

DEFEND DEFEAT FLAVORS & END NICOTINE DEPENDENCE

Guide for Community-Based Organizations



PURPOSE

This guide provides organizations and community members with information and strategies to resist the influence of flavored (including menthol) tobacco and electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) in their communities.



BACKGROUND

Tobacco use is a leading cause of early preventable death in New York City (NYC). It kills about 12,000 New Yorkers each year.¹ Currently 13 percent² of NYC adults and 5 percent³ of NYC public high school students report smoking. This means more than 886,000 adult New Yorkers and 13,000 public high school students smoke cigarettes. On average, people who smoke die 10 years earlier than people who do not smoke.⁴ The good news is that quitting can reduce the risk of premature death for people who smoke, no matter their age.

Despite NYC's progress in reducing adult and youth smoking rates over the last decade, a new generation of youth are at risk for developing life-long nicotine dependence. Youth have increasingly turned to other tobacco products, including cigars and smokeless tobacco, as well as e-cigarettes. In 2017, an alarming 17 percent of NYC public high school students reported using an e-cigarette in the past month. These products typically contain nicotine, which is addictive, especially for teens.

Flavors are a key way companies hook young people on e-cigarettes and tobacco. Companies aggressively market these products in thousands of varieties and flavors, including many designed to look and taste like candy. Almost two out of three young people who smoke in NYC started with menthol or another flavored tobacco product. Similarly, among U.S. youth who had ever tried an e-cigarette, 81 percent reported their first product was flavored.⁵ Mint or menthol are also popular e-cigarette flavors. Over half of U.S. high school students who reported using e-cigarettes in 2018 used mint or menthol-flavored products.⁶

Did You Know?

- Tobacco products include cigarettes, cigars, cigarillos, smokeless tobacco (such as chewing tobacco, snuff and dip), pipes, snus and dissolvable tobacco.
- E-cigarettes or vaping products come in many forms, but they all have a heating device to turn liquid, called e-liquid, into aerosol (or mist). E-liquids almost always contain nicotine, flavors and other chemicals. Other names for vaping products include vapes, vape pens, e-cigs or e-hookahs.
- In 2009, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) banned flavors in cigarettes because of how dangerous they are for youth. However, menthol was not included in this ban. Currently, no flavors are banned in e-cigarettes.



□ MENTHOL CIGARETTE USE

Menthol is a minty-flavored substance that masks the harshness of tobacco. The tobacco industry designed menthol cigarettes as a “starter” product to hook young people on tobacco. Menthol cigarettes cause just as much harm as non-menthol cigarettes, but the menthol additive makes the smoke less harsh and easier for teens to tolerate.⁷ Young people who smoke menthol cigarettes show more signs of being hooked on nicotine than those who smoke non-menthol cigarettes.⁸

□ E-CIGARETTE USE AMONG YOUTH

Over the last few years, e-cigarette use among NYC youth has increased, and flavors have played a major role in this trend. Although e-cigarettes were only introduced about a decade ago, 17 percent of public high school students reported using them in 2017. E-cigarette use was most common among Latino high school students (20 percent) and White high school students (27 percent).³

E-cigarettes almost always contain nicotine, which is addictive, especially for teenagers. Nicotine can change a teenager’s brain chemistry; it can worsen memory and concentration, and may decrease learning ability. In addition, the aerosol from e-cigarettes may contain harmful chemicals, such as benzene, formaldehyde, lead and nickel. Some of these chemicals are known to cause cancer or are linked to other diseases.⁹

Used e-cigarettes can also be an environmental issue. They contribute to plastic and e-waste and also contain electronics and chemicals, often with no instructions for how to dispose of them safely.





□ INDUSTRY MARKETING

Each year, the biggest tobacco companies in the U.S. spend more than \$9 billion on marketing for all tobacco products.^{10,11} That's over \$1 million an hour! The tobacco industry persistently advertises menthol tobacco products to teens, women and communities of color. Between 1970-1990, a tobacco company sent vans into communities of color to hand out free menthol cigarettes. A 2011 New York State study found that menthol cigarette ads were more common in neighborhoods with more youth.¹² Marketing aimed at communities of color contributed to an increase in menthol use among Black individuals who smoke from 5 percent in the 1950s to 85 percent nationally today.¹³ In NYC, 85 percent of Black adults who smoke and 64 percent of Latino adults who smoke use menthol cigarettes.¹⁴

Although e-cigarettes were only introduced in the last 10 years, e-cigarette companies have adopted many of the same tactics used by the tobacco industry — such as sex appeal, rebellion and glamour. In fact, some e-cigarette manufacturers are even owned by the tobacco industry. Altria, one of the world's largest tobacco companies, recently purchased a 35 percent stake in Juul, an e-cigarette company whose products make up the majority of the current e-cigarette market.

