

VAPING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: BC YOUTH'S EXPERIENCES

A GUIDE TO FACILITATE DISCUSSION
WITH STUDENTS IN GRADES 8–12.

Facilitation time: 20 minutes for video and discussion, or up to one class period including action planning.

Video link: <https://youtu.be/2ywX9IS4kFk>

INTRODUCTION

This guide is designed as a tool to engage youth in a discussion about vaping, and is a companion to the video *Vaping during the COVID-19 pandemic: BC youth's experiences* (available on McCreary's YouTube channel [@McCrearyCentre](#)).

The guide includes discussion questions to facilitate a conversation at three points during the video, background information on the project, and vaping and mental health resources to share with youth. It also includes information about McCreary's Youth Action Grants program, which is introduced at the end of the video.

The video and facilitation guide would not have been possible without the help of amazing youth researchers across BC. Special thanks are due to Aila, Devyn, Mackenzie, and Makayla.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The information in the video came from a project conducted by the McCreary Centre Society, which was commissioned by the BC Ministry of Health. The goal was to canvass the vaping experiences of youth in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

An advisory committee of BC vaping experts oversaw the project. Twenty-eight youth researchers were recruited from communities across BC and trained to co-design and deliver surveys to their peers.

The youth researchers met regularly from May 2020 to January 2021 to develop survey questions, review and provide context to the results, and discuss ways to share key messages. The youth researchers shared each wave of the survey with their peers through social media (e.g., Instagram, Facebook), as well as through their class 'chat' and school website.

The surveys were completed by young people aged 12–19 from across BC. Youth who had vaped, as well as those who had never vaped were invited to take part. The surveys included questions about thoughts and perceptions around vaping that all young people could answer.

The project was comprised of three different online surveys. The first survey was available three months after physical distancing regulations came into effect in BC (June 2020), and subsequent surveys took place in September and December 2020. Each survey was live for one month, and youth were welcome to participate at any time-point, including at all three.

The surveys took about 10 minutes to complete. Some questions were the same on all three surveys, and others changed to reflect the different stages of the pandemic. For example, the September survey asked about vaping in the context of the return of in-person schooling.

To learn more about this project, visit www.mcs.bc.ca or email mccreary@mcs.bc.ca.



BEFORE THE VIDEO:

This video is designed for use with youth in Grades 8–12 in a classroom setting.

The video covers some of the background information about the survey, but for more in-depth information, you can review the 'project background' section on page 1.

DURING THE VIDEO:

There are three points in the video where a prompt will appear to pause for discussion. At each of these points, the narrator will pose two discussion questions. The following questions were designed to deepen the discussion, and to raise points of interest identified by the youth researchers.

DISCUSSION 1:

- ✘ Do you think there are more effective ways to manage stress than vaping? If so, what might they be?
- ✘ What might it tell us that most youth who vaped daily had their first vape shortly after waking up?

DISCUSSION 2:

- ✘ Did it surprise you that so many youth shared vapes during the pandemic? Why or why not?
- ✘ The laws around selling vapes changed in July. Could this have been the reason fewer youth bought their vape juice at a store in December, or do you think there might have been other reasons?

FINAL DISCUSSION:

- ✘ Do the results reflect what is happening in this school/community?
 - ✘ If so, in what ways? If not, how might things be different?
- ✘ Did any of the results surprise you?
- ✘ What do the survey results tell us about the reasons youth might vape?
- ✘ How has the pandemic affected BC youth and their experiences with vaping?
- ✘ What do the survey results tell us about supporting youth who want to reduce or stop vaping?

AFTER THE VIDEO:

If students have an idea to address a youth health issue identified through the video, McCreary's Youth Advisory and Action Council offers Youth Action Grants (YAG) to support youth-led projects. The YAGs provide up to \$500 to support youth to deliver a project to improve youth health in their school or community.

ACTION PLANNING:

- ✘ What do you think would help young people in this school or community when it comes to vaping?
- ✘ If you could do something to improve these results, what would you do? What steps would we need to take to make it happen?

Learn more or apply for a grant at www.mcs.bc.ca/youth_action_grants.

RESOURCES TO SHARE WITH YOUTH

quitnow.ca

QuitNow is a free BC-based service for those looking to reduce or quit vaping and tobacco use.

healthlinkbc.ca

HealthLink BC offers resources for people wanting to reduce or quit vaping and tobacco use.

kidshelpphone.ca

Kids Help Phone is a free and confidential service for info and referrals, professional counselling, and text-based support available to BC youth 24/7.

