

Lesson Four:

Smoking, Drinking, and the Media

Objective

1. To analyze tobacco and alcohol advertisements to understand how upstream causes (e.g., tobacco and alcohol advertising) affect individual health behavior choices (e.g., smoking and drinking) which can lead to disease outcomes (e.g., cardiovascular or liver diseases, cancer).
2. To understand how tobacco and alcohol industries strategically recruit smokers and drinkers, particularly youth.
3. To learn how the American Legacy Foundation's advocacy efforts work to counteract the influence of the media and tobacco industries on youth smoking.
4. To learn that a public service announcement is a strategy used to raise awareness, change behavior, and recruit advocates about health issues, such as tobacco and alcohol use.

Outcomes

1. Students will identify techniques used by the media to persuade consumers to purchase tobacco and alcohol.
2. Students will recognize that the tobacco and alcohol industries are intentional in their efforts to recruit smokers and drinkers.
3. Students will understand and describe how the American Legacy Foundation counteracts the influence of the media and tobacco industries on adolescent and adult smoking.
4. Students will develop (and possibly disseminate) a public service announcement to raise awareness about the dangers of tobacco or alcohol use.

NOTE: Tobacco includes cigarettes, cigars, and chewing tobacco.

Activities

Students will participate in the following four activities:

1. *Becoming Media Savvy*
2. *Tobacco Companies Uncovered*
3. *Counter Messages: The American Legacy Foundation*
4. *Putting Together a Public Service Announcement*

Activity 1: Becoming Media Savvy

Purpose

The purpose of the *Becoming Media Savvy* activity is to expose students to and help them discern how persuasion techniques are used in tobacco and alcohol advertisements to target population subgroups (including youth) and influence health behavior choices. This activity exemplifies the upstream causes pathway in that the media is the upstream cause that influences individual behavior choices to smoke or drink, which leads to health outcomes like lung cancer or cirrhosis of the liver.

Required Materials

The *Becoming Media Savvy* activity requires the following materials:

1. *Media Persuasion Techniques*.¹
2. Tobacco and alcohol advertisements from magazines and other media, brought in by students and instructor.

¹ Media Literacy Project (Producer) (n.d.). Introduction to media literacy. [PDF] Retrieved from http://medialiteracyproject.org/sites/default/files/resources/Intro_to_Media_Literacy.pdf

Instructions

Follow the instructions below to implement the *Becoming Media Savvy* activity.

Prior to Class

1. Obtain copies of past or current cigarette and alcohol advertisements via magazines, newspapers, internet, etc.. For example, for tobacco advertisements, see www.legacy.library.ucsf.edu.

During Class

Handout 1

1. **Divide** students into groups, **distribute** a *Media Persuasion Technique* sheet to each group, and **assign** each group a set of persuasion techniques from the *Media Persuasion Techniques* sheet.
NOTE: There are 21 techniques, so divide accordingly.
2. **Ask** students to identify which of their assigned persuasion techniques are represented in their collection of tobacco and alcohol advertisements.
3. Have each group share a brief description of their advertisement(s) and the media persuasion techniques that are represented.
4. When all groups have finished presenting, students may review how their assigned media persuasion techniques are consistent with advertisements shared from other groups.

Q&A

5. **Lead** a discussion using the following questions:
 - a. Describe themes depicted in the advertisements, such as romance, adventure, certain demographics like age or ethnicity, etc. What types of people are shown in the advertisements? Where are the people and what are they doing?
 - b. How are cigarettes and alcohol shown in the advertisements (if at all)?
 - c. What do the advertisements leave out? Are risks or negative consequences of smoking and drinking illustrated (e.g., yellow teeth, stained fingers, inappropriate behavior)? How and where could you locate additional information about the negative consequences of smoking and drinking?
 - d. How has your analysis of media advertisements shown you that smoking and drinking are not solely individual choices (but are also influenced by upstream causes)?

Activity 2: Tobacco Companies Uncovered

Purpose

The purpose of the *Tobacco Companies Uncovered* activity is to recognize that the tobacco industry is intentional in its efforts to recruit new smokers. Their strategic efforts are an example of an upstream cause that influences individual behavior choices like teen smoking, which can lead to health outcomes like emphysema or lung cancer.

NOTE: Although strategies discussed in this activity refer to the tobacco industry, similar strategies are often used by the alcohol industry.

