

York County

Virtual Training Collaboartion

Partners for Healthier Communities' Tobacco Prevention Team partnered with Maine Youth Action Network's Youth Coordinator to successfully train youth in the Sidekicks curriculum.

THE NEED

The 2019 Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey asked Maine middle and high school students about a variety of risk factors regarding tobacco use and exposure. Within this survey, students were asked, "During the past 7 days, on how many days were you in the same room with someone who was smoking cigarettes?" Of those youth survey respondents in York County, 23.7% of high school students and 19.5% of middle school students answered at least 1 day. Additionally, when asked, "Besides yourself, does anyone who lives in your home smoke cigarettes now," approximately 30% of middle and high school York County students answered 'yes.' With the understanding that many students are spending more time at home than ever before, York County Tobacco Prevention Coordinators, as well as MYAN Youth Coordinator, all recognized the need for tobacco awareness and training.

INTERVENTION

In hopes of reaching youth, families, and the communities in which they live during this unprecedented time, York County Coordinators worked together to schedule two virtual Sidekicks trainings. A flyer was created that listed the offerings, as well as a short synopsis of the training itself. The flyers

were then sent out to school partners, as well as advertised on the coalition page. A Survey Monkey link was listed on the flyer. Upon clicking the link to register, students received a follow-up e-mail with a Zoom link to join.

Throughout the trainings, students were not only trained on holding respectful conversations about tobacco use, but created relationships with other students who were also interested in helping others. Students collaborated with one another, as well as Tobacco and MYAN coordinators.

RESULTS

Throughout the two trainings, nine York County youth were trained in skills to hold respectful conversations with their peers about tobacco use and other risky behaviors. Once the students completed the curriculum, all nine youth participated in a follow-up project with York County DTPP's and MYAN coordinator.

Students were asked to share a six word story describing what Sidekicks meant to them. Not only did this project provide insight into the perception of Sidekicks by youth, but allowed for the students to reflect on their experiences. Some students said:

“ **“Kindly helping others to solve problems”**
“Sidekicks teaches to help others thoughtfully”
“Being a Sidekick is helping others” ”

- York County students

SUSTAINABILITY

With interest continuing to build throughout the communities in which PHC serves, York County Coordinators are hopeful that continued outreach and prevention efforts will be impactful throughout the County. In hopes of reaching youth, virtual trainings, education and collaboration may serve as an even more significant component of tobacco awareness during this time.