shopping, playing video games, or reading.
2. Once you have filled in all eight empty triangles, fold your fortune-teller following the instructions below.
3. Once you have your fortune-teller made, wait for further instructions from the leader.



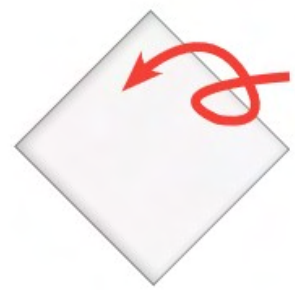
Fold the fortune-teller template along the dotted line. Either cut or tear off the bottom portion of the page and discard it.



With the text side down, fold all four corners so that the points meet in the middle.



It should now look like this.



Flip it over so the blank side face is up.



Fold all four corners so that the points meet in the middle.



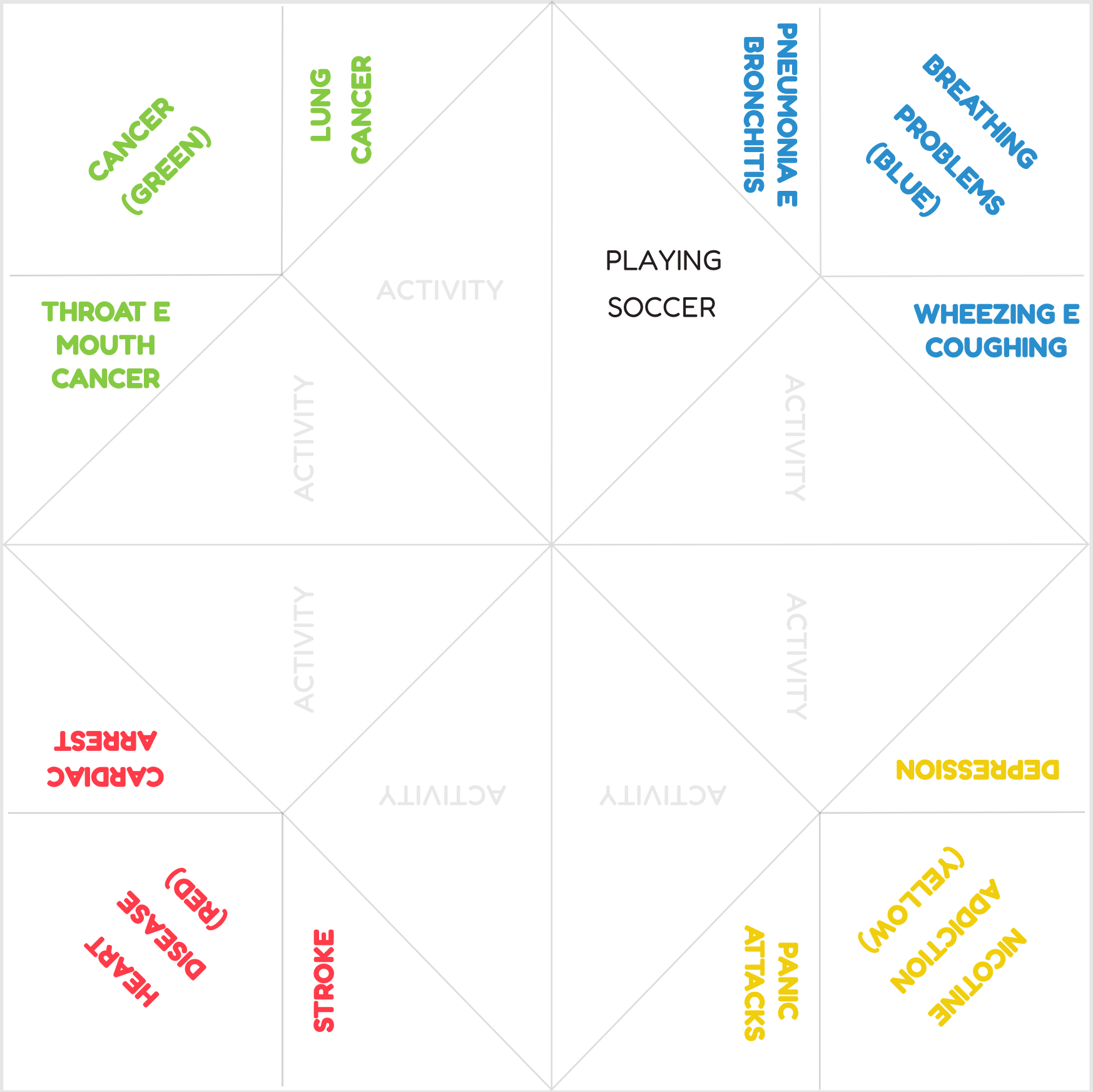
It should now look like this.



Fold the fortune-teller in half lengthwise. Then fold it in half again widthwise.



Work your fingers into the four corners to form a cone.



Fold the fortune-teller template along the dotted line. Either cut or tear off this portion of the page and discard it



## ACTIVITY TWO

### UNDERSTANDING THE HEALTH CONSEQUENCES OF TOBACCO AND NICOTINE USE

**Approx. Time:** 20 minutes

**Materials Needed:** Copies of the bingo-card templates (one for each child), a set of the bingo caller's cards, card markers (20 markers per child plus a few extras), prizes (optional)



During this game of bingo, you will have an opportunity to review the information about the health consequences of tobacco and nicotine use that you shared during the survey and fortune-teller activity.

#### Preparation:

Nicotine-Free Bingo takes a little preparation ahead of meeting with your group, but this little bit of extra time will result in a fun game with the kids!

1. There are 10 bingo-card templates on pages 13-17. If you have 20 young people in your group, print or make two copies of each of the cards, for a total of 20 cards.
2. Print or copy the bingo caller's card on page 12. Then, cut out each square and place the slips of paper in a bowl or basket.
3. Decide what object the group will use to mark the matches on their bingo cards. You will need 20 markers per child plus a few extras in case kids lose them during play. Any small object will work – pennies, candy (Skittles or plain M&Ms work great!), paper clips, etc.
4. Decide if you will offer prizes. It's fun to reward the first three players who get bingo.

#### Directions:


1. Begin by passing out the bingo cards. Tell the youth that there are different cards.
2. Explain how to play bingo. To win, a player must cover five spaces in a row – vertically, horizontally, or diagonally.
3. Start the game! Either you or another adult will pull one of the pieces of paper out of the bowl or basket you placed the bingo-caller cards in. Keep calling out words until someone yells "bingo!"
4. Once the game is complete, have the winner(s) read out the words they covered to get nicotine-free bingo and have them explain each with the help of the rest of the group.
5. To wrap up, thank the youth for letting you spend time with them. Congratulate them on wanting to be healthy and to make healthy choices. (And congratulate yourself for sharing your time and knowledge with these young people!)



# PRETEEN ACTIVITIES

## ACTIVITY TWO (CONTINUED): NICOTINE-FREE BINGO

Print or copy the bingo caller's card. Then, cut out each square and place the slips of paper in a bowl or basket



stroke	cataracts	gum disease	pneumonia	bronchitis	emphysema	chronic coughing	wheezing
heart disease	hardening of the arteries	cancer of the pharynx	cancer of the larynx	cancer of the esophagus	kidney cancer	shortness of breath	phlegm
bad breath	stained teeth	smelly hair	smelly clothes	oral cancer	tooth loss	throat cancer	lung cancer
pancreatic cancer	bladder cancer	stomach cancer	bleeding gums	mouth sores	depression	anxiety	sleeplessness
anxiousness	cracked lips	nicotine addiction	cigarettes	tobacco	vape	e-cigarettes	chew





# NICOTINE-FREE BINGO

emphysema	lung cancer	cataracts	stroke	e-cigarettes
bronchitis	tooth loss	cigarettes	cancer of the esophagus	cracked lips
sleeplessness	bleeding gums	anxiousness	pneumonia	kidney cancer
oral cancer	tobacco	phlegm	depression	cancer of the larynx
stomach cancer	shortness of breath	vape	chronic coughing	mouth sores

