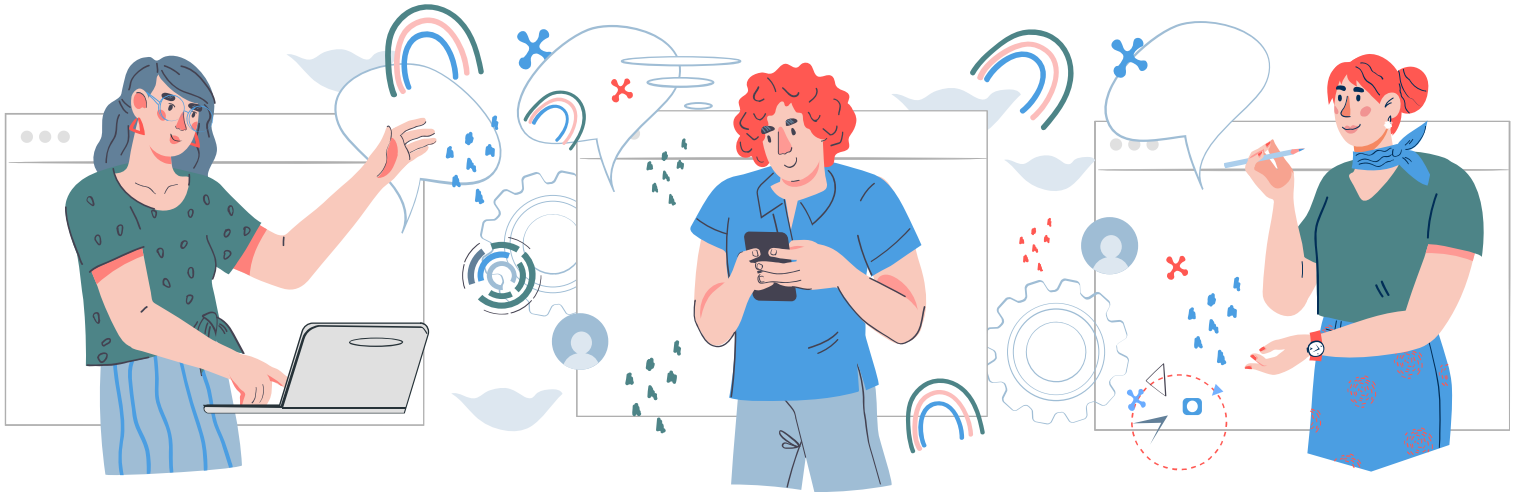
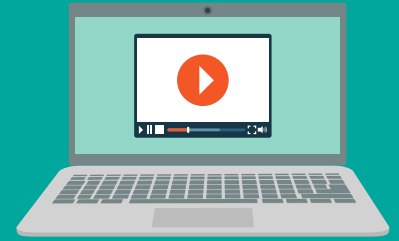


## SUMMARY

The 2021 LGBTQ+ Youth Tobacco Prevention Project's Needs Assessment indicated a clear need for prevention and other tobacco control materials to be specific to LGBTQ+ youth. 7.1% of all Maine high school students self-reported in 2019 as having "smoked in the past 30 days" compared to 12.5% of gay/lesbian students, 12.9% of bisexual students, and 20.3% of transgender students (MIYHS, 2019). Research also shows that messages and materials informed and generated by LGBTQ+ youth are well received.



## CHALLENGE

Engaging LGBTQ+ youth to join a focus group to inform messaging has been a challenge. While OUT Maine has fostered good relationships with many GSTAs, the challenges of COVID-19 have overburdened schools and their staff, making scheduling focus groups and surveys with students a difficult hurdle. Youth also indicated that they were "tired of talking about tobacco".

## RESULTS

OUT Maine engaged three groups of LGBTQ+ youth and collected 34 surveys that focused on ways to maximize the effectiveness of an LGBTQ+-focused, commercial tobacco/vaping use prevention campaign. After the surveys and focus groups were complete, OUT Maine met with the Data Innovation Project to analyze the collected data. While there were numerous and varying running themes throughout the data collected, the overall consensus described by youth was that the majority of LGBTQ+ youth are not consuming media in print form, but through social media videos, primarily YouTube. As a result of this analysis, OUT Maine is working with a marketing firm with an established, strong collaborative relationship to develop a video-based social media strategy that will appeal to LGBTQ+ youth. OUT Maine will pilot the video on YouTube and other social media platforms by June 2022.

## INTERVENTION

OUT Maine staff worked with the GSTA Advisors to create a unique scenario for the youth participants that simultaneously engaged them in a fun, hands-on art project while also participating in the focus group. This created a fun, collaborative group atmosphere and youth were able to relax. While thoroughly engaged in the art project, they responded thoughtfully to the questions posed to them regarding tobacco use, were found to be more communicative and were therefore able to provide the input needed for focused messaging techniques and materials.