

# Maryann Morris

## Executive Director

- Member, VT Substance Misuse Prevention Council
- Lead for 3 Regional Prevention Projects
- Started smoking menthol cigarettes at age 15



- Provides Education
- Creates Connections
- Advances Policy
- Across all substances



Prevention, Intervention,  
Harm Reduction, and Treatment



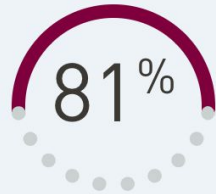
# Our definition of prevention

Providing people (businesses, schools, municipalities, organizations) with the tools, spaces, partnerships, and education to make ***the healthy choice the easy choice*** and reduce risks and consequences of substances.

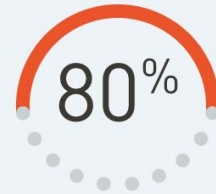


A study published in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, revealed that flavor is a key factor in tobacco product selection. Eighty-one percent of youth and 86 percent of young adults who ever used tobacco reported their first tobacco product was flavored.

***Importantly, youth and adults whose first tobacco product was flavored had a significantly higher prevalence of current tobacco use.***



81% of youth and 86% of young adults who have ever used tobacco reported their first tobacco product was flavored



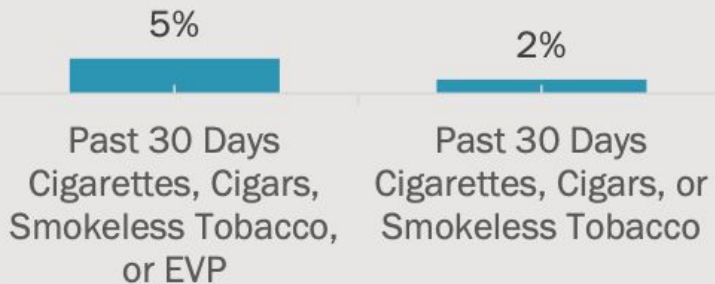
80% of youth (ages 12 to 17) current tobacco users and 73% of young adult (ages 18 to 24) current tobacco users used flavored tobacco products



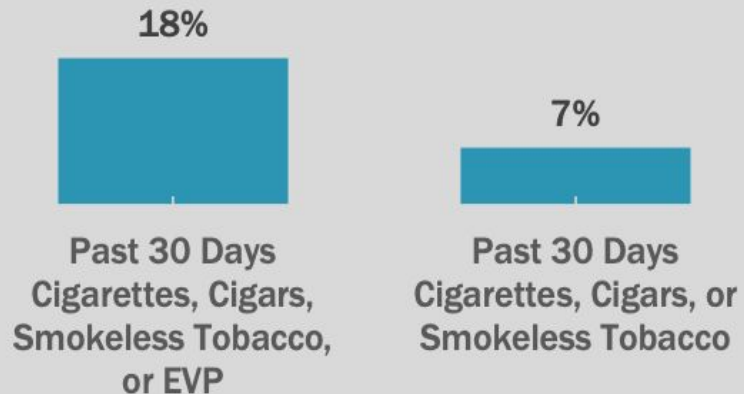
# Some Vermont Data

*But, the data lags*

## Current Tobacco Use Among Middle School Students



## Current Tobacco Use High School Students





55%

believe a flavored tobacco product is easier to use than a non-flavored product (among Vermonters aged 12-20).

“ Now people use one vape and then get sick of the flavor and switch up to a different one and that keeps them addicted because they keep having to switch because there’s so many different flavors and so many different options so if it was just one flavor like tobacco, then they would get sick of it faster and **most kids wouldn’t start vaping because they probably wouldn’t like the taste**” ~ *AB, aged 19*

“**I would def not vape anymore**, no flavors would be horrid. my personal opinion is that if it tastes bad, you won’t want to use it. It hurts, makes you cough and hack, tastes burnt.”  
~ *RB aged 21*

How did you  
let this  
happen,  
again?

*~ Flood Brook Middle  
Schoolers*







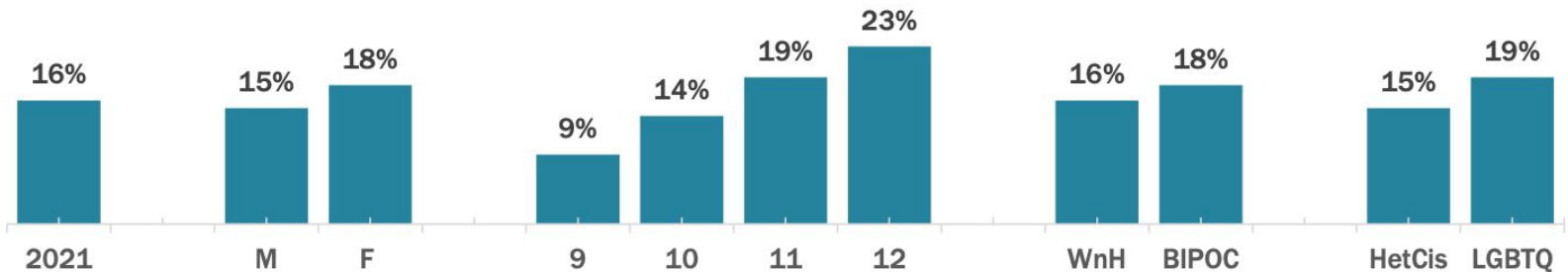
“I am thinking about how the companies making these products prey on those struggling or young/naive. This says a lot about the nature and intention of their product. Integrity means nothing to these companies.”  
- 12th grader



# 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey High School Results

- Female students are significantly more likely to use an EVP during the past 30 days compared to male students.
- Current EVP use significantly increases with each grade level.
- Current EVP use does not differ by race and ethnicity.
- LGBTQ+ students are significantly more likely than heterosexual cisgender students to use an EVP during the past 30 days.