Required Materials

The *Tobacco Companies Uncovered* activity requires the following materials:

1. *Tobacco Industry Excerpts*² (provided at the end of *Lesson Two*)

2 American Legacy Foundation (Producer) (1973). Research planning memorandum on some thoughts about new brands of cigarettes for the youth market. [html] Retrieved from http://tobaccodocuments.org/product_design/502987357-7368.html

Instructions

Follow the directions below to implement the *Tobacco Companies Uncovered* activity:

Handout 2

1. To further emphasize strategies used by the tobacco industry to recruit new smokers and encourage current smokers to sustain their habit, evenly **distribute** *Tobacco Industry Excerpts* (provided at the end of *Lesson Four*) to students. Instruct each student to read the document (one excerpt per student, multiple students will have the same excerpt).
2. **Direct** students to form small groups with other students who read the same excerpt and record their responses to the following questions:
 - a. What characteristics of adolescents are the tobacco company targeting and taking advantage of?
 - b. How can students and other community members raise awareness about and not be influenced by these intentional and persuasive tactics?
 - c. What are the economic advantages of targeting youth smokers?
 - d. How does the tobacco industry get young, non-addicted smokers to continue smoking, even if it is unpleasant?
 - e. How might a young executive working in tobacco advertising defend his/her personal values when marketing a dangerous product to youth?

Activity 3: Counter Messages: The American Legacy Foundation

Purpose

The purpose of the *Counter Messages: The American Legacy Foundation* activity is to inform students about the American Legacy Foundation's efforts to inspire students to advocate against the tobacco industry. The efforts of the American Legacy Foundation exemplify positive upstream causes that influence healthy individual behavior choices like not smoking which can lead to good health outcomes or the absence of disease.

NOTE: Similar programs such as Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) and Mothers against Drunk Driving (MADD) advocate for responsible alcohol use.

Required Materials

The *Counter Messages: The American Legacy Foundation* activity requires the following materials:

1. Computer with internet access for each student. If computer access is not available, bring printed handouts from the American Legacy Foundation website.

Instructions

Follow the instructions below to implement the *Counter Messages: The American Legacy Foundation* activity:



Read

1. **Explain** the following messages to students:
 - a. The American Legacy Foundation is an organization that uses its voice to spread health-promotion messages. Primarily through their *Truth* campaign, their mission is to expose the tobacco industries' intentional efforts to recruit smokers.
 - b. One's voice is a powerful tool to enact change. The tobacco and alcohol industries, as discussed earlier in this lesson, use their voices, money, and influence to promote cigarette and alcohol use. Similarly, students can use their voices to counter the efforts of the tobacco and alcohol industry and instead promote healthy messages.
2. **Let** students explore The American Legacy Foundation (www.legacyforhealth.org) and Truth Campaign (www.thetruth.com) websites or read the printed handouts. If computers are limited, students may explore the website in small groups but respond to the question (from instruction #3 below) individually.
3. From what they learned from the websites or handouts, **instruct** students to list several ways that individuals and/or organizations can counter tobacco industry tactics. Share responses with the class.

Activity 4: Putting Together Public Service Announcement

Purpose

The purpose of the *Putting Together a Public Service Announcement* activity is for students to develop a public service announcement about the dangers of tobacco or alcohol use. Creating and delivering a message to serve as a positive upstream cause may influence individuals to make healthy behavior choices. Those choices may lead to good health outcomes or the absence of disease.

Required Materials

The *Public Service Announcement* activity requires the following materials:

1. Public service announcements, collected by instructor prior to class.
2. Additional materials will vary depending on students' public service announcement.

Instructions

Follow the instructions below to implement the *Public Service Announcement* activity.

Prior to Class

1. Locate sample public service announcements, such as Kaiser Permanente's *Thrive* campaign.

During Class

Read

1. **Explain** to students that a public service announcement is a form of advertising known as social marketing. Rather than using advertising and marketing techniques (as discussed earlier in the lesson) to sell a product, social marketing incorporates similar techniques to raise awareness about a health issue or the impact of upstream causes on health or to promote healthy behaviors. Public service announcements can be produced as print media like billboard and transit advertisements, brochures, and murals as well as oral communication like radio or television messages.
2. **Share** examples of public service announcements (collected by instructor prior to class).
3. **Tell** students that in opposition to the tobacco and alcohol industries' efforts to recruit new and maintain current consumers of their products, groups of students will create a public service announcement for their classmates to: 1) raise awareness about the dangers of tobacco and alcohol use, 2) promote healthy behaviors like not smoking and not drinking underage, and 3) advocate for addressing the social, economic, and political factors that contribute to tobacco and alcohol use.
4. **Refer** to the *Putting Together a Public Service Announcement* worksheet for additional details.
5. Divide students into groups and instruct them to begin creating a public service announcement.

