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How to Stop the Underage Vaping Crisis

As I walk through the hallways of Mountain View High School, I can't help to notice the shift in the student dynamic. I think to myself "something has changed". It's more than just a statistic; it is the stark reality that teens are damaging themselves and the people around them. Seeing how vaping is affecting teachers and students who are also anti-vaping. As students trigger the fire alarms with the clouds of toxic smoke they are emitting from their burning lungs, causing the whole school to evaluate, not only causing a disruption in the classroom but also losing educational minutes causing the school year to be extended. Vaping doesn't just affect the health of young teens, it takes time out of teachers as well as other students who are anti-vaping.

But I feel that having peer influence is the strongest form of vape prevention.

Developing a strong trusted relationship with peers is the most effective way to help

debunk the vaping epidemic in the youths' lives, and can be done through organizations at schools.

Parents are not the most effective way to stop as well as prevent the usage of teen youth vaping. Parents on a day to day basis do not know how to educate and influence their kids on the new age of smoking. According to Better Health, A teen health organization used for anti-vaping campaign, "It is not always possible for parents to prevent their child from trying e-cigarettes or cigarettes, but the use of various strategies can reduce the likelihood of a child wanting to vape or smoke and doing so regularly" ("Smoking"). I personally feel that parents have an influence on their children but is it always the most effective. Parents as well as teachers often tend to punish their students and kids when catching them using vape products, but I have seen first hand that when students are punished they continuously do the opposite. And being constantly punished you are developing a lack of trust between you and your child.

I have seen this first how vaping is affecting teachers and students who are also anti-vaping. As students trigger the fire alarms causing the whole school to evaluate, not only causing a disruption in the classroom but also losing educational minutes causing the school year to be extended. Vaping doesn't just affect the health of young teens, it takes time out of teachers as well as other students who are anti-vaping.

Even though parents and teachers are the main people who strongly influence teens and the youth, the vaping epidemic continuously grows. Peer influence is the strongest way. The Parkersburg News and Sentinel in West Virginia exclaimed that teachers and counselors have a strong impact on students who are approaching their teenage years, but the real change must be seen and it is evident that peer influence can do this. The source also demonstrated that the influence of educators can be extremely influential in the lives of teens, but the change often lies with peer influence. As students grow and deal with the constant change they are able to navigate through the vaping epidemic. From Jama Network also agrees peer influence could be more effective rather than parents “Efforts to address youth vaping need to consider peer influence and incorporate measures reducing e-cigarette advertising exposure.” This goes to show that there are many viewpoints to enact change in the adolescents' lives.

Student led clubs and organizations can also help debunk the root cause of vaping in the youths' lives. High school is one of the biggest changes that teenagers have to embark on, and in order to keep it safe and vape free it is through other students supporting one another. And the easiest way to do this is with clubs and organizations. According to Truth Initiative, an anti-vaping company, “Getting students to come to the table to talk about e-cigarette use and quitting can be difficult, both literally and figuratively. Research has shown that young people are more receptive to information when it comes from peers.” This goes to show that students and teens would feel more comfortable opening up to their peers about them vaping rather than an adult who has more power over them.

Power, it plays a big part in putting a halt in this epidemic. By understanding and addressing power dynamics like parents, educators, friends, peers creates gaps in relationships. It is evident that strained relationships with parents, educators and teens poses a significant obstacle to curbing this epidemic. In order to reduce the vaping crises we need to be recognizing how we approach teens, by using a more empathetic and understanding approach. But by developing a connection via Peer led initiatives will lead to them retaliating and going to do the opposite. But I think with a student lead club/ organization students will feel more comfortable talking about their experience when knowing they will not get consequented. Having a one to one connection will break the wall of lack of trust, and lead them into the right direction.

I feel that one way I can make a contribution to my school's community is by starting one of my own clubs, not just only in high school but also where I end up going to college. Implementing all of the factors of anti-vaping, which is developing trust within the students. As well as creating a safe space where there will be no punishment inflicted upon. This will not only help students who are not only struggling but will educate them on the negative impacts of how vaping is significantly affecting the health of young teens' lives. Beyond my impact my high school will continuously establish a long lasting effect on the future students to come hopefully making a positive impact amongst the students. Fostering clubs all over the world with a

judgment free zone, will create platforms to empower students to take back their health.

Vaping has crept its way into millions of peoples lives, and as a result there has been little change in the right direction. Teenagers are able to connect to each other better than adults, and by implementing more teenager-led clubs it will improve their lives for their future lives. And a way to ease teens from falling susceptible would be through an easier approach; peer influence to relate to teens to get them off of vaping.

I feel that my take on anti-vaping could be the most effective and successful way to stop the underage vaping crises. Even though there are many strategies like having parent and teacher influence, having one to one connections with peers is the most effective way to develop a connection and trust with one another. I feel that people should care about the teen vaping crisis because it is something that has crept into many young teens' lives.

Works Cited

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