□ COUNTERMARKETING

Countermarketing is a communication strategy that public health organizations use to combat tobacco industry advertising and tobacco media influences, such as smoking imagery in movies.¹⁵ State, national and international studies have found that tobacco countermarketing campaigns can effectively reduce youth smoking. You can come up with your own countermarketing ideas and taglines, using an activity later in this guide.

WHAT AN ORGANIZATION CAN DO

Take the pledge to **DEFEND!** (See the pledge in the toolkit.)

Flavored tobacco products and e-cigarettes are putting an entire generation of young people at risk. Your organization can reduce the number of young people who smoke or vape, thereby decreasing and preventing nicotine addiction in your community.

You can raise awareness about the hazards of these products, fight back against the aggressive marketing of flavored tobacco and e-cigarettes to youth, and assist those who want to quit. Here are ways to engage youth and adults in these efforts.

❑ **DISPLAY** the **Truth About E-cigarettes** poster in a prominent location at your organization.

❑ **HOST** a community forum or event for World No Tobacco Day (May 31) or another anti-tobacco action day. For event activity ideas, see Appendix A. For examples of anti-tobacco action days, see Appendix B.

■ **Collect and share** interviews or personal stories about the negative effects of flavored tobacco products and e-cigarettes in your community. Use your organization's social media, newsletter or website. For a good resource on collecting stories visit ctb.ku.edu and search for **photovoice**.

■ **Map** or collect data on how many tobacco and e-cigarette retailers and prominent product advertisements are in your neighborhood. For a good resource on collecting data in your community, visit countertobacco.org and search for **STARS**. Share your findings with community residents and leaders through presentations, emails, social media or by writing an op-ed in a local newspaper.

❑ **EDUCATE** your community about the harms of flavored tobacco products and e-cigarettes using your organization's social media platforms, newsletter or website. You can use the hashtag **#VapeFree**

❑ **PROMOTE** resources to help community members quit smoking, by encouraging them to:

- Visit nysmokefree.com or call **866-NY-QUITS (866-697-8487)** or **311** to get a free starter kit of quit-smoking medications or to talk to a quit coach.
- Visit nyc.gov/nycquits.
- Download the NYC HelpMeQuit app from the Apple (iOS) or Google Play (Android) stores.
- Visit nyc.gov/health/map to find local smoking cessation programs.
- Visit facebook.com/nycquits to find more resources and connect with others trying to quit.



APPENDIX A

Event/Workshop Activities

Organize an event in your community to engage and educate youth about the harms of flavored tobacco products and e-cigarettes. The following activities* offer fun ways to do this interactively.

*The Health Department and Vision Change Win developed these activities.

Flavors Jeopardy

Supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Game cards– Tape
Time	30 minutes to 1 hour
Objective	Introduce participants to the health risks of flavored tobacco and vaping products and also inform them of industry marketing tactics.
Planning Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Make sure you have tape and other supplies needed for set up.✓ Review the lesson plan. Familiarize yourself with the questions and answers.✓ Participants may think that some of the statistics reflect overall smoking rates. Explain to participants that the overall adult smoking rate in NYC is 13.4 percent. The overall smoking rate for youth is even lower at 5 percent.
Procedure 30-45 minutes	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Tape the four categories (Tobacco Industry, Menthol, Facts About Menthol Usage and E-Cigarettes) on the top row. Place the dollar values (\$100, \$200 and \$300) and questions for each category underneath.2. Divide participants into two teams. Any person from the team can answer the question.3. Have the first team choose a category and dollar value to answer. If the team provides the correct answer, it earns the dollar value. If the team answers incorrectly, the other team can try to answer the same question. The team that did not score in the previous round chooses the next category and point value.4. Repeat the process until all questions are answered.