# NICOTINE-FREE BINGO

heart disease	cracked lips	emphysema	pancreatic cancer	smelly hair
hardening of the arteries	cancer of the pharynx	chew	tooth loss	vape
stroke	cancer of the esophagus	pneumonia	kidney cancer	bronchitis
stomach cancer	gum disease	nicotine addiction	wheezing	sleeplessness
phlegm	stained teeth	cataracts	bladder cancer	shortness of breath



## NICOTINE-FREE BINGO

tobacco	mouth sores	vape	shortness of breath	stained teeth
kidney cancer	cigarettes	bleeding gums	pneumonia	cracked lips
depression	pancreatic cancer	anxiousness	e-cigarettes	smelly hair
nicotine addiction	stomach cancer	oral cancer	cancer of the esophagus	stroke
heart disease	hardening of the arteries	gum disease	sleeplessness	tooth loss

## NICOTINE-FREE BINGO

throat cancer	bad breath	cigarettes	shortness of breath	smelly hair
hardening of the arteries	smelly clothes	bladder cancer	bronchitis	oral cancer
emphysema	wheezing	sleeplessness	cancer of the esophagus	cracked lips
heart disease	depression	tooth loss	anxiety	vape
stomach cancer	gum disease	chronic coughing	e-cigarettes	pneumonia



# NICOTINE-FREE BINGO

<b>nicotine addiction</b>	<b>hardening of the arteries</b>	<b>cancer of the pharynx</b>	<b>chew</b>	<b>smelly clothes</b>
<b>stomach cancer</b>	<b>anxiety</b>	<b>tobacco</b>	<b>tooth loss</b>	<b>bladder cancer</b>
<b>mouth sores</b>	<b>anxiousness</b>	<b>smelly hair</b>	<b>pneumonia</b>	<b>vape</b>
<b>cigarettes</b>	<b>pancreatic cancer</b>	<b>wheezing</b>	<b>bleeding gums</b>	<b>throat cancer</b>
<b>gum disease</b>	<b>shortness of breath</b>	<b>heart disease</b>	<b>depression</b>	<b>cancer of the esophagus</b>

# NICOTINE-FREE BINGO

<b>kidney cancer</b>	<b>stroke</b>	<b>mouth sores</b>	<b>e-cigarettes</b>	<b>bad breath</b>
<b>emphysema</b>	<b>bladder cancer</b>	<b>stomach cancer</b>	<b>shortness of breath</b>	<b>pancreatic cancer</b>
<b>cancer of the larynx</b>	<b>tooth loss</b>	<b>cancer of the esophagus</b>	<b>pneumonia</b>	<b>anxiousness</b>
<b>phlegm</b>	<b>anxiety</b>	<b>cracked lips</b>	<b>wheezing</b>	<b>oral cancer</b>
<b>hardening of the arteries</b>	<b>cataracts</b>	<b>heart disease</b>	<b>smelly hair</b>	<b>nicotine addiction</b>



# NICOTINE-FREE BINGO

emphysema	depression	cancer of the larynx	bad breath	cancer of the esophagus
cataracts	cracked lips	chew	pneumonia	tobacco
smelly clothes	throat cancer	tooth loss	chronic coughing	lung cancer
bronchitis	heart disease	anxiousness	oral cancer	vape
nicotine addiction	wheezing	smelly hair	stomach cancer	stained teeth

# NICOTINE-FREE BINGO

wheezing	cataracts	oral cancer	bleeding gums	shortness of breath
chronic coughing	cracked lips	smelly hair	heart disease	bladder cancer
stroke	depression	gum disease	chew	stomach cancer
cancer of the esophagus	tooth loss	lung cancer	phlegm	tobacco
anxiety	cigarettes	emphysema	e-cigarettes	anxiousness





# NICOTINE-FREE BINGO

depression	anxiousness	chronic coughing	tooth loss	tobacco
cancer of the esophagus	nicotine addiction	pancreatic cancer	lung cancer	mouth sores
wheezing	stroke	heart disease	shortness of breath	sleeplessness
oral cancer	cracked lips	stained teeth	phlegm	anxiety
gum disease	e-cigarettes	cigarettes	hardening of the arteries	emphysema

# NICOTINE-FREE BINGO

chronic coughing	bad breath	vape	anxiety	throat cancer
bleeding gums	tobacco	cracked lips	heart disease	depression
hardening of the arteries	smelly hair	e-cigarettes	gum disease	tooth loss
mouth sores	stomach cancer	wheezing	cigarettes	kidney cancer
cancer of the pharynx	chew	cataracts	stained teeth	cancer of the esophagus

**ACTIVITY  
ONE**
**UNDERSTANDING THE HEALTH CONSEQUENCES  
OF TOBACCO AND NICOTINE USE**

**Approx. Time:** 20 minutes

**Materials Needed:** Poster board, if a chalkboard or whiteboard is not available

20  
minutes

Young people often feel invincible. They may think tobacco and nicotine use causes health problems for adults, but that those same health risks won't apply to them. According to the CDC, "many children and adolescents do not understand the nature of nicotine addiction and are unaware of, or underestimate the important health consequences of nicotine use."<sup>13</sup> Therefore, they need to be reminded that health consequences of tobacco and nicotine use affect everyone, regardless of their age. That is the purpose of this activity.

**Directions:**

**1.** To introduce this activity, write the following tobacco and nicotine-related health consequences on a whiteboard, if one is available, or on a poster board ahead of time.

- halitosis (bad breath)
- shortness of breath
- stained teeth
- cracked lips
- mouth sores/bleeding in the mouth lips
- coughing/wheezing
- smelly hair (non-health-related)
- oral cancer
- tooth loss
- throat cancer
- kidney cancer
- gum disease
- stroke
- heart disease
- emphysema
- lung cancer
- nicotine addiction
- difficulty concentrating
- anxiety
- depression
- mood disorders

**2.** Next, ask the group which issues on the board they think are health consequences of tobacco and nicotine use. Put a check next to each one as it is suggested.

**3.** Once the guessing has stopped, tell them that all of the items on the list are health consequences of tobacco use – and they are real. Share the information on the following page about some of the health consequences on the list.



### ACTIVITY ONE (CONTINUED): UNDERSTANDING THE HEALTH CONSEQUENCES OF TOBACCO AND NICOTINE USE

Young people who smoke cigarettes are likely to be less physically fit and have more respiratory (breathing) problems than people their age who don't smoke.<sup>14</sup> Coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, and phlegm production are symptoms that young people who use tobacco report they are more likely to experience than their non-smoking peers.<sup>14</sup>

#### ASK THE GROUP:

Which activities that you enjoy doing would be difficult if you were short of breath or coughed and wheezed a lot? (If the group is slow to share, give them some suggestions such as, would you be able to play football or soccer? If you coughed a lot or couldn't breathe well, would it be harder to play an instrument like the trumpet or flute? If you were wheezing, would you feel like dancing or even playing a video game?)

#### NOW ASK THE GROUP:

Can you imagine what it would be like to no longer be able to see or to speak because you used tobacco? (You can further encourage discussion by asking how not being able to see or speak would affect the jobs they hope to have in the future and activities that they like to do now.)

Tobacco contains nicotine, which is a drug. Whether you smoke, chew, dip, sniff, or vape a tobacco product, you're delivering nicotine to the brain.<sup>5</sup> Most smokers use tobacco regularly because they are addicted to nicotine. Nicotine withdrawal symptoms include irritability, craving, depression, anxiety, cognitive and attention deficits, sleep disturbances, and increased appetite.<sup>4</sup>

Cigarette smoking causes coronary heart disease and stroke.<sup>8</sup> A young smoker's resting heart rate is two to three beats faster per minute than a nonsmoker's.<sup>9</sup> An increased heart rate can cause shortness of breath, lightheadedness, chest pain, and nausea.<sup>11</sup>

#### NOW ASK THE GROUP:

How do you feel when you hear that smoking could cause you to have a heart attack or stroke? (You can share that the thought of having a heart attack or stroke is scary to you.)