High School Students who Used an EVP, Past 30 Days



# Mental Health

Students cite feeling anxious or stressed as the top reason for vape use:

High School - 30%  
Middle School - 40%

2021 YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY, VERMONT

The fact that vaping causes anxiety rather than preventing and alleviating it, is a powerful message for teens.

**~ Parent of 10th grader**

Young people need safe alternatives to dealing with stress and anxiety.

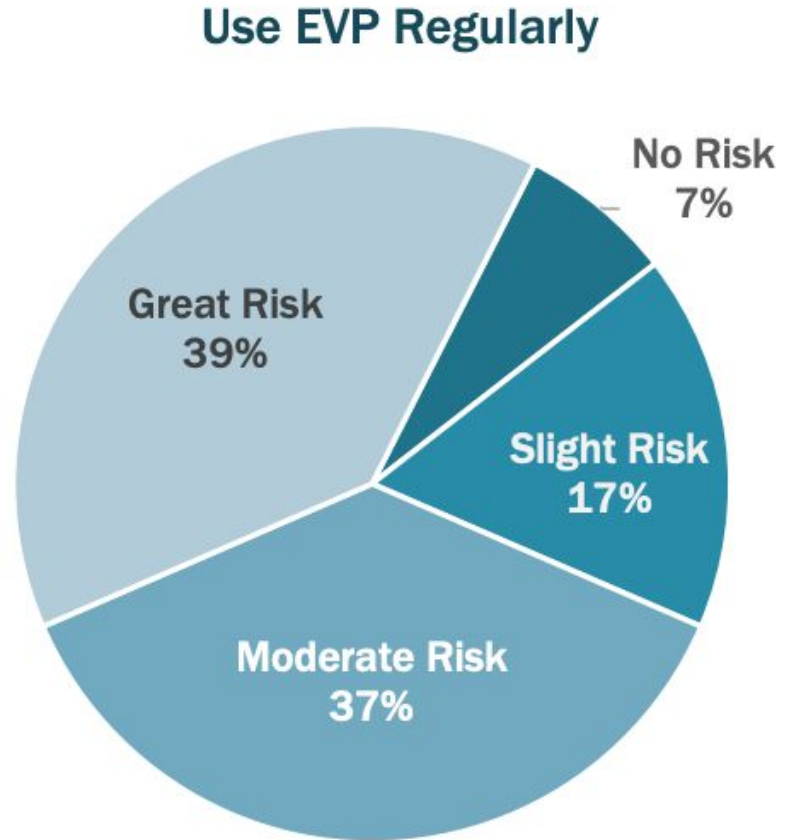
**~ Parent of a 7th grade student**

Vaping actually causes more stress, when you think it relieves it.

**~ 10th grade student**

# Perception of Harm

High School  
Students



## **National Institute on Drug Abuse:**

Any exposure to nicotine among youth is a concern. The adolescent brain is still developing, and nicotine has effects on the brain's reward system and brain regions involved in emotional and cognitive functions. Research suggests that the nicotine-related changes to these areas of the brain during adolescence may perpetuate continued tobacco use into adulthood. These changes also contribute to a higher rate of other substance use disorders among people who use tobacco during adolescence, sometimes referred to as a "gateway" effect.



# Thoughts on Cessation

Making sure teens have resources if they are addicted and would like to quit. We need to work together, (adults & youth), to make a change in the culture of vaping.

**~ medical provider**

Nicotine is very addictive for teens and adults but teens are more likely to not be able to quit after first starting. Nicotine can cause learning issues for us as brains are developing.

**~ 11th grade student**

Have better resources for kids who need help. Instead of suspending them or getting them in trouble and putting their future at risk, help them quit and understand why it's a bad choice.

**~ Parent of a 12th grader**

We need to be more open as a community about quitting and supports to quit,

**~10th grade student**

We need to offer accessible support programs for those trying to quit and ensure that we do not ostracize those who vape in our approach to helping them.

**~ Parent of a 11th grader**

# Cessation Supports

**802Quits** - Many options and resources for quit support

**NOT:** School based tobacco cessation for 14-19 yr olds

**MyLifeMyQuit** - Specifically for youth, all schools given promotional materials. Easy to use texting application and website resource

**This is Quitting** - Vaping focused for youth and adults who want to quit. Provides parent/caring adult support to help underage person quit



# Support across the spectrum

**68% of Vermonters\***

support legislation to end the sale of flavored tobacco products

We should surround ourselves with people who are aware of the danger of vaping and smoking. When we are not alone in our opinions and choices within a community, we feel safer, and are less likely to be tempted by an unhealthy decision.

***~ 11th grade student***

\*According to the Coalition for a Tobacco Free Vermont and the Flavors Hook Kids Vermont Campaign,