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Event/Workshop Activities

Flavors Jeopardy (continued)

Procedure
30–45
minutes

CATEGORY: Tobacco Industry

- **\$100 Value Question:** Which populations does the tobacco industry market menthol products to? Provide at least two different communities.
Answer: Youth, communities of color, women and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) communities.
- **\$200 Value Question:** How many people does tobacco kill every year in the U.S.? (Hint to participants that it is more than 300,000 per year and they can be within a 20,000 margin below or above the correct answer.)
Answer: Tobacco kills more than 480,000 people annually in the U.S. — more than AIDS, alcohol, car accidents, illegal drugs, murders and suicides combined.^{16,17}
- **\$300 Value Question:** What action did the FDA take in 2009 regarding flavors in cigarettes?
Answer: The FDA banned flavors in cigarettes due to risk for youth initiation, but made an exception for menthol.

CATEGORY: Menthol

- **\$100 Value Question:** What is menthol?
Answer: Menthol is a minty substance added to tobacco products that hides the harshness of smoking.
- **\$200 Value Question:** True or False: Menthol cigarettes are less harmful than regular tobacco cigarettes.
Answer: False. Menthol cigarettes are just as harmful and have the same amount of nicotine as regular cigarettes.
- **\$300 Value Question:** True or False: Almost two out of three young people who smoke in NYC start with menthol or another flavored tobacco product.
Answer: True.

What Is
Menthol?



Event/Workshop Activities

Flavors Jeopardy

Procedure
30–45
minutes

CATEGORY: Facts About Menthol Usage:

- **\$100 Value Question:** Fill in the blank. The tobacco industry designs menthol cigarettes as a starter product to lure _____ people so they become hooked on tobacco.

Answer: *Young*

- **\$200 Value Question:** Approximately what percentage of U.S. youth who smoke use menthol cigarettes? (Inform participants they can be in a 10 percent margin below or above to gain points.)

Answer: *About 54 percent of U.S. youth who smoke (age 12 to 17) use menthol products.*

- **\$300 Value Question:** What percentage of Black adult New Yorkers who smoke use menthol products? What percentage of Latino adult New Yorkers who smoke use menthol products? (Inform participants they can be in within 10 percent of the correct answer to gain points)

Answer: *85 percent of Black adults who smoke use menthol products and 64 percent of Latino adults who smoke use menthol products.*

CATEGORY: E-cigarettes:

- **\$100 Value Question:** Do e-cigarettes contain nicotine?

Answer: *Almost always, yes.*

- **\$200 Value Question:** Are e-cigarettes harmful to youth?

Answer: *Yes. E-cigarettes almost always contain nicotine, which is addictive, as well as other potentially harmful chemicals that are still being studied to determine long-term health effects.*

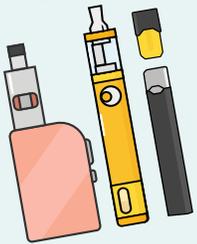
- **\$300 Value Question:** Teens who try e-cigarettes may be more likely to try what other product?

Answer: *Traditional cigarettes — compared to their peers who haven't used e-cigarettes or vaping products.*