Smokers have an increased risk for cataracts,<sup>7</sup> a disease that can cause blindness. Smoking also causes cancer of the larynx,<sup>7</sup> which is your voice box. This type of cancer can cause people to lose the ability to talk. Smokeless tobacco, which is called chew, dip, spit, or snuff, can cause sores in the mouth, tooth decay and gum disease.<sup>11</sup> It can also cause cancer.<sup>11</sup>

#### NOW ASK THE GROUP:

How do you think being anxious, irritable, or depressed would affect your schoolwork and relationships? (Share with the group how being depressed might affect your work or family life. For example, if you were depressed you might not have the energy to go to work or might not do a good job which could lead to problems with coworkers and even the possibility of losing your job.)

To wrap up the activity, ask students which of the consequences concern them most. Some students might be concerned about immediate consequences, such as bad breath and the smell, while others may be more concerned about the diseases. Remind students that they can protect themselves from all of these consequences by choosing to be tobacco and nicotine free.

<sup>14</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Preventing Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, Georgia: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health; Washington, D.C., 2012. Referenced 2017. [www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/reports/preventing-youth-tobacco-use/full-report.pdf](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/reports/preventing-youth-tobacco-use/full-report.pdf)

## ACTIVITY TWO

### NICOTINE-FREE POEM

**Approx. Time:** 20 minutes

**Materials Needed:** Copies of the acrostic template on page 21 or blank sheets of paper, pencils (or pens)



In this activity teens will write an acrostic. An acrostic is a poem in which the first letters of each line spell out a word or phrase, in this case "NICOTINE FREE." By writing an acrostic, teens will have the opportunity to recall what they've learned so far and create a document they can take home as a reminder of why refraining from tobacco and nicotine use is important.

#### Directions:

**1.** If you have made copies of the acrostic template on page 21, hand out a copy to each member of the group. If you'll be using blank paper, hand it out and ask the teens to write "NICOTINE FREE," one letter on top of another, down the left side of the paper.

**2.** Explain that for each letter they should write a word or phrase about the health consequences of using tobacco or nicotine or the positive reasons for being nicotine free.

**3.** Give the group about 15 minutes to write. During that time, you can write your own acrostic or walk around the group and provide ideas and encouragement.

**4.** Once the group has finished writing their acrostics, ask if anyone would like to share theirs. If the group is shy, you can start by sharing a few letters of your acrostic.

**5.** To wrap up, thank the group for letting you spend time with them. Congratulate them on wanting to be healthy and to make healthy choices. (And congratulate yourself for sharing your time and knowledge with these young people!)



# MY TOBACCO-FREE POEM

For each letter on the page, write a word or phrase about the health consequences of using tobacco or nicotine, or a positive reason to be nicotine free. For example, for the letter "T," you could write "Tooth loss" because that is a consequence of using tobacco. Now, get creative and write your own Nicotine-Free acrostic poem!

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## MODULE TWO

### HOW FRIENDS FIT IN

Approx. Time: 60 minutes



During adolescence, a child's friends are very influential in both positive and negative ways. As they make more decisions for themselves, young people need to recognize and understand how their friends, other people, and outside forces influence them both positively and negatively. The main goal of the How Friends Fit In module is to help young people understand peer pressure and learn positive ways to handle sticky situations, including situations that involve tobacco or nicotine use.

#### What You'll Do in This Module

1. This module begins with helping youth understand the difference between peer influence and peer pressure. With preteens, you will share several scenarios that demonstrate both peer influence and peer pressure. Teens will create skits about peer pressure and influence.
2. In Activity 2, you'll share strategies for navigating peer pressure and saying "no."
3. During the final activity, preteens will use role playing to help them problem solve real-life situations. Teens will compose a blog to a fictional character, giving advice on how to handle a situation filled with peer pressure.

All of the activities in this module can be completed in an hour, or you can do each of the activities in three consecutive meetings with your group. If you don't have a full hour and aren't able to meet multiple times with your group, here are some different options for you.

#### If you have 45 minutes:

##### Preteens

Go through just the first scenario in Activity 1 about the new girl who comes to school wearing a dress. Then, do all of Activity 2.

##### teens

Do all of Activities 2 and 3.

#### If you have 30 minutes:

Do Activity 2 with preteens and with teens.

This Leader's Guide will walk you through every step of each activity, so don't feel that you have to be an expert. Be sure to review the activities and the discussion talking points provided in the Leader's Guide before meeting with your group.

Prior to your presentation, speak with the youth leader about your approach to answering questions and interacting with the group. Discuss the logistics of your presentation, such as the setup of the room, audiovisual needs, or any other concerns. To encourage a more open dialogue with the youth, the presentation should not be video or audio recorded. You may want to ask the youth and any adults present to put away their cell phones for the duration of the presentation.

If you are not a regular presenter or leader of the group, let the youth know who you are – your name, your connection to the group and your profession. You might also want to provide a fun personal fact, like your favorite flavor of ice cream or your favorite sport or activity. If you have a picture of yourself when you were their age, show it as a way to help the youth in your group relate to you. If it's a group or team photo, ask the youth to find you in the picture. Breaking the ice and relating to the students is an effective way to begin the conversation and build trust.

## BE YOURSELF AND HAVE FUN!

MODULE  
ONEFRIENDS PLAY A ROLE, THUMBS-UP,  
THUMBS-DOWN

Approx. Time: 15 minutes



This activity will introduce the young people in your group to the concepts of peer pressure and peer influence and give them an opportunity to think about the impact of their friends on the decisions they make.

### Directions:

**1.** Start by explaining that everyone, no matter their age, wants to fit in and be liked by others. It's natural. Sometimes the easiest way to accomplish this is by behaving like everyone else. At times, that might mean behaving in a way we would rather not behave or doing things we'd rather not do.

Go on to explain that we all face peer pressure and peer influence. What is the difference? Peer pressure is when our friends pressure us to do or say something that we don't want to, or that we know is wrong, by teasing, taunting, challenging, or encouraging us. Peer influence happens when people act a certain way or say things because they assume they have to in order to be accepted, to be liked, or to maintain friendships.

**2.** Next, read the following scenario that illustrates the difference between peer influence and peer pressure:

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

**3.** Now, ask the questions below. For each question, have the kids indicate their answers with either a thumb-up for yes or a thumb-down for no.

- a.** Was the girl pressured to wear pants by her classmates? Thumbs-down: No one told the girl she couldn't or shouldn't wear a dress. No one made fun of her or teased her for wearing a dress. This is an example of peer influence. The girl noticed she was the only one wearing a dress and decided to stop wearing them.
- b.** Did she choose to wear pants because she wanted to fit in? Thumbs-up: The girl wanted to be accepted. She thought if she wore pants instead of a dress she would fit in better. She was influenced by her peers.
- c.** Do you think her decision bothered her? Thumbs-up or thumbs-down: Answers will vary, but encourage the group to see that the girl may be disappointed because she probably enjoyed wearing dresses and likes how she feels when she wears them. She may feel uncomfortable in pants but is wearing them anyway to fit in.
- d.** Do you think the girl's classmates care about what she wears? Thumbs-up or thumbs-down: Answers will vary. Acknowledge that the desire to be with those who are most like us is quite common. But also mention that there will always be some ideas and behaviors that we don't hold in common, even with our best friends, and that this is what makes us individuals.

### ACTIVITY ONE (CONTINUED): FRIENDS PLAY A ROLE, THUMBS-UP, THUMBS-DOWN

**4.** Continuing to use thumbs-up and thumbs-down, ask the kids in the group to indicate whether the following scenarios are examples of peer pressure or peer influence.

**a.** Your friends are all getting a certain haircut, but your parents have said you can't cut your hair that way. Your friends tease you that your hair isn't cool. Are you being peer pressured?

Thumbs-up: Teasing is a sign of peer pressure – a way for others to try and get you to do things you don't want to do or know you shouldn't do, like in this example, where you don't have permission from your parents to do what your friends are doing.

