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NOTICE: Youth, POC & LGBTQ+ Big Tobacco Wants You

Tucosha Lopez

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NOTICE: Youth, POC & LGBTQ+ Big Tobacco Wants You

Tucosha Lopez

Breathe California of the Bay Area, Golden Gate & Central Coast -- Janet Herbst

Collaborative Health & Human Services

Department of Health, Human Services and Public Policy

California State University Monterey Bay

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Author Note

Tucosha Lopez, Department of Health Human Services and Public Policy, California State University Monterey Bay. This research was supported by Breathe California of the Bay Area, Golden Gate, and Central Coast. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Tucosha Lopez, California State University Monterey Bay, 100 Campus Center, Seaside, CA, 93955. Contact: tulopez@csumb.edu.

Abstract

Breathe California of the Bay Area, Golden Gate, and Central Coast is a 501(c)3 non-profit that works with local communities to fight lung disease. This capstone project was developed for the Tobacco Control Program and addressed how Big Tobacco disproportionately targets youth, people of color, and LGBTQ+. Less awareness of tobacco-related issues, targeted marketing schemes, and individual susceptibility to negative health behaviors result in addiction, decreased physical/mental health, and increased negative behaviors. The project was a 45-minute educational resource video to be published on the Breathe California YouTube channel. It consists of topics about the warning signs of nicotine addiction in youth, Breathe California's history, Ash Kickers program, and tobacco control efforts by collaborators. The goal was to reach 25 views and 20 survey responses in the first week. The result was 57 views and four survey responses. I recommend that the agency uses the video in further public education programs.

Key words: youth, people of color (POC), LGBTQ+, addiction, tobacco, nicotine, education, cessation, Big Tobacco

Agency and Communities Served

Breathe California is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. They serve communities within the Golden Gate, Bay Area, and Central Coast of different ages, gender, ethnicities, and socioeconomic statuses. Their mission is to fight “...lung disease in all its forms and works with its communities to promote lung health” (Breathe California, 2022). Breathe California tends to serve more underserved communities and vulnerable populations since they are the most affected by lung diseases due to health disparities.

Problem Description

Problem Definition

Youth, people of color (POC), and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ+) communities are targeted for tobacco use. Tobacco companies know that these communities, in particular, are vulnerable and their tobacco use will bring the companies decades of financial gain. While the companies claim that they no longer aim their marketing at youth, their products are frequently located near kid-friendly stores at prices that young people can afford (TobaccoFreeCA, 2021). From a micro-level perspective, this issue affects the youth and their families. Parents and guardians lack awareness of the signs that their children are becoming addicted. This is due, in part, to tobacco companies marketing products that have easier to hide scents, which do not smell like tobacco, and packaging that looks harmless, like pens or USB drives.

Breathe California has a six-session tobacco cessation program called Ash Kickers, that uses the transtheoretical model of behavior modification to help smokers that may be in different stages of the cessation process (Breathe California, 2022). However, they could use more help raising awareness in the targeted communities to the loved ones of these specific communities

that are targeted. If parents/guardians, youth, POC, and the LGBTQ+ become aware of the signs of addiction and prepared enough to have a conversation about cessation, tobacco companies would have to find another community to target. Unfortunately, lack of awareness is only one of the contributing factors: the tobacco industry's marketing schemes and these vulnerable communities' susceptibility to participating in negative behaviors.

Contributing Factors

Less awareness of tobacco use harm in communities

Parents and guardians are often unaware of the signs that their children are vaping or using tobacco products; moreover, the children are usually unaware of the dangers of using tobacco products as well. As a result, it is more efficient to work on tobacco prevention and cessation with the entire family. Harvey and Chadi (2016) also reported more success when the family groups learned of the "immediate negative effects of smoking" rather than long-term consequences because the younger family members had less concern about the future.

According to Duan et al. (2021), 80% of middle and high school students saw e-cigarette advertising in multimedia in casual environments like retail stores. Without proper education or awareness that these products can have long-term adverse effects on their health/lives, they could become curious to try them then quickly become addicted. If their parents/guardians could warn them before they are exposed to this information, they could prevent them from being curious as well.

