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# Tobacco Talk

A publication of the Indigenous Peoples' Task Force

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## *Theme: Youth Activities* *What's a Youth Group to Do?*

Youth-led and generated activities are the core of our efforts to prevent tobacco misuse. This issue of *Tobacco Talk* describes the types of activities that are often conducted by youth with guidance and help from their adult group advisors. Youth activities generally fall into two types: those focusing on the community-at-large and those focusing on Individuals. Both are essential to building a strong, effective community program to protect our future generations from tobacco misuse.

### *Choices: Community Focused Youth Activities*

Community focused activities aim to change policy and norms in the community-at-large.

- ⊕ **Advocacy.** The goal of advocacy is to change tobacco-related policies so that they protect community members from the negative health effects of tobacco misuse. Such policy advocacy might include promoting smoke-free public places, demanding services to help community members kick nicotine, increasing taxes on tobacco products, and working to eliminate industry influence through advertising and sponsorship. Potential activities range from one-on-one meetings with tribal council members, letter writing, and gathering signatures for a petition to organized protest, media activities, and testifying before local tribal councils.
- ⊕ **Reducing Youth Access.** The goal of activities to reduce youth access is to prevent youth from getting addicted to commercial tobacco products by limiting how and where they acquire them. Activities might include creating community policies so that retail outlets restrict sales to youth, conducting compliance checks, providing merchant education (educating retailers on how the tobacco industry uses them to market products to youth), and conducting educational campaigns to reduce social and commercial availability of cigarettes to our youth.
- ⊕ **Countermarketing.** The goal of countermarketing is to develop a response to the 5 billion dollars spent by the tobacco industry each year to addict new smokers and spit users. Activities include media literacy (learning how to analyze and resist negative advertising) and creating alternative messages.

### Key Resources:

["Kick Butts Day Guide" or "Save Lives: Manual for Youth Advocates"](#) - Get started with these Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids step-by-step guides to advocacy activities!

[Target Market "Crew Guide"](#) - Ask Prairie Rose, your TM organizer, to get a TM crew up and running in your community! They have great ideas for countermarketing activities.

[Indigenous Peoples Task Force](#) - We recognize that these activities are new to Indian Country and GLBT communities, but we can search for resources that might be helpful.

## Choices: Individual Focused Youth Activities

Activities with an individual focus have the goal of changing the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of individual youth by providing education and building the skills needed to resist negative peer pressure. To be most effective, these activities are

- ⊕ highly interactive,
- ⊕ provide lots of opportunities for youth to practice skills, and
- ⊕ are delivered (at least in part) by peers or older youth role models.

Most of these skills are taught via formal curricula. Life Skills (LS), Towards No Tobacco (TNT), and Minnesota Smoking Prevention Program (MSSP) are examples of curricula that researchers have found to be effective with non-Indian and non-GLBT youth. Another curriculum, American Indian Adolescent Life Skills (AILS), includes some of the same skills, but was developed with Native youth in New Mexico. These curricula are summarized in the Table below:

	Focus	Age	# of lessons	Delivery	Used in AI/GLBT
LS	-Tobacco -Alcohol -Other Drugs	Grade 6-8	15 (Year1) 10 (Year2) 5 (Year3)	School based by teachers, best but can be adapted with guidance	AI- used, but no research GLBT - No
TNT	Tobacco	Grade 7-8 or 6-7	10 (Year1) 2 (Year2)	School-based	Neither
MSSP	Tobacco	Grade 5-6	6	Peer led, school based, can be adapted	Neither
AILS	Suicide	High school	37	Adults and peers, school based but flexible.	AI- researched GLBT -No

The Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning currently offers training in Life Skills and TNT. Training in MSSP is available through the Hazelden Foundation. We are looking for training in AILS and are also searching for other evidence-based (researched) curricula or adaptations of Life Skills for American Indian and GLBT youth. Contact Rachel Wolk @ (612) 870-1723 if you'd like more information or could share other resources.

## Choices, Choices--But Where Should I Start?

It is very important to include BOTH individual and community activities in your work. After reviewing the youth activity guides and curricula, you may feel that you don't know where to start, especially on community-focused activities. If so, a good place to begin may be with community assessment activities. Contact the Task Force for help! Some ideas include:

- ⊕ Conduct "Operation Storefront" in the Kick Butts guide. This activity collects data on merchant sales in your community. We can help you analyze your data.
- ⊕ Youth conduct interviews on tobacco policy issues with tribal council leaders;
- ⊕ Youth conduct surveys at community events (powwows, etc) to gain a better understanding of attitudes toward smoke-free policies, taxation, and secondhand smoke.
- ⊕ Develop a policy committee of youth and adults to review policies and discuss ideas for next steps that make sense in your community.



## *Words of Encouragement for Youth Leaders*

You have chosen an important leadership role, embarking on a new path toward community change for youth. Being a youth worker can be one of the most rewarding yet challenging jobs! Wendy Lesko of Youth Activism 2000 tells us that successful youth leaders truly enjoy being around young people, thrive in a creative, chaotic, and carefree atmosphere, and aren't afraid of controversy or advocacy. Once youth get started, they will really take to this work and make your job easier if you have these qualities. Check out these Web sites for tips and resources on working with youth:

### **General**

[www.mnyouth.org](http://www.mnyouth.org)

[www.youthactivism.com](http://www.youthactivism.com)

[www.nydic.org/](http://www.nydic.org/)

<http://www.kickbutt.org/youth/index.html>

MN Alliance for Youth (email questions welcome!)

Activism 2000 Project National Clearinghouse

National Youth Development Information Center

Doctors Ought to Care (see Group Development Guide)

### **GLBT and Two Spirited Youth**

[www.nyacyouth.org/](http://www.nyacyouth.org/)

[www.youthresource.com/](http://www.youthresource.com/)

National Youth Advocacy Coalition

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Youth Resources

### **American Indian/Indigenous Youth**

[www.ayn.ca/](http://www.ayn.ca/)

[www.unityinc.org/](http://www.unityinc.org/)

Aboriginal Youth Network

United National Indian Tribal Youth

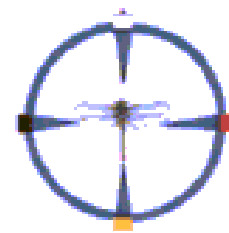
## *Calendar of Events*

- March 14..... Conference call (3:30): "Great Presentations"
- May 7-9..... MDH Spring Training Institute - Brainerd
- June 12..... Native Summit on Youth Access -Leech Lake

## *Indigenous Words of Wisdom*

*The future is inseparably linked to the past... We must unite in a common vision of what human beings can overcome, and build a new future for our children that is based solidly on the values foundation of our own culture.*

*Anna Whiting Sorrel, Salish-Kootenai*



For help or more information on any of these topics...contact Tobacco Project Coordinator, Rachel Wolk at (612) 870-1723 or tobacco870@aol.com.

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