**b.** You're thinking about joining the school chorus, but your friends often make fun of other kids in the chorus so you decide not to join. Are you being peer pressured?

Thumbs-down: While your friends do make fun of kids in the chorus, they aren't making fun of you. Because you don't want to be teased or made fun of, you decide not to join the chorus. That's peer influence. You want to fit in, so you make a decision based on how you think your friends will react to it, even though the decision isn't what you really want.

**c.** You want to hang out with a new group of kids, but they all smoke. You take a puff when you are offered a cigarette or e-cigarette by one of them. Are you being peer pressured?

Thumbs-down: When everyone around you is smoking, vaping, or chewing tobacco, there is a lot of peer influence, but no one is directly pressuring you to participate. If you were told that you're being a baby and can't hang out with the group if you don't use a nicotine product, then you'd be experiencing peer pressure.

**d.** Your friends are all going to watch a scary movie. You don't like scary movies and don't want to watch it. Your friends call you chicken and start clucking and cackling. You stick around and watch the movie. Are you being peer pressured?

Thumbs-up: Yes! Being taunted like this is definitely peer pressure. It can be hard to do something that is different or unpopular with your peers, but it can also feel good when you stand up for yourself and do what you want or what you know is right.

**5.** After going through these examples of peer influence and peer pressure, acknowledge how important our friends can be to us and how difficult it can be when we feel that we have to choose between doing something we don't necessarily want to do in order to solidify a friendship and not doing it. Talk about how truly strong friendships can handle differences of appearance and interests. Sometimes, it's those differences that are what our friends like most about us.

#### Wrapping Up:

Remind the group that wanting to fit in is normal and that making decisions because we want to fit in isn't always bad. For example, you wouldn't wear pajamas to work because that's not what other people wear to work. It is important to be aware of how peer influence and peer pressure impact the decisions you make so that you can stay true to who you are, what you want to do, and what you know is right or wrong.



## MODULE TWO

### SAYING "NO" IS THE WAY TO GO

**Approx. Time:** 15 minutes

**Materials Needed:** A whiteboard or poster board and markers (optional)



This activity will provide youth with tips for resisting peer pressure and suggestions on how to say "no" to friends.

#### Directions:

Before starting the activity, explain to the group that saying "no" to friends who are pressuring you can be hard to do. How you respond to them depends on the situation and what feels right – or wrong – to you. Deciding what to say can be even more difficult if you feel you are on the spot or if everyone is watching.

There are many ways to say "no" if someone asks you to smoke, vape, or use chewing tobacco. You have a few tips to share with them.

**1.** If you'll be using a whiteboard or poster board, write each technique for saying "no" (the phrases in bold below) as you share it with the group. If you don't have a whiteboard or poster board available, that's OK. Just read the techniques aloud to the group along with the examples.

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

**3.** Now, ask the questions below. For each question, have the kids indicate their answers with either a thumb-up for yes or a thumb-down for no.

**a.** Suggest something else. What does that look like? "No, I don't want to smoke. Let's go shoot some hoops."

Ask the group what else they might suggest doing instead of smoking if someone were to offer them a cigarette or a vape.

### ACTIVITY TWO (CONTINUED): SAYING “NO” IS THE WAY TO GO

#### b. Explain why you’re saying “no.”

What does that look like? “No, I’ve got a big dance recital coming up, and I want to be able to get through the whole routine without coughing or breathing hard.”

Ask the group what other explanations they might give for why they don’t want to smoke.

#### c. Add some humor.

What does that look like? “No, I look better with white teeth than with yellow ones.”

Ask the group what funny comebacks they have for why they don’t want to smoke or vape.

#### d. Reverse the pressure.

What does that look like? “Why don’t you toss the cigarettes? Most people don’t like being around smokers.”

Ask the group what other ways they could put pressure back on the person offering them a cigarette.

#### e. Talk about the consequences.

What does that look like? “I don’t want my clothes and hair to smell bad, and I don’t want to cough all the time. It’s gross.”

Ask the group to think of other consequences of smoking, vaping, or using chewing tobacco that they could share with someone pressuring them to use a tobacco product.

#### f. Change the subject.

What does that look like? “No. Did you see the ball game last night?”

Ask the group to share other ways they could change the subject away from smoking or vaping.

#### g. Walk away.

What does that look like? “No. I have to go meet another friend.”

Explain to the group that sometimes the best way to avoid peer pressure is to just walk away. If you remove yourself from a situation, there are no tough decisions to make.

### Wrapping Up:

Ask the group which strategies they think would be easiest to use if they were pressured to use tobacco or nicotine. Share which strategy you would be most likely to use, and encourage members of the group to shout out their ideas. Conclude the discussion by telling the group that practicing some of these strategies with their parents, another adult, a sibling, or a friend can help them feel more confident when they need to say “no” in a real situation.

## ACTIVITY THREE

### ROLE PLAYING

**Approx. Time:** 30 minutes

**Materials Needed:** Copies of the role-playing cards on pages 29-30.



This activity gives the group a chance to practice the strategies for identifying peer pressure and peer influence, and saying “no,” that you shared with them. Youth will act out situations where they may feel pressure to make decisions to fit in or be liked.

### Directions:

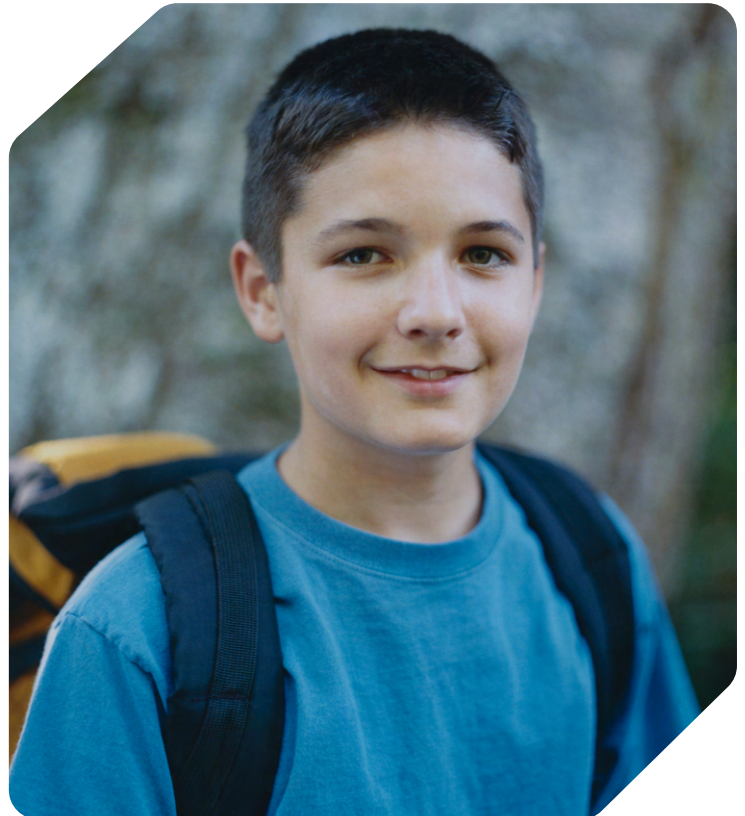
**1.** Start by showing the kids what they’re going to do. Ask another adult to help you. Explain that they will pick a partner and each person will have a different part to play. In this example, you’re going to play the part of someone (Partner 1) who likes the new kid. The other adult is going to play the part of someone (Partner 2) who doesn’t like the new kid.

#### Read out loud:

There is a new kid in the neighborhood that you really like, but when he shows up at school, none of your friends like him. Some make fun of him behind his back; others just don’t warm up to him.

**Role of Partner 1:** You want to be friends with the new kid, but it’s hard hanging out with someone your other friends don’t like. What will you do?

**Role of Partner 2:** What will you do to influence or pressure your friend into letting the new kid know they are not welcome?