Targeted Marketing

The issue of targeted marketing schemes is one that has been around for over 50 years now. Sometimes, a person may be aware of the dangers but will still be intrigued because a product caters to their interests or is convenient. Big Tobacco targets youth by creating products

that look and smell like harmless products made for kids (TobaccoFreeCA, 2021). They also target people of color by installing ten times more advertising in predominantly African American neighborhoods (truthinitiative, 2017). Finally, tobacco companies provide LGBTQ+ people with free tobacco products, host pride events, and use the community in product campaigns as a way to garner trust and use within the community (truthinitiative, 2021).

Susceptible to Participating in Negative Behaviors

Because the human brain does not fully develop until around the age of 25, youth have a higher chance of being manipulated into participating in negative behaviors like using tobacco products (NPR, 2011). LGBTQ+ and POC have disproportionately suffered from mental illness, homelessness, and lower socioeconomic status at higher rates due to generational systemic oppression, discrimination, and racism. This makes them more vulnerable to participate in negative behaviors like using tobacco products to cope with their condition of life. According to Mental Health America (2022), 37% of those that identified as LGBTQ+ suffer from mental illness. On a national level, out of every 10,000 people, 20 Latinx/Hispanic people are homeless (Moses, J., 2019). In 2021, the median household income for Black/African Americans was \$45,870 compared to White Americans at \$74, 912 (Peter G. Peterson Foundation, 2021).

Consequences

Addiction

There's a common saying, "Start young, stay addicted." In support of this quote, TobaccoFreeCA (2021) added that the young people that start smoking today will be addicted for much longer than those that start at later times in life. The CDC (2021) lists the rate of tobacco users by ethnicity: 1 in 7 (14.9%) non-Hispanic Black adults in the U.S. smokes cigarettes, 1 in 5 (20.9%) American Indian/Alaska Native adults, 1 in every 14 (7.2%) Asian American adults,

and 1 in 10 (8.8%) Hispanic or Latino adults. They also provide the statistics of how many LGBTQ+ members currently smoke, about 1 in 5 (19.2%) (Center for Disease Control, 2021).

There is a high chance that many of the adults in these vulnerable populations and statistics started smoking at a young age and developed an addiction causing them to make up the majority of smokers in the country.

Decrease in Physical and Mental Health

Vaping with e-cigarettes or JUULs can cause permanent lung damage like a condition called popcorn lung from the chemical Diacetyl inside the e-liquid (Vaping Daily, 2017). This makes the lungs irritated and inflamed by trapping the air inside the lungs and making it hard to breathe; this is very serious and can lead to death. In addition, vaping can have adverse effects on the mind. According to TobaccoFreeCA (n.d.), “Nicotine can increase anxiety, mood swings, and irritability.” For those already suffering from mental disorders, using tobacco/nicotine will increase their chances of worse symptoms and may cause them to be addicted to other substances like marijuana.

Increase in Negative Behaviors

As previously mentioned, nicotine can affect a person's mental state negatively. There are viral videos of teens in classrooms pretending to smoke their USB drives in imitation of JUULS (Balingit, 2019). Smoking in the classroom is obviously prohibited. However, since students know that smoking a JUUL can be mistaken for a USB and do not have toxic smells, they are able to misbehave in class. The issue with vaping at school has increased to the point that kids refer to the bathroom as “...The JUUL room” now. They not only misbehave at school but at home as well. One parent expressed that her son became so violent and angry around her that it terrified her (Balingit, 2019). However, she did not realize that it was a sign that her son was

addicted to vaping until his lung health decreased and a pediatrician talked to them about smoking cessation.

