

Teens Talk Vaping

About the project

The Teens Talk Vaping project sought to co-produce research about teen vaping *with* teens to better understand their everyday vaping experiences and exposures.

How we did it

Taking a by-youth-for-youth approach, we trained a group of teenagers in the research skills needed to contribute as “co-researchers” on all phases of the project. Co-researchers facilitated 7 online focus groups with 17 teens from across Canada. Analysis generated five themes revealing how vaping is experienced as ‘everywhere’.

THEMES

Secrecy and Surveillance at School

Washrooms are vape central: “there’s a layer of lemon and cotton candy fog in the bathroom”.

Uneven implementation: “teachers know that students are vaping in the washrooms, but they like purposely don’t catch them”.

Gendered surveillance: “[they] took off the doors in the boys’ washroom due to the vaping problem”.

Rethinking Vaping Education in Schools

Outdated and limited information: “their information is outdated and people already came over it”.

Teen-centered information and approaches: “they should get the information from other teens”.

Online Omnipresence

Social media influence(rs): “they got famous off doing like famous vape tricks”.

Product promotion: “I can’t even open my social media without seeing like an advertisement about [vapes]”.

Social Pressures

Peer Pressure: “they might just think you’re a skunk”.

Fitting in: “you’re doing it to boost your status”.

Access and Mobility Restrictions

Easy Access (through siblings and shops): “it’s so easy for us to access vapes”.

Easy access (through school): “would like have an entire like vape shop in their bag”.

Bi-directional pandemic impacts: “they didn’t really have a way to get out so mainly just force to quit”/“constantly stuck at home and like, having on other like, stress reliever to go to but vaping so I think it’s increased”.

KEY MESSAGES

Socio-environmental Dimensions

School rules, online presence, peer pressure, and easy access shape teens vape experiences and exposures.

Widespread Normalization

Vaping is seemingly everywhere in Canadian teens’ lives, through influences on social media and seeing peers vape.

The Where and How

Teens encountered vaping in everyday places like school, online, and with friends, showing how it’s part of the daily routine.

Equity-Centered Interventions

Including teen perspectives can contribute to identifying strategies that support informed decision-making when it comes to vaping.

Policy Disconnect

Despite rules against vaping, many teens came across vaping in school, showing a gap between rules and reality.

A short film created by teen co-researchers, which shares the key themes and brings viewers into teens’ perspectives and experiences following a ‘day in the life’ through the eyes of a high schooler.



<https://tinyurl.com/TTVfilm>