You (Partner 1) will tell Partner 2 why you like the new kid and want to hang out with him. Partner 2 will try to convince you not to hang out with the new kid by teasing or taunting you. You’ll then use one of the saying “no” strategies to tell your partner that you’re going to continue to hang out with the new kid.

Partner 1: “I like hanging out with Connor because he’s really good at basketball.”

Partner 2: “You only think Connor is good at basketball because you’re so bad at it.”

Partner 1: “You should play basketball with Connor. I bet he’ll beat you.”

### ACTIVITY THREE (CONTINUED): ROLE PLAYING

**2.** Now that you've shown the group how the role play works, have the kids choose a partner. If you have an odd number of kids in the group, either have an adult step in to even up the number or, for this activity, three kids could do a role play together. Two kids will play the Partner 2 role.

**3.** Once everyone is paired off, have each pair select a card from the pile.

**4.** Give each pair about 5 minutes to read the scenario and prepare their role play.

**5.** Depending on how much time you have and how big your group is, you may have time for every group to perform their role play or you may just ask a few of the pairs to perform. If possible, perform at least one version of each of the four role-play scenarios.

**6.** After each role-play performance, ask:

**a.** Has anyone ever been in a similar situation? (Ask for a show of hands.)

**b.** Which of the strategies for saying "no" did you see used in the role play?

**c.** Do you think you could stand up to the peer pressure or peer influence in this scenario?



### Wrapping Up:

Thank the kids who performed their role plays for having the courage to perform. Let the kids know that although these situations may seem silly, they actually do happen.

1. Acknowledge that it's difficult to deal with peer

2. Reinforce that it's OK to disagree with one or two aspects of group behavior. You can still fit in with the group even if you don't agree with everything.

3. Explain that even if they disagree with friends on important issues, like not using tobacco or nicotine products, there are still many other things that they agree on and like about their friends.

Thank the group for letting you spend time with them and remind them that they are in control of their decisions. There are many ways to say "no" when they're feeling pressured to do something they don't want to do, and even though it might be hard, they'll probably feel better in the end if they say "no" to things they don't want to do or know are wrong.

# THE SHOE DILEMMA

**Partner 1:** The only one in the group without the cool new shoes.

**Partner 2:** The popular kid with two pairs of the shoes everyone wants.

## THE SITUATION...

**Partner 1:** When a new style of shoe comes out, a lot of your friends go out and buy them right away. But, you don't have the money for them, and besides, you don't really like the way they look. How do you feel when you realize you are the only one in the group who has not bought the cool new shoes?

**Partner 2:** What will you do to influence or pressure your friend into buying the shoes everyone else is wearing?

# AFTER SCHOOL

**Partner 1:** The only one in the group who doesn't want to smoke or vape.

**Partner 2:** The friend who wants you to smoke or try vaping.

## THE SITUATION...

After school, you go with a group to a friend's house. There is no adult there, and some of your friends are vaping. They want you to join them, but you really don't want to vape or smoke.

**Partner 1:** What sort of position does this put you in with your friends? Can it jeopardize your friendships? What sorts of feelings and thoughts go through your head? What should you do?

**Partner 2:** What actions or words can you use to try and persuade your friend to join you and the others in vaping?

## THE MOVIE SAGA



**Partner 1:** Your parents said you can't watch a particular movie.

**Partner 2:** You really want to watch the movie.

### THE SITUATION...

Your friends want you to watch a movie that your parents have specifically told you not to watch.

**Partner 1:** How can you obey your parents and still be friends?

**Partner 2:** What strategies will you use to influence or pressure your friend into watching the movie?

## OLD FRIENDS, NEW CHANGES

**Partner 1:** You notice a change in a friend.

**Partner 2:** You are the friend who has changed.

### THE SITUATION...

You have been friends with the same people for several years, and you are all very close. Lately, however, some of your friends have started smoking. They've lost interest in the things you used to do together, like sports.

**Partner 1:** Can you still be friends if they're doing things you disagree with and don't want to do? What can you say to your friends about their decision to smoke?

**Partner 2:** Which strategies will you use to convince your friend that they should start smoking?

## ACTIVITY ONE

### PEER POWER

**Approx. Time:** 30 minutes

**Materials Needed:** None



In this activity, teens will write and act out skits that depict peer pressure and peer influence so that they can better understand options for how to handle these situations and the feelings that arise when faced with them.

### Directions:

**1.** Start by asking the group if they sometimes do things they don't want to do because of their friends. Maybe your friends get you to do something good, like work out. Or maybe they get you to do something that's not so good, like skipping class. Friends can have a lot of power – but only if you let them.

**2.** Share the difference between peer pressure and peer influence. If your friends coax you into doing something you don't want to do because of their words or actions, that's peer pressure. If you convince yourself to do something because you think your friends want you to or you think it will be accepted by the group, that's peer influence.

An example of peer pressure: You are at the high diving board at the swimming pool, and your friends are diving off of it. You don't want to, but they say you're a wimp if you don't. They dare you, so you go ahead and do it.

An example of peer influence: Someone at school is taking up a collection for a hurricane relief fund. You gave money to a similar fund yesterday, so you don't want to do so again. But when the person comes to your lunch table, you notice that all of your friends donate money. You do too, because you think they will think badly of you if you don't.

**3.** Now, have the teens split up into small groups of four or five

**4.** Explain that each group's assignment is to create a skit that displays either peer pressure or peer influence. They can depict peer influence and peer pressure as positive or negative.

**5.** Read aloud the following topics and tell the small groups that they should each pick one for their skit:

- tobacco and nicotine use
- lying
- bullying
- gossiping
- betraying the confidence of a friend



### ACTIVITY ONE (CONTINUED): PEER POWER

- 6.** Tell the teens to brainstorm a situation that they might find themselves in. Each member of the group will play a different character. Someone, or several people, will face pressure to do something while the rest of the group will apply the pressure or influence.
- 7.** The group can choose how to end their skit: with someone succumbing to peer pressure or influence or with someone resisting it.
- 8.** Remind the teens to keep in mind key elements of peer pressure and peer influence as they write their skits:
  - the desire to be liked by others
  - the desire to be accepted by a particular group
  - the desire to act similar to others in a group
  - the embarrassment of being ridiculed for not doing something
  - the pain of feeling excluded
  - the need to sort out one's choices
  - the need to understand the consequences of each choice
  - the price we sometimes pay for making what we believe to be unpopular choices
- 9.** Give the teens about 15 minutes to prepare their skits.
- 10.** Depending on how much time you have available, ask one to three of the groups to perform their skits.
- 11.** After each group performs a skit, ask the teens if they think the way in which the situation was portrayed was realistic. If the skit ends with someone giving in to peer pressure, ask the group how the character could have resisted

#### Wrapping Up:

Thank the teens for having the courage to perform their skits. Remind them that they don't have to succumb to negative peer influence or pressure to be liked and accepted by their true friends. Although these situations may seem silly, they actually do happen, and students have the ability to say "no" and not go along with the group.



## ACTIVITY TWO

### SAYING “NO” IS THE WAY TO GO

**Approx. Time:** 15 minutes

**Materials Needed:** A whiteboard or poster board and markers (optional)



In this activity, teens will learn ways of saying “no” to their friends

#### Directions:

Before starting the activity, explain that it sometimes takes skill to remove yourself from uncomfortable or embarrassing situations. It can be tough to say “no” because you may be worried about how your friends will react. For example, if a girl is asked out on a date by a boy she has no interest in, but whose feelings she doesn’t want to hurt, she is going to want to use tact in her refusal.

There are many ways to say “no” if someone asks you to smoke, vape, or use chewing tobacco. You have a few to share with them.

**1.** If you’ll be using a whiteboard or poster board, write each technique for saying “no” (the phrases in bold) as you share it with the group. If you don’t have a whiteboard or poster board available, that’s OK. Just read the techniques aloud to the group along with the examples.

#### a. Suggest something else.

What does that look like? “No, I don’t want to get into your parents’ liquor cabinet, but I’m starving. How about going into the kitchen to find something to eat?”

Ask the group what else they might suggest doing instead of raiding the liquor cabinet. What about if someone offered them a cigarette or a vape?

