

May TAP/TEG Enews From Community Intervention (May 2004)

In This Issue...

- * Tobacco Trivia: Smoking, Sex, and Reproductive Health
- * Teenage Activism and Tobacco Use Reduction
- * May Question of the Month
- * Dates to Remember
- * First Time **TEG** Is Not A Charm

Tobacco Trivia: Smoking, Sex, and Reproductive Health

Male sexual impotence. Smoking increases the risk of impotence approximately 50% for men in their 30s and 40s. (May 2002 ASH Fact Sheet)

Fetal growth and birth weight. Babies born to women who smoke average eight ounces lighter than babies born to non-smokers. Low birth weight is associated with higher risks of death and disease in infancy and early childhood. (May 2002 ASH Fact Sheet)

Smoking and cervical cancer. Women who smoke have up to four times higher risk of developing cervical cancer than non-smokers. (May 2002 ASH Fact Sheet)

Tobacco use and breast cancer. Women who start smoking in their teens are 70 percent more likely to develop breast cancer than non-smokers. (October 5, 2002, The Lancet Medical Journal)

Action on Smoking and Health >> <http://www.ash.org.uk/>

Teenage Activism and Tobacco Use Reduction

So, your **TAP** or **TEG** sessions have ended. Most kids reduced their tobacco use and many quit. Now what? You know how much the time they spent with you helped and how much they could use more structure and support.

During group, did you notice young people who seemed concerned about how their secondhand smoke harms other people or their pets? Did you observe youth upset by the ways tobacco companies manipulated them into thinking smoking is sexy and fun? Did any of your students become angry at how hard and painful it is to stop their tobacco addiction? If so, the next step for your **TEG** or **TAP** graduates may be to become anti-tobacco advocates or activists. This is a great way for them to positively channel their anger and frustration, develop new peers, and get support to be tobacco free.

Research backs up this common sense notion. A study in ten alternative high schools in San Francisco/San Jose found that teen smokers who enrolled in an anti-tobacco advocacy course reduced their cigarette use by 3.8 percent by semester's end (March 2004 of the Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine). Also, the May 7 issue of *Join Together Online* reported that an article in the May 4 *Christian Science Monitor* documented several scenarios where youth advocates made significant, positive changes in their communities.

This sounds fine and dandy, right? But with the time you commit to teaching **TAP** and **TEG**, you can't imagine adding the responsibility of leading youth advocates. This is where you pass the ball to someone else in your community. Contact youth workers, Boys and Girls Clubs, tobacco prevention coalitions, religious organizations, cultural centers, Boy and Girl Scouts, volunteer organizations or other youth professionals in your community.

Direct them to the many sources of information and training on how to teach youth activism skills and approaches. For instance, **SQUADS** (**S**tudy, **Q**uestion, **U**nderstand, **A**ct, **D**ebrief, and **S**uccess) was one of the first youth advocacy curriculum and training programs, developed by Judy Sopenski and others at **STAT** in Boston. Other great sources of information include, but are not limited to:

www.youthactivism.com

www.stamp.org

www.mobilize.org

www.cyanonline.org

www.kickbutt.org

www.ysa.org

Young people use the skills they learn being youth activists and advocates throughout their lives to address any issue of local, national or global concern, not just tobacco.

Click here for more information on **SQUADS**:

<http://www.communityintervention.org/squadstraining.asp>

May Question of the Month

~~~~~  
**What are you and your students doing to commemorate World No Tobacco Day on May 31?** (Remember: The first ten people to reply will get ten *free* **TAP** or **TEG** student workbooks! Also, we may share your response with others in the next **TAP/TEG** Enews.)

In April, we asked you to share ways you successfully recruit students to **TAP**. Tammy Bryant from Mason City, IA, enthusiastically wrote, "We just completed 4 **TAP** classes!!! YEAH!!! Three of them were offered in the high school during the day. In each of the schools, we have a student anti-tobacco group. Those students helped come up with poster ideas." They printed and hung the student's posters everywhere, including bathrooms, halls, pillars, windows, etc. They handed out flyers at sporting programs. Tammy thinks that enlisting and empowering students really helped, along with "buy in" from the office, principals, teachers, and staff. Once students trusted there would be no repercussions, no strings attached, and no questions asked, they felt safe giving **TAP** a try.

Michelle Hamilton at Vista Unified School District in California says that one of the best ways she recruits is by finding a student that has a circle of friends who smoke. She tells the student to bring his/her smoking friends to **TAP** so they can support each other in their attempt to quit. She rewards the students with movie passes.

Ruth Lucas in Cumberland, TN, set up a "picnic table" at a local health fair on which she placed a picnic basket filled with a bottle of ammonia, a box of rat poison, formaldehyde from a funeral home, nail polish remover, and bug spray. Her sign read, "If you smoke, you are having a picnic on these." More than 800 young people visited the booth!

Many responded to say that they recruit the most **TAP** participants through a personal invitation or direct referral. This approach must not be to nag and preach, but to care and teach. For instance, ask your school nurse to screen each and every child who walks into his/her office for tobacco use. She could teach the student about the possible connection between their ailment and tobacco use (asthma, colds, headache, failing grades, etc.) This same personal approach works for parents, the school resource officer, counselors, social workers, janitors, bus drivers, dentists, employers of teens, teachers, and anyone who has a good connection with kids. Make sure they have a card with your contact information to pass along!

#### **Dates to Remember**

~~~~~

May is...
Mental Health Month
Skin Cancer Awareness Month
Healthy Vision Month and
Clean Air Month

May 31 is World "No Tobacco" Day!

June is...
Vision Research Month
14-20 National Men's Health Week
6th is National Cancer Survivors Day

Click here for more information on World No Tobacco Day: <http://www.wntd.com/>

First Time TEG Is Not A Charm

~~~~~

At a recent conference, I ran into Sammy\*, a **TEG** facilitator who, with a twinkle in her eye, shared the experience of her first **TEG** group with me.

B.T. (Before **TEG**), the high school took the "If We Don't Have Any Smoking Rules, Then The Kids Won't Break Them" approach. Since this resulted in students smoking in the bathrooms all day long, the school thought **TEG** sounded like the answer to their annoying smoking problem.

**TEG** was to take place before and after school for three weeks. On the first day of **TEG**, only two out of thirteen students showed. The tobacco-use policy had not been formally updated, so parents hadn't been notified and there were no consequences if students chose not to attend.

The school suggested that doing the groups during lunchtime might improve attendance. (Lunch is 25 minutes long.) The kids would arrive 10 minutes late, leaving only 15 minutes for **TEG**. To make matters worse, the students were distracted by eating and the temptation to socialize. It took Sammy more than twenty lunches to complete eight **TEG** lessons!

Next year, the policy will change so that **TEG** will be an alternative to suspension. Parents will be notified. There will be consequences. The "i's" will be dotted and the "t's" crossed.

Good luck Sammy! We'll be rooting for you!

\*The facilitator's name has been changed.