Debrief
Three-five
minutes

- **What did you already know?**
- **What was new information?**

E-Cigarettes



Harmful
to Youth

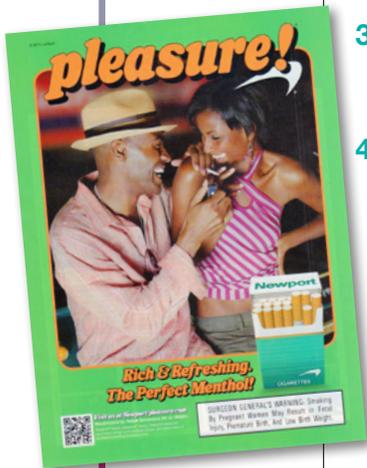


APPENDIX A

Event/Workshop Activities

Tobacco Industry Advertisements Gallery Walk

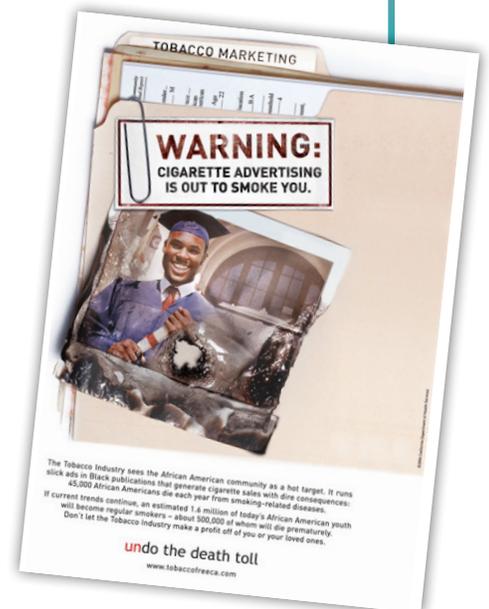
Supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Industry advertisement examples. Visit tobacco.stanford.edu to download and print out examples. – Tape
Time	15–30 minutes
Objective	To give participants an opportunity to see how advertising affects them.
Planning Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Make sure you have your supplies. ✓ Become familiar with the ads. ✓ Tape ads around the room before participants arrive. ✓ Remind the group of the dangers of smoking. ✓ Research the concept of persuasive advertising and how images can influence someone to start smoking.
Procedure 10–20 minutes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tell participants they will participate in a gallery walk. Inform them that there are ads placed around the room. 2. Ask them to take their time looking at each ad, and think about what they see and feel when looking at these ads. 3. After participants have looked at the ads, let them know you will read a series of statements or questions. Have participants stand in front of the ad that they think best reflects the statement. 4. Statements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stand in front of an ad that markets to people of color. ▪ Stand in front of an ad that markets to women. ▪ Stand in front of an ad that markets to young people. ▪ Stand in front of the ad you think is the most effective (that speaks to you the most). ▪ Stand in front of the ad you think is the least effective (that you did not connect to). <p>After each statement: Ask one or two people why they chose a particular ad.</p>
Debrief Three–five minutes	<p>Large Group Debrief</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What are your overall thoughts or reactions to the ads? ▪ What do you think or how do you feel about being in a community that is being targeted in these ads? ▪ Do you think the ads are effective in targeting particular communities?



Event/Workshop Activities

Countermarketing Taglines Workshop

Supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Countermarketing advertising examples. Visit tobacco.stanford.edu to download and print examples. — Four large sheets of paper — Markers — Tape
Time	30 minutes
Objective	<p>Ask participants their opinions on the effectiveness of countermarketing advertising.</p> <p>Have participants create countermarketing taglines that they can share with their communities.</p>
Planning Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Become familiar with the ads. ✓ Tape ads around the room before participants arrive. ✓ Have chart paper and markers for the creation of the countermarketing tagline. ✓ Prepare small group questions.
Procedure 30 minutes to one hour	<p><i>Explain what countermarketing is. Give the group the following prompt, and then ask them each to briefly share their answer. “What makes a successful countermarketing campaign?”</i></p> <p>Write this on flip chart paper or board:</p> <p>Eight Key Elements Found in Successful Countermarketing Campaigns¹⁸:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communicate the negative health effects of the product. 2. Mention industry manipulation of consumers. 3. Spark negative emotions. 4. Mock popular brands. 5. Tailor campaigns for specific groups. 6. Disapprove the industry aiming their marketing to at-risk groups. 7. Establish a distinct countermarketing campaign brand. 8. Engage users in all phases of campaign.



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Event/Workshop Activities

Countermarketing Taglines Workshop (continued)

Procedure
30 minutes
to one
hour

Split the participants into small groups of four and hand each group several countermarketing ads.

1. Have each group discuss the following questions:
 - a. Are these images effective? Why or why not?
 - b. Which ads are the most compelling? Which are the least compelling?
 - c. By viewing these ads, would you be swayed to either quit or not start smoking at all?
2. Tagline creation: Give each group a piece of flip chart paper and art supplies.
 - a. Using the countermarketing ads posted on the walls as inspiration, ask each group to create a tagline to counter tobacco or e-cigarette ads. Ask them to imagine that they are designing a new marketing campaign.
 - b. Give them 20 minutes to complete the challenge.
3. Ask each group to report back on their countermarketing ads and then present their own taglines.