Problem Model

Project Title: NOTICE: Youth, POC & LGBTQ+ Big Tobacco Wants You!		
Problem Statement: Youth, POC, & LGBTQ+ are targeted for tobacco use (specifically vaping)		
CAUSES TO AGENCY PROBLEM	AGENCY-SPECIFIC “MICRO-LEVEL” PROBLEM ADDRESSED BY PROJECT	CONSEQUENCES TO AGENCY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency has limited hours (only open Monday-Friday) • Less dedicated staff hours to perform adequate outreach to youth, POC, LGBTQ+ • Language barriers & lack of cultural competency • COVID-19 restrictions did not allow communities to gather which hindered our outreach 	Agency needs to adjust hours to meet availability of community members as much as possible. It also needs to adjust to virtual methods of outreach to increase engagement with the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service goals to reach underserved communities not met • Reduction in community engagement with agency
CAUSES TO BROADER HEALTH PROBLEM	BROADER “MACRO-LEVEL” HEALTH/SOCIAL PROBLEM	CONSEQUENCES TO SOCIETY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less education and awareness in communities • Marketing schemes • Susceptible to participating in negative behaviors • Lack of awareness for vaping signals • Denial of the possibility that their family member is addicted/would do such a thing • Feeling hopeless/unsure of resources that could help 	Youth, POC, & LGBTQ+ are getting addicted to vaping at higher rates than others. The families (even extended families) are also affected by the addiction of their children, adults, and elders. It impoverishes families and whole communities because of high tobacco use rates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addiction • Decrease in physical & mental health • Increase in negative classroom behaviors • Increase in morbidity & mortality • Lower quality of life & possible premature death • Higher health care cost • Sacrifice time/energy to care for their family member • Emotional warfare

Capstone Project Description and Justification

Project Description

The educational video titled “NOTICE: Youth, POC & LGBTQ+ Big Tobacco Wants You!” will be aimed at parents/guardians, youth, people of color, and those that identify as LGBTQ+. It will include speakers from Breathe California’s Tobacco Cessation Program (Ash Kickers), Tobacco Free Coalition (TFC) members, Social Equity Initiative members, Santa Clara County Public Health Department representatives, and the Billy DeFrank LGBTQ+ Community Center. They will each give a speech (no longer than 10 minutes) describing their line of work and its impact on this issue with one or more of the listed vulnerable populations. The goal of the video is to explain the services that Breathe California provides and to shine a light on

collaborators that also help with the issue that youth, people of color, and the LGBTQ+ communities are disproportionately targeted by Big Tobacco resulting in nicotine/tobacco addiction. The video will be uploaded to Breathe California's YouTube account and website. This will give the video/information longevity and credibility to the organization. The video will also be shared with family/friends, my school network, Breathe California's network, the other collaborating agencies' networks, and the TFC members, including members of the Santa Clara County Public Health Department, CDC representatives, and over 100 other organizations concerned with tobacco use. It will also be promoted on a flier at all future health fair events attended by Breathe California representatives.

Project Justification

Breathe California has a limited number of days and times that they are open for business throughout the week. This means that they are only available to educate and provide services to their clients when they are open. Adding on to, there is a new shift toward increasing virtual services since the COVID-19 pandemic. A step toward this direction, would be creating more virtual information that can be accessed at any time for anyone that needs it.

Having the role of a mentor to a youth group in Breathe California, highlights the direct targeting of Big Tobacco toward this age group, the disproportionate smoking and addiction rates, and lack of awareness in this community. However, people of color (POC) and the LGBTQ+ communities also face disproportionate rates of targeting, addiction, and have a lack of awareness of this issue. Being that Breathe California has a smoking cessation program and collaborates with other agencies that specifically work on tobacco control within the POC and LGBTQ+ communities, it would raise more awareness within these communities to put together a YouTube video that would later be shared with parents/guardians, youth, people of color,

LGBTQ+. These communities would notice the issue, where they could receive assistance with cessation and/or not fall for Big Tobacco's targeted marketing at all.

Project Implementation

The implementation process started in February 2022 and ended in May 2022. In February I presented my final capstone project idea (using my Problem Model) to the CEO of Breathe California, Margo Sidener, along with the support of my mentor Janet Herbst. After Margo approved my idea, I started to recruit guest speakers for my video, using an email script created by me, Margo, and Janet. I also had Zoom meetings with the selected guest speakers to meet, present my idea again, and answer any questions about what was expected of them.

