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Tips For Effective Communication With Youth About Vaping

There are all sorts of reasons why youth pick up vaping and tobacco. And as parents/adults, it's tough to have legit conversations about it. Heck, it's hard to talk to youth about a lot of stuff, so we're here to help you navigate through the difficult conversations.

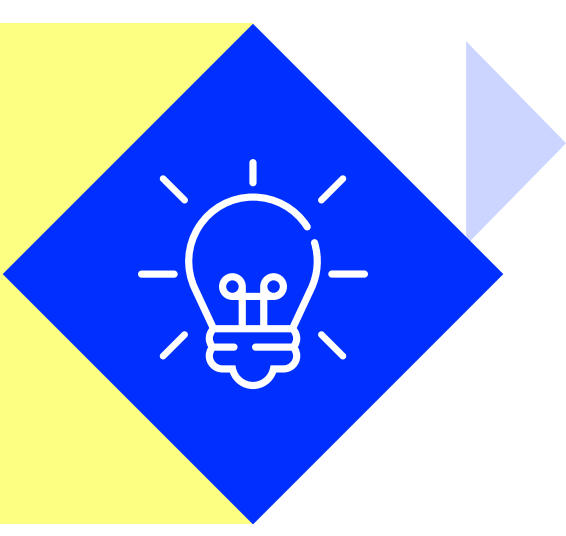
These tips came straight from youth! When we asked them how they'd like the adults in their lives to engage in a discussion about vaping, these were their top suggestions.



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Empathy and Safe Space

Use empathy when talking with young people, listen without judgment, and create a safe, open space for dialogue between youth and adults.



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Discover the "WHY"

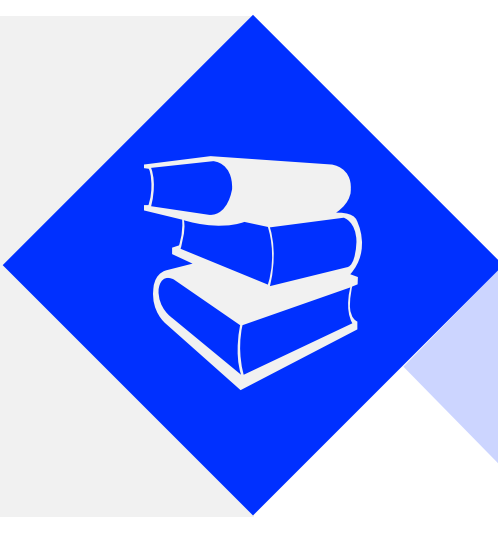
Be open and explore WHY youth use. Don't come in hot with your own opinions/suggestions/accusations until you've heard your youth's perspective, and then respond in a way that builds trust and is nonjudgmental. Seek the right resources/professional guidance to assist with your youth's physical and mental health needs.



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Mental Health and Vaping

Know that vaping could be related to some underlying mental health issues (depression, anxiety, and ADHD). Vaping nicotine can worsen mental health conditions and increase stress levels; youth may be using to self-medicate. If your youth talks about mental health symptoms, believe them.



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Learn About the Products

You don't have to be an expert; however, learn a little about the products so you can talk about them – use credible resources for information (e.g., American Heart Association, Truth Initiative, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, CDC, U.S. Surgeon General, and the Tobacco-Free Meck website). Saying "don't do it" without an explanation is not helpful - provide the facts.



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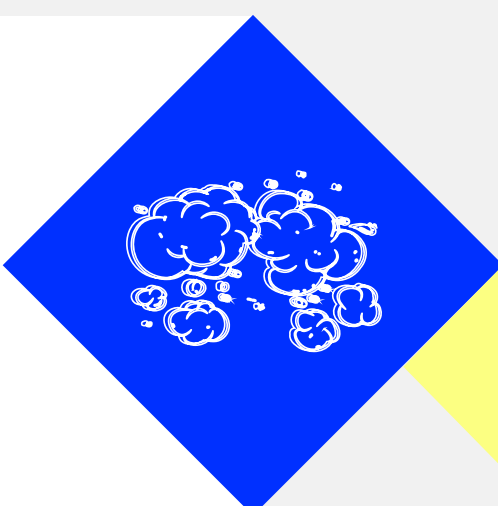
Two-Way Dialogue

It is helpful for youth to know short-term and potential long-term effects of these products; however, find a way to not have it come off as a lecture. Ask them to share what they know about the effects and have a two-way dialogue about it. Nicotine addiction is not benign; it impacts the brain and behavior, college and workforce readiness, and primes the brain for addiction/usage of other drugs.

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You've Got a Friend in Me

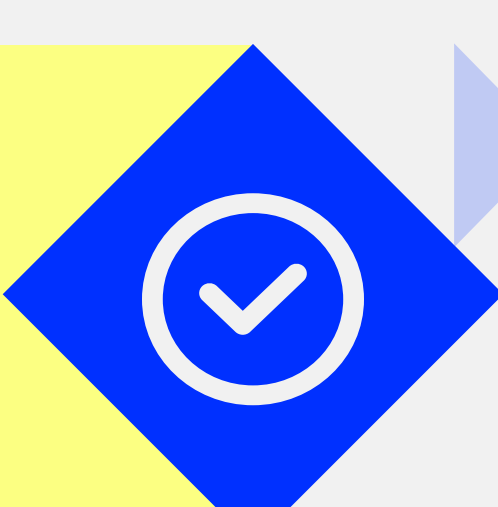
Find the balance between being a friend and a parent. Reiterate that you are not mad at your youth.



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Vaping Is the New Trend

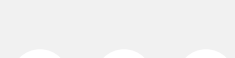
While smoking cigarettes has become less socially acceptable, realize that vaping has become somewhat normalized in our society and to youth. This is the environment our youth live in today. Put yourselves in their shoes instead of reverting to the "back in my day" narrative.



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Set a Good Example

Lead by example by being tobacco-free and working to have your home and car tobacco-free. Visit www.QuitlineNC.com for help in quitting smoking/vaping.



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Normalize Talking About It

Look for opportunities for conversation starters, such as seeing someone use an e-cigarette in person or in a video; passing an e-cigarette store when you're walking or driving; or better yet, if your youth brings it up, stop and take the time to have the conversation and ask more. Don't cut conversations down with oversimplified solutions. Normalize having these conversations.



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Let Us Help You Navigate Difficult Conversations.

For more tips and resources, visit our website!

<https://tobaccofree.mecknc.gov/>



MECKLENBURG COUNTY
North Carolina