Debrief
30–35
minutes

Groups report out what they discussed on countermarketing ads and tagline creation:

- How did the countermarketing ads make you feel?
- Which countermarketing ad made you most or least want to try the product?
- What makes an ad work for you?
- How might you be able to share your taglines in your community?

APPENDIX B

Tobacco Awareness Calendar



Jan. 1 - New Year's Day

Help people quit smoking as their New Year's resolution.



February is American Heart Month.

Quit smoking for your heart this month.



March 19 - Kick Butts Day

Help people who smoke or use other tobacco products kick their habit. Visit kickbuttsday.org for more information.



April 22 - Earth Day

Help people see the connection between tobacco and e-cigarette litter and the environment. Visit earthday.org for more information.



Second Sunday in May - Mother's Day

Help families everywhere make this Mother's Day smoke-free.

Third Sunday in May - No Menthol Sunday

This national observance day, led by National African American Tobacco Prevention Network (NAATPN), is an important opportunity to engage faith leaders and their communities in a discussion about how to improve health outcomes for African Americans. Use the hashtag #NoMentholSunday.

May 31 - World No Tobacco Day

Raise awareness about the harms of tobacco use and business practices of tobacco companies. Visit who.int and search for **World No Tobacco Day**.



Third Sunday in June - Father's Day

Help families everywhere make this Father's Day smoke-free.

APPENDIX B

Tobacco Awareness Calendar



July 15-21 - National Youth Sports Week

Promote an active and smoke-free life-style for children and their families through sports. Visit ncys.org and search for **National Youth Sports Week**.



Schools are almost in session. Develop a lesson plan to teach youth about the harms of tobacco products and e-cigarettes.



Healthy Aging Month

Spread the word that quitting smoking, even for older adults, has many proven health benefits.



Third full week of October - Red Ribbon Week

Teach children about tobacco addiction. Visit anti-smoking.org/redribbonweek.



Lung Cancer Awareness Month

Help Americans join in the fight against lung cancer. Visit lung.org.

Third Thursday of November - Great American Smokeout

Educate about the dangers of smoking and promote cessation resources to people who smoke. Visit cancer.org and search for **Great American Smokeout**.

Fourth Thursday of November - Thanksgiving

Those who smoke don't have to go cold turkey this Thanksgiving. Promote existing cessation resources.



Help people give themselves the gift of quitting tobacco this holiday season.

APPENDIX C

Content for Social Media



The Health Department has created a social media messaging kit you can use to share facts about flavored tobacco products and e-cigarettes. Find sample messages, hashtags and graphics to share on your organization's social media channels by visiting on.nyc.gov/vapingsocial.

APPENDIX D

Resources

Stanford Medicine Tobacco Prevention Toolkit

Visit med.stanford.edu/tobacco-preventiontoolkit.html.

New York City Health Department

Visit nyc.gov/nycquits.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Visit cdc.gov/tobacco.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services E-Cigarettes Page

Visit e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/getthefacts.html.

FDA The Real Cost Campaign

Visit fda.gov and search for **The Real Cost**.

Flavors Hook Kids

Visit flavorhookkids.org.

Tips for Former Smokers Media Campaign (CDC)

Visit cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips.

Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (CTFK)

Visit tobaccofreekids.org.

Kicks Butts Day

Visit kickbuttsday.org.

Truth Campaign

Visit thetruth.com.

Parents Against Vaping E-cigarettes (PAVE)

Visit parentsagainstvaping.org.

New York State Smoker's Quitline

Visit nysmokefree.com.

American Cancer Society (ACS)

Visit cancer.org and search for **tobacco**.

Great American Smokeout (Put on by ACS)

Visit cancer.org and search for **Great American Smokeout**.

American Heart Association

Visit heart.org and search for **tobacco**.

American Lung Association

Visit lung.org.

Smokefree.gov

Visit smokefree.gov.

Black Lives, Black Lungs Video

Visit blacklivesblacklungs.com.

National African American Tobacco Prevention Network

Visit naatpn.org.

CDC Tobacco Webpage

Visit cdc.gov/tobacco.

Counter Tobacco Menthol Page

Visit countertobacco.org and search for **menthol**.

NAACP Menthol Campaign

Visit naacp.org and search for **youth against menthol**.

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To learn more, visit nyc.gov/health and search for **vaping action kit**.

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