

Tobacco Cessation Lessons Learned from the Utah Youth Program

From a Counseling point of view:

- Dealing with youth is in fact a unique challenge
- Unlike most of our participants, the youth may not have chosen to be in the program (court mandated), they may be less engaged, more short-sighted
- Use of MI early is crucial; communicate that “we’re not the smoking police”, reinforce confidentiality of calls, “what we talk about doesn’t get back to the courts”
- Establish good rapport before moving on to a quit plan
- Be non-judgmental, don’t lecture, be interested in their opinion, don’t “correct” their ideas, use age appropriate vocabulary (less formal)
- Why do youth start smoking? Peer pressure/having friends who smoke, rebellious behavior, tobacco marketing targets youth (it’s hip/cool/sexy), weight management (females)
- Why do youth continue smoking? Manage moods, reduce stress/anxiety, manage weight, lack adequate coping skills
- Once youth start smoking: underestimate the addictiveness of tobacco, the younger they start the stronger the addiction to nicotine, self regulation skills may not be well developed
- Why do youth want to quit? Health concerns, concerns about physical appearance, cost of cigarettes, athletic performance, influence from friends who don’t smoke
- Unique situations: some youth report not using tobacco but having been “caught” with a friend that does; ask their opinion of tobacco use, keep in mind they’re still at a higher risk to start smoking, are they around smokers a lot, do they experience peer pressure to use tobacco?

From a Logistics point of view:

- Send age appropriate materials
- Adjust any scripting/questionnaire/demographic questions when necessary (salary/sexual identity/marital status/pregnancy)
- Incentives seemed to be a neutral factor; perhaps more modern items like \$5 iTunes cards?
- Dedicated coaches may be helpful
- Clear policy on what’s allowed if they fall behind on calls