#### b. Explain why you’re saying “no.”

What does that look like? “No, I don’t want to smoke. I’ve got a big dance recital coming up, and I want to be able to get through the whole routine without coughing or breathing hard.”

Ask the group what other explanations they might give for why they don’t want to smoke.

### ACTIVITY TWO (CONTINUED): SAYING “NO” IS THE WAY TO GO

#### c. Add some humor.

What does that look like? “No, I don’t want to smoke. I want to keep my pearly whites – they come in handy when meeting people.”

Ask the group what funny comebacks they have for why they don’t want to smoke or vape.

#### d. Reverse the pressure.

What does that look like? “Why don’t you toss the cigarettes? Your hair really stinks.” Or, “You don’t look cool when you vape. You just look like you’re trying to hide something.”  
Ask the group other ways they could put pressure back on a person trying to get them to do something they don’t want to.

#### e. Talk about the consequences.

What does that look like? “No, thanks. In fact, I don’t want to ever start vaping, and I’ll tell you why: I want my brain to function correctly.”

Ask the group to think of other consequences of smoking, vaping, or using chewing tobacco that they could share with someone pressuring them to use tobacco.

#### f. Change the subject.

What does that look like? “Nah, I don’t want a beer. But let’s get a pizza.” Or, “No, thanks. I don’t want a cigarette. What happened on our favorite TV show last night?”

Ask the group to share other ways they could change the subject away from smoking.

#### g. Walk away.

What does that look like? “No, I don’t want to do that. I have to go meet another friend.”

Explain to the group that sometimes the best way to avoid peer pressure is to just walk away. If you remove yourself from a situation, there are no tough decisions to make.

### Wrapping Up:

Ask the group which strategies they think would be easiest to use if they were pressured to use tobacco or nicotine products. Share which strategy you would be most likely to use and encourage members of the group to shout out their ideas. Talk about the difference between rejecting an idea or an action (“I don’t like the idea of vaping because ...”) and rejecting a person (“I don’t like you because you vape.”).

Conclude the discussion by telling the group that practicing some of these strategies with their parents, another adult, a sibling, or a friend can help them feel more confident when they need to say “no” in a real situation.

## ACTIVITY THREE

### GETTING IT “WRITE”

**Approx. Time:** 15 minutes

**Materials Needed:** Copies of the question templates on page 36-37, pencils or pens



In this activity, the teens will practice what they've learned about resisting peer pressure by writing a response to a fictional teen about how to handle a difficult situation.

#### Directions:

1. Tell the group that each one of them is each going to pretend that they are a blogger who gives advice to people who post questions to the blog.
2. Hand out the copies of the questions that have been submitted to the fictional bloggers. There are two different questions. Pass out the two options randomly, one to each teen.
3. Give them about 10 minutes to write their advice.
4. Ask a few of the teens to read their responses aloud.

#### Wrapping Up:

After learning about peer influence and peer pressure, the teens in your group will have a better understanding of how to act and react in real-life situations involving tobacco or nicotine use. Thank the group for letting you spend time with them and remind them that they are in control of their decisions. There are many ways to say “no” when they’re feeling pressured to do something they don’t want to do, and even though it might be hard, they’ll probably feel better in the end if they say “no” to things they don’t want to do or know are wrong.







## MODULE THREE

## HOW I AM

**Approx. Time:** 45 minutes



Researchers have found that low self-esteem can be an important factor in the decision by youth to experiment with tobacco and nicotine. According to research, as children mature, their self-image becomes more important to them, and they become more concerned with how they appear to others.

### What You'll Do in This Module

#### 1. Preteens

The kids in the group will reflect on how they see themselves, using an activity called Mirror, Mirror and a follow-up discussion on self-esteem.

#### 1. Teens

The youth will learn the importance of goal setting and go through the process of setting a long-term goal for themselves.

**2.** In the next activity, youth will have opportunities to make decisions and see what factors influence their decisions. Both preteens and teens will go through the process of making an important decision

**3.** Lastly, both preteens and teens will be encouraged to make a commitment to be nicotine free by signing the Right Decisions Right Now pledge.

Depending on the ages of the participants in your group, choose either the preteen or the teen activities. All of the activities in this module can be completed in a 45-minute session, or you can do each of the activities in two or three consecutive meetings with your group.

### If you have 30 minutes

Do Activity 2, Decisions, Decisions All Around!, and then conclude with the Nicotine-Free Pledge.

This Leader's Guide will walk you through every step of each activity, so don't feel that you have to be an expert. Be sure to review the activities and the discussion talking points provided in the Leader's Guide before meeting with your group.

Prior to your presentation, speak with the youth leader about your approach to answering questions and interacting with the group. Discuss the logistics of your presentation, such as the setup of the room, audiovisual needs, or any other concerns. To encourage a more open dialogue with the youth, please share with the leader that the presentation should not be video or audio recorded. You may want to ask the youth and any adults present to put away their cell phones for the duration of the presentation.

If you are not a regular presenter or leader of the group, let the youth know who you are – your name, your connection to the group, and your profession. You might also want to provide a fun personal fact, like your favorite flavor of ice cream or your favorite sport or activity. If you have a picture of yourself when you were their age, show it as a way to help the youth in your group relate to you. If it's a group or team photo, ask the youth to find you in the picture. Breaking the ice and relating to the students is an effective way to begin the conversation and build trust.

## BE YOURSELF AND HAVE FUN!

### ACTIVITY ONE

## MIRROR, MIRROR

**Approx. Time:** 15 minutes

**Materials Needed:** Copies of the Mirror, Mirror template on page 41, markers, crayons, pens, or pencils

15  
minutes

This activity will help youth focus on things they like about themselves and build their self-esteem.

**1.** Give each person in your group a Mirror, Mirror template. Explain to them that self-esteem is a term that describes how we see ourselves and how much we either do or don't accept ourselves as we are. Tell them that what they think about themselves is really important. It can affect how they act, how others see them, and the decisions they make.

**2.** Now, ask the kids to take a few minutes to think about things they really like about themselves or are good at. Give them a few examples about yourself, like "I make really good chocolate chip cookies," "I am a good friend," or "I am a good sport when I play basketball, even if I lose the game."

**3.** After giving the kids a few examples, have them take about five minutes to write five compliments to themselves on their Mirror, Mirror templates.



## ACTIVITY ONE (CONTINUED): MIRROR, MIRROR

### Discussion Guide:

1. Once the kids have finished writing on their mirrors, ask them if they found it easy or difficult to write positive things about themselves. Encourage them to try and explain why it was either easy or difficult. You can prompt them with these suggestions.

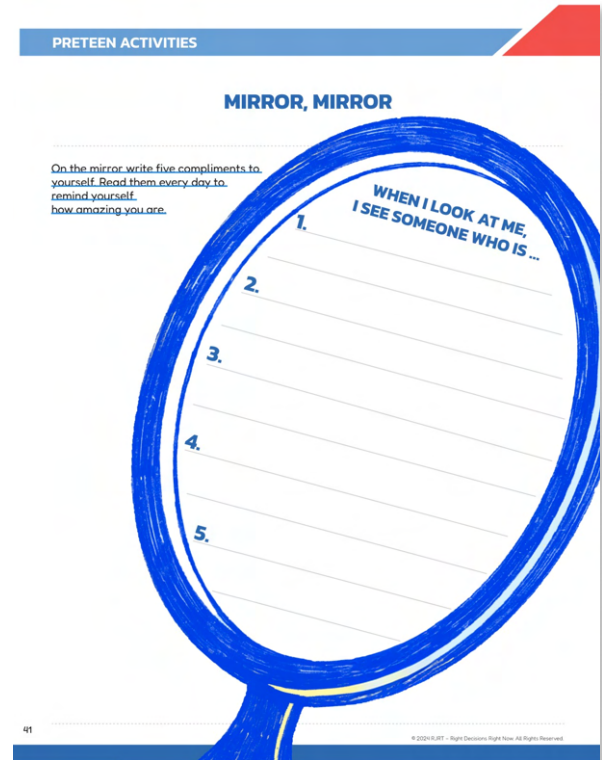
If it was difficult to write nice things: We all have things we'd like to change about ourselves, and sometimes it's easier to focus on those things than all of the things we're good at. When we focus on what we feel bad about or want to change, we may be letting low self-esteem get the better of us.

