

Activity 1

Share Your Story

Do you sometimes feel like risky things you do now really won't matter later? This is a common feeling for young people. Unfortunately, some risky things, like tobacco use, can create serious problems sooner than you might think.



Sally's story: Sally is a high school student in Bensonhurst, a neighborhood in Brooklyn, N.Y. She doesn't smoke, but she's surrounded by tobacco products. There are 93 places that sell tobacco products in her neighborhood. Many of these are close to Sally's high school and a local elementary school. This worries Sally because she knows that 9 out of 10 smokers start while they are teenagers.



Brandon's story: After starting to smoke as a teenager, Brandon received a diagnosis of Buerger's disease when he was 18. This disease, which is linked to tobacco use, can lead to infection and gangrene. Stopping smoking can help the symptoms, but there is no cure. In Brandon's case, it took him nine years to quit smoking after he was diagnosed. In the meantime, he had several fingertips and both legs amputated—by the time he was 27.



Jamason's story: At 16, Jamason had a severe asthma attack triggered by secondhand smoke. He had to stay in the hospital for four days, where he received breathing treatments every two to four hours. When he was allowed to go home again, he was afraid, because he knew he could encounter secondhand smoke at any time and might not be able to breathe.



How has use of tobacco products hurt you or someone you know?

Tobacco products include cigarettes, e-cigarettes and other electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS), cigars, hookahs, bidis, kreteks, pipe tobacco, and smokeless tobacco.

Think about this:

- **If you know someone who uses or used tobacco:**
 - How and when did they start? Do/did their peers use cigarettes or ENDS?
 - What type of tobacco product do they use? Do they use more than one type?
 - Did they start out with a flavored product? Do/did they usually use a flavored product?
 - Has their tobacco use caused a serious problem or disease?
 - Have they tried to quit using tobacco? How did it go?
- **If you or someone you know were hurt by someone else's tobacco use:**
 - When did it happen?
 - How did it happen?
 - How do you or the person you know feel about it now?
- **If your community is impacted by tobacco:**
 - Where are you exposed to secondhand smoke?
 - Where do you see tobacco advertising in your community?
 - Where is tobacco sold in your community?

Now, in your own words, write a nonfiction story about how tobacco use has affected you, someone you know, or your community.

Consider including advice or words of wisdom about why it doesn't make sense to use tobacco.

Sources:

¹ "Students Deploy Digital Art to Expose Big Tobacco." Brooklyn—Bensonhurst Neighborhood. Public Health Solutions, NYC Smoke-Free. October 23, 2016. Accessed April 18, 2017. <http://nycsmokefree.org/article/students-deploy-digital-art-expose-big-tobacco>

² "Tips from Former Smokers™: Brandon's Story." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Page last updated: January 20, 2017. Accessed March 28, 2017. <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/stories/brandon-biography.html>

³ "Tips from Former Smokers™: Jamason's Story." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Page last updated January 20, 2017. Accessed May 7, 2017. <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/stories/jamason.html>

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