

# CREATING A PROACTIVE AND CONSCIOUS COMMUNITY THROUGH YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

## Summary

From October to December 2021, Lincoln County's district tobacco prevention partner (DTPP) presented to 21 different classes in four different schools. The presentations included a Catch My Breath training for an entire middle school, a Tar Wars presentation to a small 4th and 5th grade class, and E-cigarette presentations to the 5th - 8th grade classes in one school and the whole 9th grade class in another school. Over the course of three months, the DTPP presented to over 340 students throughout Lincoln County.

## Issue

According to the Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey (MIYHS) in 2019, 27% of high school students and 5% of middle school students in Lincoln County reported having vaped in the past 30 days, an increase from the rates seen in 2017. The same data set shows that 9% of high school students and 1% of middle school students reported having smoked in the past 30 days. These smoking rates, unlike vaping, have decreased since 2017. While we wait for the most recent data, it's important to continue working with youth. These data show the importance of providing Maine students with facts regarding these products along with the impacts they can have on ones health.

## Program

In October, Lincoln County's DTPP conducted a Catch My Breath Training. The Catch My Breath curriculum is a four week program that covers the basics of vaping, health impacts of vaping, tobacco advertising, resiliency building and refusal skills. Some of the resiliency building and refusal skills from this program were pulled to be included in other presentations.

From November to December the bulk of the presentations given were E-cigarette presentations. Most of these presentations were



completed in partnership with the Lincoln County Substance Use prevention coordinator (SUPP). By tag teaming these presentations, the DTPP and SUPP found it easier to get into the schools, as the presentations hit on several different learning targets. While the DTPP focused on e-cigarettes and tobacco, the SUPP focused on alcohol and marijuana. They ended their presentations with content around resiliency building and refusal skills, which was an added bonus for the teachers!

"We felt it was important to incorporate refusal and resiliency building skills into these presentations. We throw so many facts at the students, adding this section ties the presentation together nicely. It also allowed us to equip students with the skills needed to stand by and feel confident in the choices they make in life!"

*-Gabby Tilton MPH, Lincoln County DTPP*

In December, the presentations changed slightly as the Knox DTPP was also able to join in on the fun! The RSU 40 school district spans both Lincoln and Knox county, so the DTPPs felt it was a perfect opportunity to work together. Following a similar approach the DTPPs and SUPP made sure to include resiliency building aspects into these presentations as well. They wanted to ensure that the high school students didn't feel talked at but rather that they were being provided information and skills, allowing them to make their own informed choices.

## Results

Over the course of three months, more than 340 students in Lincoln County received some form of tobacco prevention education from the Lincoln County DTPP. Equipping youth with the information and resources about these products, and resiliency skills can help facilitate life long healthy decisions; hopefully leading to a tobacco-free community.

**For More Information Contact Us At:**

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