If it was easy to write nice things: We should all have many things we feel good about. Focusing on what we're good at helps us be confident and make good decisions.

2. Share with the group that some young people who experiment with tobacco and nicotine do so because they have a low self-image or they don't feel good about themselves. Ask the kids for their thoughts on how using tobacco and nicotine can affect self-esteem. Explain that using tobacco or nicotine is not a healthy choice and will not make you feel better about yourself.

3. Ask the youth what other things they could do that, unlike using nicotine, could make them actually feel better about themselves. Prompt the kids with these suggestions:

- You could practice an activity you already like soccer, dancing, chess, playing an instrument and become even better at it.
- You could volunteer at an animal shelter, start a food drive, or tutor someone in your class who needs help with their homework. Helping others is a good way to feel better about yourself.
- You could learn something new. Learning is a great way to build your confidence. And the more you learn, the more interesting things you have to share with people.



### Wrapping Up:

Conclude the activity by reminding the kids that what they think about themselves is really important. It can affect how they act and how others see them. Feeling good about themselves and believing positive things about themselves can help them make the right decisions. Having good self-esteem will help them stand up for themselves in tough situations.

Ask the students to take their mirrors home with them and encourage them to read the compliments that they wrote as reminders that they are amazing people with many attributes that they should be proud of. Encourage them to add positive things to their mirrors as they think of them.



# MIRROR, MIRROR

On the mirror write five compliments to yourself. Read them every day to remind yourself how amazing you are.



**WHEN I LOOK AT ME,  
I SEE SOMEONE WHO IS ...**

**1.**

**2.**

**3.**

**4.**

**5.**

## ACTIVITY TWO

### DECISIONS, DECISIONS ALL AROUND!

**Approx. Time:** 20 minutes

**Materials Needed:** None



In this activity, youth will be introduced to a decision-making process that will help them make good decisions.

#### Directions:

**1.** Start by sharing that the one thing we do every day, from the time we get up until the time we go to bed, is make decisions. Some are pretty simple (Whom will I sit with at lunch today?), and some are more complex (Should I try out for the school play?). Explain to them: When it comes to making a decision, you always have choices or options. You need to think about what you want to happen. These are your goals. You also need to think about what could happen based on your decision. These are the consequences of your decision.

**2.** Next, explain that while they may not think about it, their mind goes through a series of six steps, or questions, during the process of making any decision. These steps include:

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

**3.** Now, read the following situation aloud. Your best friend invites you and some other classmates over to their house for the afternoon. While you're there, your friend tells you that they have started smoking cigarettes. "Just one or two a day," your friend says. Each person lights one up. Your friend then offers you a puff. What do you do?



## ACTIVITY TWO (CONTINUED): DECISIONS, DECISIONS ALL AROUND!

4. Walk the group through the six steps to decide what to do in this situation.

### ■ The Situation: Why do you need to make a decision?

Your friend has offered you a cigarette or vape

### ■ Goals: What do you want to happen?

Encourage the kids in the group to shout out what they would want to have happen in this situation. Prompt them with suggestions like:

You may want your friend to stop smoking or vaping.

You may want to go home.

You may want your friend not to ask you again to smoke or vape.

### ■ Choices: What are your options or the alternatives?

Ask the kids what they could do in this situation. Prompt them with options like:

Say, "No, I don't want to smoke or vape."

Go home.

Change the subject. Ignore the question.

Suggest another activity, like watching TV or getting a snack.

Tell your friend you think smoking and vaping is nasty.

### ■ Consequences: What could happen?

Open up the floor for kids to brainstorm how their friend could react or what might happen based on the options they came up with. Consequences could include:

Your friend calls you a chicken and starts to laugh at you. You refuse, and you respect yourself for standing up for yourself and what's important to you.

Your friend says they don't want to hang out with you anymore because you don't want to smoke or vape. Your friend says, "OK," and doesn't offer you a cigarette or vape again.

### ■ Decision: What will you do?

Have the kids silently decide what they would do if a friend offered them a cigarette or vape. Ask if anyone would like to share their decision. Don't pressure the kids to share. Whether someone shares or not, tell the group:

There are health consequences for young people who use tobacco and nicotine. According to the Surgeon General, symptoms like phlegm production, coughing, and wheezing have been found in the bodies of young people who smoke. These consequences of smoking can make it hard to do things you enjoy, like playing sports, dancing, running, and even sleeping. Let the kids know that you hope that they all made the decision to turn down their friend's offer of a cigarette or vape.

### ■ Think About It: Did you make the right decision?

Give the group a few moments to think about whether they made the right decision. Let them know that choices are freely made, even if we feel pressure. Each of us is responsible for our choices and the consequences of those choices.

## Wrapping Up:

In conclusion, remind the young people that the more thought we give to making an important decision, the more empowered we will feel, and the more confident we will be that we made the right decision. Trying tobacco or nicotine, however, is never a good decision. The more thought they give it, the more reasons they will have not to do so.

### ACTIVITY THREE

## NICOTINE-FREE PLEDGE, THAT'S ME!

**Approx. Time:** 10 minutes

**Materials Needed:** Copies of the Tobacco-Free Pledge template on page 45, pencils or pens

10  
minutes

The goal of the Right Decisions Right Now program is to equip young people with knowledge and skills that help them make the decision not to use tobacco or nicotine products. You'll conclude this module by asking the young people in your group to sign a nicotine-free pledge.

### Directions:

1. Give a copy of the Nicotine-Free Pledge to every person in your group.
2. Remind the kids in the group that there are many negative health consequences of using tobacco and nicotine and that the vast majority of young people do not smoke and do not like to be around people who smoke.
3. Ask them to think about the reasons why they want to be nicotine free. Reasons against smoking can be immediate (e.g., Is it because they don't want to cough all the time? Or they don't want their hair and clothes to smell? Or they want to be their very best on the football field?). Reasons to be nicotine free can also be about their future life and health (e.g., Is it because nicotine products are expensive, addictive and cause very serious diseases?). Give the kids a few minutes to write on the pledge three reasons why they want to be nicotine free.
4. Once everyone has finished writing their three reasons, ask if anyone would like to share one or more of their reasons. You can prompt the discussion by sharing the reasons you want to be nicotine free.



### Wrapping Up:

Congratulate the kids in the group on their commitment to be nicotine free. Have them sign their pledges and ask them to then give each other a high five for doing such a good job with the activities. Thank the group for letting you spend time with them.



# I PLEDGE TO BE NICOTINE FREE

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

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

1.

2.

3.

By signing below, I pledge to be nicotine free:

Signed

Date:

ACTIVITY  
ONE

## NICOTINE-FREE PLEDGE, THAT'S ME!

**Approx. Time:** 20 minutes**Materials Needed:** Copies of the Goal-Setting template on page 48, markers, pens, or pencils20  
minutes

As young people enter their teenage years, they experience many new things as well as many new pressures. It can be helpful for teens to pause and think about what is important to them and what their goals are. By doing this, teens are more likely to think about the decisions they make and how they may impact the goals they've set for themselves.

In this activity, teens will set a goal, identify qualities about themselves that will help them achieve that goal, and also think about obstacles that may get in the way of achieving their goal.