In March I had to find out my guest speakers' availability to record the video. Therefore, I created a Doodle and collected dates and times that worked the best for all of them. After I selected the date, I sent an email asking them to save the date for the recording. Next, I created a marketing plan, using a Google Document, that explained how I planned on promoting the video. This plan was sent to Margo and Brian Sawyer, Breathe California's Communication and Database Manager, because their approvals and help were needed with promoting. Lastly, I created a Google Forum, containing the post-video survey questions.

April was the most productive month for this project. My collaborators and I started off with rehearsals. After, I create a personal slide deck and remarks for my section of the video. I went on to create my own virtual Zoom background that would be used during the video. Once both were completed, I rehearsed with Janet. Using Microsoft Word, I created the agenda for the Zoom recording and sent it to my guest speakers. Within the next day of implementation, we recorded the video, it was sent to Brian to edit, and was posted on the same day. Brian then helped me edit 3 flier designs with the QR Code to the video and survey that I created. I emailed

the flyers out to the collaborators, my family and friends, and my school network. Then, I went into the Breathe California office and printed each flier and put them with the health fair materials. Lastly, starting at the end of April and beginning of May, Brian updated me with the amount of video viewers we received and posted all 3 of my flyers on all of Breathe California's social media accounts.

Assessment Plan

By May 3, 2022, the target population of youth, POC, LGBTQ+ and those connected to them will have accessed my video and learned a lot about the issue of nicotine addiction due to Big Tobacco targeting them. My goal is to receive 25 views and 15 "I learned a lot" responses on my post video survey that asks if they "learned a lot" or "learned a little". On May 3, 2022, the results will be measured by checking the number of YouTube video views and number of positive responses to my post video survey. My mentor, Janet Herbst, and I will be responsible for implementing and measuring whether the objective is achieved.

Expected Outcomes

I expect my video to have longevity past my capstone project and internship experience. It is expected to stay on the Breathe California YouTube account for as long as the agency would like. I will also be printing out flyers with QR codes to be passed out during future health fairs that Breathe California attends. I do not think I will actually meet my goal of 25 views and 15 "I learned a lot" responses on my post video survey because I now have one week less than originally planned to assess my project. I am hoping to come close to these views and responses.

Project Results

The video actually reached 97 views and had 13 post video responses. The view count exceeded my goal of 25 views but the post video responses fell short from my goal of 20

responses. I did not start to get many responses to my survey until I asked Brian to make the survey link more visible to the audience members in the description box. Another reason I may not have received as many responses is due to a lack of time my viewers had. They may have only had time to view the video but not to do the survey as well.

The video did bring more awareness to the targeted audience and communities, according to my data. There were only 2/13 of my survey responders who were not a youth, POC, LBGTQ+, or a parent/guardian. 100% of my respondents learned “a lot” from the video. A comment that I received in my survey was “This video was very informative and more youth should take the time to learn more about their health.” One of my Youth for Lungs mentees commented, and expressed appreciation for the video. The staff at Breathe California expressed pride and optimism for the video's future impact on the community and use as a great resource for the agency.

Notice: Youth, POC & LGBTQ+, Big Tobacco Wants You!

97 views • Apr 14, 2022

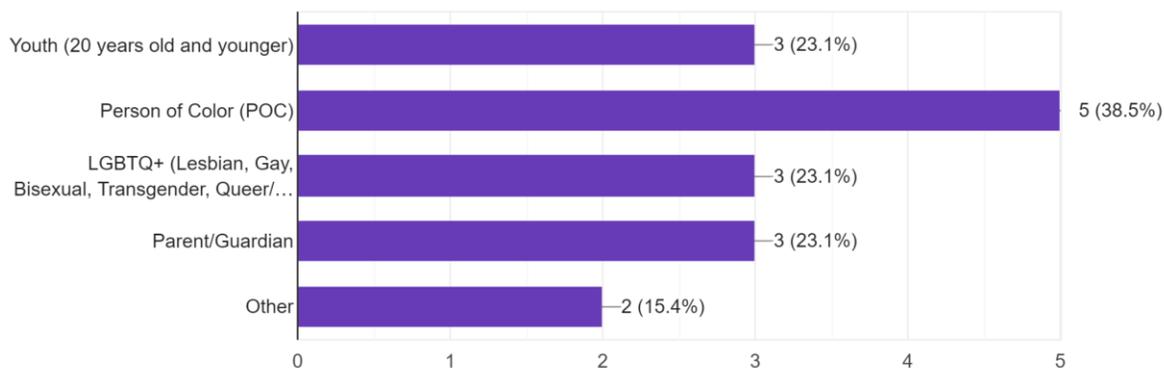
4 DISLIKE SHARE SAVE ...