Handout
3

NOTE: This activity may take several class periods and can be assigned as a homework assignment.

Media Persuasion Techniques

Media literacy refers to a person's ability to identify how media techniques are used to persuade consumers to purchase products. Becoming fluent in media literacy builds critical thinking skills and encourages active participation in the media process to avoid being unconsciously influenced. Examples of media persuasion techniques include the following:

1. **Association.** Implies an association or link between a product already desired by the target audience such as fun, pleasure, beauty, security, intimacy, success, and wealth, leading consumers to believe that if they purchase the product that they will experience these positive outcomes.
2. **Card stacking.** Selects only favorable evidence and deliberately provides a false context to lead consumers to a desired conclusion or misleading impression about the product.
3. **Timing.** Places product in an ideal place at the right time.
4. **Bandwagon.** Suggests that to fit in, consumers must purchase the product. Urges consumers to "jump on the bandwagon" and participate like everyone else.
5. **Bribery.** Persuades consumers to buy a product by promising something else in return, such as a discount, rebate, coupon, or a free gift. This includes sales, special offers, contests, and sweepstakes.
6. **Charisma.** Appears firm, bold, and confident such that consumers strongly believe in the product.
7. **Newness.** Emphasizes the novelty of the product.
8. **Scientific evidence.** Gains the trust of consumers by using scientific props such as charts, graphs, statistics, or lab coats to "prove" the benefit of the product.
9. **Celebrities.** Uses a celebrity endorsement to garner extra attention and imply a level of prestige for the product.
10. **Experts.** Uses scientists, doctors, professors, lawyers, and other professionals to lend their credibility to the product.
11. **Plain folks.** Uses "regular people" to sell the product on the assumption that consumers will relate to and believe in people who look and act like themselves.
12. **Beautiful people.** Uses attractive models to catch viewers' attention and to suggest that if consumers purchase the product that they too could be beautiful.
13. **Testimonials.** Endorses the product through personal accounts of those who have benefited from them.
14. **Humor.** Attracts consumers through humor and instills a positive emotion in viewers which they may then transfer to/associate with the product in the future.
15. **Warm and fuzzy.** Stimulates feelings of pleasure, comfort and delight by incorporating sentimental images, soothing music, pleasant voices or words.
16. **Nostalgia.** Triggers past memories and emotions, and suggests that the product will offer the same positive benefits that consumers experienced in the past.

17. **Intensity.** Hypes a product by including inflammatory language: superlatives (e.g., greatest, best, most, fastest, lowest prices); comparatives (e.g., more, better than, improved, increased, fewer calories); and hyperbole/exaggeration (e.g., amazing, incredible, forever).
18. **Maybe.** Precedes unproven, exaggerated or outrageous claims about the product with “weasel words” such as may, might, can, could, some, many, often, virtually, as many as, or up to. This technique is typically “too good to be true.”
19. **Repetition.** Repeats words, sounds, or images to reinforce the benefit of the product.
20. **Euphemism.** Uses creative phrasing to downplay potential negative effects associated with the product.
21. **Symbols.** Shows positive words or images linked to well established emotions or values to suggest that these benefits can be attained through use of the product.

Tobacco Industry Excerpt #1

“Though decreasing in number, younger adult smokers are a key market for [our company] because improved performance [in our company] among younger adults could contribute more to long term profitability...than could be achieved from gains in other groups.”

“Strength among younger adults will ultimately yield growth in older age brackets.”

“Aging of loyal younger adults creates disproportionately large gains in market share due to their increasing consumption.”

Lesson 4
Activity 2

Handout
2

Tobacco Industry Excerpt #2

“We are presently, I believe unfairly, constrained from directly promoting cigarettes to the youth; that is, to those in the approximately twenty-one years old and under group. Statistics show, however, that large, perhaps even increasing, numbers in that group are becoming smokers each year, despite bans on promotion of cigarettes to them. If this is so, there is certainly nothing immoral or unethical about our company attempting to attract those smokers to our products. We should not in any way influence non-smokers to start smoking; rather we should simply recognize that many or most of the twenty-one and under group will inevitably become smokers, and offer them an opportunity to use our brands.”

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Activity 2

Handout
2

Tobacco Industry Excerpt #3

“Realistically, if our company is to survive and prosper over the long-term, we must get our share of the youth market. In my opinion this will require new brands tailored to the youth market; I believe it is unrealistic to expect that existing brands identified with an over-thirty establishment market can ever become the ‘in’ products with the youth group. Thus we need new brands designed to be particularly attractive to the young smoker, while ideally at the same time being appealing to all smokers.”