**Directions:**

1. Give a copy of the Goal-Setting template to every person in your group.
2. Explain that goals are things we want to achieve. There are short-term and long-term goals. A short-term goal, for example, is to get an A on your research paper. A long-term goal could be something like making the varsity basketball team or getting into college. Tell the group that this activity is an opportunity for them to pick a long-term goal and make a plan for how they will achieve it.
3. In the circle labeled My Goal Is, ask the teens to write a goal they'd like to achieve in the next one to three years. Remind them that this is a long-term goal. You can give examples, like getting first chair in the band, making a varsity team, or winning a scholarship to college.
4. In the circle labeled What I've Got Going for Me, ask the teens to write three to five positive qualities about themselves that will help them achieve their goal. If their goal is to make the varsity team, the qualities might be "I practice every day," "I am a team player," "I run fast," and, "I have good grades."
5. In the circle labeled Things That Could Get in My Way, ask the teens to write three to five obstacles they may face in trying to achieve their goal. Give examples, like peer pressure, a lot of homework, or an injury.
6. In the last circle, labeled I Can Do It!, ask the teens to write how they can overcome the obstacles they identified. For example, staying focused on the goal and the reasons why they set it for themselves in the first place, avoiding people who don't support their goal, and asking friends or family to help them.



### ACTIVITY ONE (CONTINUED): MY FUTURE IS IN MY HANDS

#### Discussion Guide:

Once everyone has set their goal, ask the teens the following questions. Encourage the teens to share their goals with the group and talk about how being nicotine free will help them achieve them.

- How would using tobacco and nicotine products become a roadblock to achieving your goal?

Sticking with the example of making the varsity team, using tobacco could cause you to cough or wheeze a lot, which would make it hard to run fast and keep up with the rest of the team. If you're caught using tobacco or nicotine, you might not be allowed to play on the team because school rules prohibit any use of tobacco and nicotine. Ask the group what other consequences there might be to using tobacco and nicotine that would prevent them from reaching their goals.

- How does being nicotine free reflect what's important to you?

Start the brainstorming by sharing that being nicotine free shows that they care about staying healthy and keeping those around them healthy, too.

- How does being tobacco and nicotine free reflect a positive image/ healthy lifestyle?

Tell the group that using tobacco can cause you to cough, wheeze, have trouble breathing, and many other negative health effects and diseases.<sup>7</sup> Nicotine addiction, can cause irritability, anxiety, headaches, and trouble sleeping.<sup>4</sup> When you don't use tobacco or nicotine, it shows your friends that you care about your health and want to stay healthy.

#### Wrapping Up:

Share with the teens that setting goals will help them look forward to the future and improve their chances of achieving what they want in life. Encourage the teens to think about other goals they have. Some could be short term, like getting an A on an upcoming test. Others could be long term, like the one they just set in the activity. Tell the teens that they can create action plans, like they just did, for any of their goals. By thinking about their goals, how they plan to achieve them, and what could get in the way, they are more likely to accomplish their goals and be successful.



# MY FUTURE IS IN MY HANDS

**My Goal is...**

A blue-bordered box with a red header containing the text "My Goal is...". The box has five horizontal lines for writing.

**What i've got going for me**

A blue-bordered box with a red header containing the text "What i've got going for me". The box has five horizontal lines for writing.

**Things That Could Get in My Way**

A blue-bordered box with a red header containing the text "Things That Could Get in My Way". The box has five horizontal lines for writing.

**I Can Do It!**

A blue-bordered box with a red header containing the text "I Can Do It!". The box has five horizontal lines for writing.



**ACTIVITY  
TWO**
**DECISIONS, DECISIONS ALL AROUND!**
**Approx. Time:** 20 minutes

**Materials Needed:** None

**20  
minutes**

In this activity, teens will be introduced to a decision-making process that will help them make good decisions.

**Directions:**

**1.** Start by explaining to the teens that in high school they may face a wide range of decisions they may not have dealt with when they were younger. For example, they may have the freedom to try out for a varsity sport or to learn how to drive. Explain to them: When it comes to making a decision, you always have choices or options. You need to think about what you want to happen. These are your goals. You also need to think about what could happen based on your decision. These are the consequences of your decision.

**2.** Next, explain that while they may not fully realize it, their mind goes through a series of six steps, or questions, during the process of any decision. These steps include:

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

**3.** Now, read the following situation aloud. Your best friend invites you and some other classmates over to their house for the afternoon. While you're there, your friend tells you that some of them have started smoking cigarettes. "Just one or two a day," your friend says. Your friend lights one up. Your friend then offers you a puff. What do you do?



### ACTIVITY TWO (CONTINUED): DECISIONS, DECISIONS ALL AROUND!

4. Walk the group through the six steps to decide what to do in this situation.

■ **The Situation: Why do you need to make a decision?**

Your friend has offered you a cigarette or vape.

■ **Goals: What do you want to happen?**

Encourage the kids in the group to shout out what they would want to have happen in this situation. Prompt them with suggestions like:

You may want your friend to stop smoking or vaping.

You may want to go home.

You may want your friend not to again ask you to smoke or vape.

■ **Choices: What are your options or the alternatives?**

Ask the kids what they could do in this situation. Prompt them with options like:

Say, "No, I don't want to smoke or vape."

Go home.

Change the subject. Ignore the question.

Suggest another activity, like watching TV or getting a snack.

Tell your friend you think smoking and vaping is nasty.

■ **Consequences: What could happen?**

Open up the floor for kids to brainstorm how their friend could react or what might happen based on the options they came up with. Consequences could include:

Your friend calls you a chicken and starts to laugh at you.

You refuse, and you respect yourself for standing up for yourself and what's important to you.

Your friend says they don't want to hang out with you anymore because you don't want to smoke or vape.

Your friend says, "OK," and doesn't offer you a cigarette or vape again.

■ **Decision: What will you do?**

Have the teens silently decide what they would do if a friend offered them a cigarette or vape. Ask if anyone would like to share their decision. Don't pressure them to share. Whether or not someone shares, tell the group:

There are health consequences for young people who use tobacco and nicotine. According to the Surgeon General, symptoms like phlegm production, coughing, and wheezing have been found in the bodies of young people who smoke. These consequences of smoking can make it hard to do things you enjoy, like playing sports, dancing, running, and even sleeping. Let the kids know that you hope that they all made the decision to turn down their friend's offer of a cigarette.

■ **Think About It: Did you make the right decision?**

Give the group a few moments to think about whether they made the right decision. Let them know that choices are freely made, even if we feel pressure. Only we can be held responsible for our choices and their consequences.

### Wrapping Up:

In conclusion, remind the young people that the more thought we give to making an important decision, the more empowered we will feel, and the more confident we will be that we made the right decision. Trying tobacco or nicotine, however, is never a good decision. The more thought they give it, the more reasons they will have not to do so.

### ACTIVITY THREE

## NICOTINE-FREE PLEDGE, THAT'S ME!

**Approx. Time:** 10 minutes

**Materials Needed:** Copies of the Nicotine-Free Pledge template on page 52, pencils, or pens

10  
minutes

The goal of the Right Decisions Right Now program is to equip young people with the knowledge and skills that help them make the decision not to use tobacco or nicotine products. You'll conclude this module by asking the young people in your group to sign a nicotine-free pledge.

### Directions:

1. Give a copy of the Goal-Setting template to every person in your group.
2. Remind the group that there are many health consequences of using tobacco and nicotine and that most young people do not like to be around people who smoke.<sup>4</sup>
3. Ask them to think about the reasons why they want to be tobacco and nicotine free. Reasons against smoking can be immediate (e.g., Is it because they don't want to cough all the time? Or they don't want their hair and clothes to smell? Or they want to be their very best on the football field?). Reasons to be nicotine free can also be about their future life and health (e.g., Is it because nicotine products are expensive, addictive and cause very serious diseases?). Give the teens a few minutes to write on the pledge three reasons why they want to be nicotine free.
4. Once the group has finished writing their three reasons, ask if anyone would like to share one or more of their reasons. You can prompt the discussion by sharing the reasons you want to be nicotine free.



### Wrapping Up:

Congratulate the group on their commitment to be nicotine free. Have the kids sign their pledges and then give each other a high five for doing such a good job with the activities. Thank the group for letting you spend time with them.



# I PLEDGE TO BE NICOTINE FREE

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

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

1.

2.

3.

By signing below, I pledge to be nicotine free:

Signed

Date:

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