 **Breathe California of the Bay Area**
252 subscribers

[SUBSCRIBE](#)

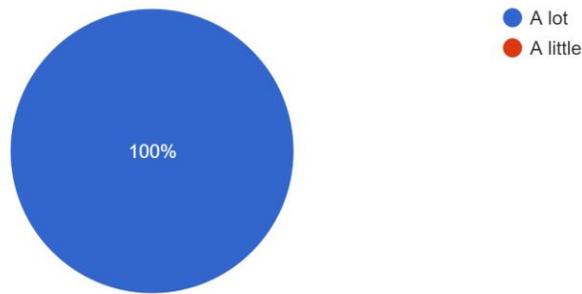
Which best identifies you? Select all that apply

13 responses



How much did you learn from the video?

13 responses



Any questions/comments? :)

12 responses

- Great presentation, very informative in how tobacco industry use marketing tactics for vulnerable communities.
- Amazing job!
- Great job on such an informative presentation such as warning signs and more information about Ash Kickers.
- I really liked the video, and I also wish you luck on your journey after college. I really enjoyed working with you in Youth for Lungs, and I hope you have an amazing two weeks at college; they are your last after all.
- Great job Tucosha! This was so beautifully presented and put together. Congrats on all the hard work.
- This video was very informative and more youth should take the time to learn more about their health.
- Video was informative and resourceful!
- We'll done.

Conclusion & Recommendations

Based on the results of my video, I believe that my capstone project was successful. It proved that it reached the communities I wanted to inform and that they learned a lot from it. My video should continue to live as a resource until the information needs to be updated or no longer serves its purpose. With more time, I could have personally promoted my video at different coalition meetings that work with my target audiences. In the future, more projects that can be shared as a resource virtually with broad networks and vulnerable communities should be continued at Breathe California to further their mission to promote healthy lungs.

Personal Reflection

Completing my field internship program with Breathe California was absolutely incredible. I am extremely grateful for all of the opportunities that were provided. I learned professional communication/development, conflict negotiation and mediation, financial management, systems management, public policy, and information management skills. Adding on to, every task allowed me to showcase my leadership and knowledge of health and human services. Some tasks made me feel nervous and unsure if I could actually accomplish them. However, no matter what, I always felt supported by my mentor Janet. She had an enormous amount of patience with me and graciously explained things to me, no matter how many times I asked. I had the honor of getting to know the entire staff and they all made me feel a part of the team. I also had the privilege to work closely with the CEO. She taught me about the grant process, how to be a spokesperson, and how to properly represent Breathe California at health fairs.

With all of these great experiences, and the fact that my internship was remote, I found it very hard to find an issue that I wanted to focus on for my capstone project. However, I used my passion and experience for working with youth and wanting to solve health disparities as my topic at hand. I realized that these specific communities may not come into the Breathe California's office due to their hours or from a lack of awareness about the organization/issue. It was important to create a resource that would provide the education and information and let them know Breathe California is there if they need more help.

My advice to the next group of interns is to take full advantage of this experience. Go into the experience with an open mind and open heart. Find out what you like and do not like about working in the Health and Human Services field. Don't think of yourself as a helpless

intern either - you have more knowledge than you know. Even if you truly do not understand something, this is your chance to ask as many questions as you can think of. Also, take the critical feedback given to you and actually improve. This is your moment, and you will gain as much as you put in.