Lesson 4
Activity 2

Handout
2

Tobacco Industry Excerpt #4

“For the pre-smoker and ‘learner’ the physical effects of smoking are largely unknown, unneeded, or actually quite unpleasant or awkward. The expected or derived psychological effects are largely responsible for influencing the pre-smoker to try smoking, and provide sufficient motivation during the ‘learning’ period to keep the ‘learner’ going despite the physical unpleasantness and awkwardness period.”

Lesson 4
Activity 2

Handout
2

Tobacco Industry Excerpt #5

“If the majority of one’s closest associates smoke cigarettes, then there is a strong psychological pressure, particularly on the young person, to identify with the group, follow the crowd, and avoid being out of sync with the group’s value system.... This provides a large incentive to begin smoking.... Thus a new brand aimed at the young smoker must somehow become the ‘in’ brand and its promotion should emphasize togetherness, belonging to group, and acceptance, while at the same time emphasizing individuality and doing one’s own thing.”

Lesson 4
Activity 2

Handout
2

Tobacco Industry Excerpt #6

“The teens and early twenties are periods of intense psychological stress, restlessness, and boredom. Many socially awkward situations are encountered. The minute or two required to stop and light a cigarette, ask for a light, find an ash tray, and the like provide something to do during these periods of awkwardness or boredom, and afford a little time-out period when confronting a stressful situation. Smoking also gives one something to do with the hands and something to talk about in a situation where otherwise one might simply have nothing to do or say. This desirable attribute of smoking should be strongly emphasized in promoting a new youth brand.”

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Activity 2

Handout
2

Tobacco Industry Excerpt #7

“The fragile, developing self-image of the young person needs all of the support and enhancement it can get. Smoking may appear to enhance that self-image in a variety of ways. If one values, for example, an adventurous, sophisticated adult image, smoking may enhance one’s self-image. If one values certain characteristics in specific individuals or types and those persons or types smoke, then if one also smokes he or she is psychologically a little more like the valued image. This self-image enhancement effect has traditionally been a strong promotional theme for cigarette brands and should continue to be emphasized.”

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Activity 2

Handout
2

Tobacco Industry Excerpt #8

“There is a strong drive in most people, particularly the young, to try new things and experiences. This drive no doubt leads many pre-smokers to experiment with smoking, simply because it is there and they want to know more about it. A new brand offering something novel and different is likely to attract experimenters, young and old, and if it offers an advantage it is likely to retain these users.”

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Tobacco Industry Excerpt #9

“The smoking-health controversy does not appear important to the [youth] group because psychologically, at eighteen, one is immortal. Further, if the desire to be daring is part of the motivation to start smoking, the alleged risk of smoking may actually make smoking attractive. Finally, if the older establishment is preaching against smoking, the establishment sentiment discussed above would cause the young to want to be defiant and smoke. Thus, a new brand aimed at the young groups should not in any way be promoted as a health brand, and perhaps should carry some implied risk. In this sense the warning label on the package may be a plus.”

Putting Together a Public Service Announcement

What is a public service announcement?

A public service announcement is a form of advertising known as social marketing. Rather than using advertising and marketing techniques (as discussed earlier in the lesson) to sell a product, social marketing incorporates similar techniques to raise awareness about a health issue or the impact of upstream causes on health, or to promote healthy behaviors. Public service announcements can be produced as print media like billboard and transit advertisements, brochures, and murals as well as oral communication like radio or television messages.

What is the purpose of this assignment?

Tobacco and alcohol industries use the media to sell their products and promote smoking and drinking. In this assignment, you will use similar media tactics to create an advertisement that instead “sells” a healthy message such as not smoking or drinking responsibly. Your advertisement will:

- 1) raise awareness about the dangers of tobacco and alcohol use, such as lung cancer and poor brain development in teens;
- 2) promote healthy behaviors like not smoking and not drinking underage; and/
- or 3) advocate for addressing the social, economic, and political factors that contribute to tobacco and alcohol use, such as suggesting people vote in favor of a ballot measure that would require companies to remove billboards near school property.

What are the details of this assignment?

1. Choose whatever form of media you would like, such as creating a video to post on YouTube, developing a brochure to distribute in student mailboxes, writing a poem or form of spoken word to present in class or at a school assembly, or drawing a mural on chart paper to hang in the school hallway.
2. Include at least 2 of the 21 media techniques discussed in the *Media Savvy* activity.
3. Direct your public service announcement to students, teachers, and administrators at your school.
4. Ask your teacher and conduct internet- or library-based research to view examples of other public service announcements.
5. Be prepared to share your final project with the class.