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Appendix A

Scope of Work

ACTIVITY	J	F	M	A	M
Capstone Idea Finalized		X			
Guest Speakers Availability			X		
Record Video				X	
Post Video				X	
Flyer/Poster w/QR Code				X	
Evaluate Video					X

Educational Awareness Video	Tucosha Lopez			
Task	Timeline	Parties Involved	Materials/Services Needed	Completed Product
Get Capstone Proposal Approved	2/18/22	Janet Herbst & Margo Sidener	Problem Model(s), Email Scripts & Problem Model Report	✓
Recruiting Guest Speakers	2/25/22	Tucosha Lopez	Email/Phone Script	✓
Zoom conferences w/Guest Speakers	3/11/22	Tucosha Lopez	Zoom	✓
Create Doodle for Best Recording Date	3/18/22	Janet Herbst & Guest Speakers	Doodle	✓
Inform Guest Speakers of Selected Recording Date	3/25/22	Tucosha Lopez	Email	✓
Send Marketing Plan	3/25/22	Brian Sawyer & Margo Sidener	Email & Google/Word Doc	✓
Create Google Form for Video Post Survey (audience viewers)	3/25/22	Tucosha Lopez	Google Form	✓
Rehearsal(s)	4/4/22	Jovanna Ponco & Vanessa Marvin	Zoom & PowerPoint	✓
Create Personal Slide Deck & Remarks	4/5/22	Tucosha Lopez	PowerPoint	✓
Create Virtual Background for Me	4/5/22	Tucosha Lopez	Canva	✓
Rehearsal(s)	4/6/22	Janet Herbst & Tucosha Lopez	Zoom & PowerPoint	✓
Create Video Agenda (DRAFT)	4/6/22	Janet Herbst	Google/Word Doc	✓
Email Video Agenda to Guest Speakers	4/11/22	Tucosha Lopez	Agenda	✓
Record Video	4/12/22	Guest Speakers	Zoom & PowerPoint	✓
Send Video to Brian for Editing	4/12/22	Brian Sawyer	Editing Tools	✓
Post Video on BC YouTube	4/12/22	Brian Sawyer	BC Youtube Account	✓
Create Flyer/Poster w/QR code	4/18/22	Brian Sawyer	Approval from Brian	✓
Email Flyer to Collaborators + Family/Friend + School Network	4/20/22	Tucosha Lopez	Flyer	✓
Analyze Success (viewers + responses)	4/20/22	Brian Sawyer	Access to Social Media Accounts (including YouTube)	✓
Post Flyer via Social Media	4/22/22	Tucosha Lopez & Brian Sawyer	Access to Social Media Accounts	✓
Print Flyer for BC health fairs	4/22/22	Tanya Payyappilly & Sharmin Sultana	BC Office Supplies	✓
Analyze Success (viewers + responses)	4/28/22	Brian Sawyer	Access to Social Media Accounts (including YouTube)	✓
Analyze Success (viewers + responses)	5/3/22	Brian Sawyer	Access to Social Media Accounts (including YouTube)	✓

NOTICE:
**YOUTH, POC & LGBTQ+
BIG TOBACCO WANTS YOU!**



▶ SCAN ME

**TO WATCH
OUR VIDEO**

COLLABORATORS

*Social Equity Initiative
SF Community Health
Santa Clara County Public Health Department
Tobacco Free Coalition
Billy DeFrank LGBTQ+ Community Center*





BREATHE
CALIFORNIA

**NOTICE: YOUTH, POC & LGBTQ+
BIG TOBACCO WANTS YOU!**



▶ SCAN ME

TO WATCH OUR VIDEO

PRESENTED BY

Warning Signs of Youth Addiction
by Tucosha Lopez, Breathe California Intern

Breathe California History + Ash Kickers Program
by Margo Sidener, Breathe California CEO

POC + Tobacco Control Efforts
by Aba Arman

LGBTQ+ & Youth + Tobacco Control Efforts
by Mark Heringer & Amaya Wooding

Youth, POC & LGBTQ+ + Tobacco Control Efforts
by Jovanna Ponco & Vanessa Marvin

LGBTQ+ + Tobacco Control Efforts
by Gabrielle Antolovich



After watching the video, please click the link in the description to complete our easy 1-minute survey letting us know how much you've learned!

NOTICE:

**Youth, POC & LGBTQ+
Big Tobacco Wants You!**



▶ SCAN ME

TO WATCH OUR VIDEO

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