**FOCUS GROUP INVESTIGATION   
of UNDERAGE ACCESS TO TOBACCO PRODUCTS**



.

Presented to:

Prevention & Health Promotion Admin.

Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene

201 West Preston Street

Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Table of Contents

[Executive Summary 1](#_Toc496799645)

[Background of the Study 3](#_Toc496799646)

[Materials and Methods 3](#_Toc496799647)

[Strategies for Obtaining Tobacco 5](#_Toc496799648)

[Purchasing Tobacco Products Underage 8](#_Toc496799649)

[Slang for Tobacco Products 13](#_Toc496799650)

[Product and Brand Preferences 14](#_Toc496799651)

[Reasons for Smoking 17](#_Toc496799652)

[Deterrents to Smoking 20](#_Toc496799653)

[Awareness of the Risks 23](#_Toc496799654)

[Risks of Getting Caught 24](#_Toc496799655)

[Conclusions 26](#_Toc496799656)

[Appendix A: Transcripts 27](#_Toc496799657)

[Appendix B: Moderator’s Guide 145](#_Toc496799658)

[Appendix C: Slang Terms 150](#_Toc496799666)

# Table of Figures

[Figure 1: Strategies for Obtaining Tobacco Products While Underage 5](file:///C:\Users\ACS\Executive%20Shared%20Drive\Projects\MD%20Focus%20Groups\Report\Tobacco%20Report.docx#_Toc496799710)

[Figure 2: Card Exercise Example 13](file:///C:\Users\ACS\Executive%20Shared%20Drive\Projects\MD%20Focus%20Groups\Report\Tobacco%20Report.docx#_Toc496799711)

[Figure 3: Slang for Cigarette 13](file:///C:\Users\ACS\Executive%20Shared%20Drive\Projects\MD%20Focus%20Groups\Report\Tobacco%20Report.docx#_Toc496799712)

[Figure 4: Slang for Cigar 13](file:///C:\Users\ACS\Executive%20Shared%20Drive\Projects\MD%20Focus%20Groups\Report\Tobacco%20Report.docx#_Toc496799713)

[Figure 5: Slang For Little Cigar 13](file:///C:\Users\ACS\Executive%20Shared%20Drive\Projects\MD%20Focus%20Groups\Report\Tobacco%20Report.docx#_Toc496799714)

[Figure 6: Slang for Cigarillo 13](file:///C:\Users\ACS\Executive%20Shared%20Drive\Projects\MD%20Focus%20Groups\Report\Tobacco%20Report.docx#_Toc496799715)

[Figure 7: Slang for Chewing Tobacco 14](file:///C:\Users\ACS\Executive%20Shared%20Drive\Projects\MD%20Focus%20Groups\Report\Tobacco%20Report.docx#_Toc496799716)

[Figure 8: Slang for Clove Cigarettes 14](file:///C:\Users\ACS\Executive%20Shared%20Drive\Projects\MD%20Focus%20Groups\Report\Tobacco%20Report.docx#_Toc496799717)

[Figure 9: Slang for Bidis 14](file:///C:\Users\ACS\Executive%20Shared%20Drive\Projects\MD%20Focus%20Groups\Report\Tobacco%20Report.docx#_Toc496799718)

[Figure 10: Slang for Hookah 14](file:///C:\Users\ACS\Executive%20Shared%20Drive\Projects\MD%20Focus%20Groups\Report\Tobacco%20Report.docx#_Toc496799719)

[Figure 11: Slang for Pipe 14](file:///C:\Users\ACS\Executive%20Shared%20Drive\Projects\MD%20Focus%20Groups\Report\Tobacco%20Report.docx#_Toc496799720)

[Figure 12: Slang for Loose Tobacco 14](file:///C:\Users\ACS\Executive%20Shared%20Drive\Projects\MD%20Focus%20Groups\Report\Tobacco%20Report.docx#_Toc496799721)

# Executive Summary

The Center for Tobacco Prevention and Control (the Center) contracted with Analytic Insight to conduct focus group sessions with Maryland adults ages 18 through 21 who used tobacco products on at least 20 out of 30 days while in high school grades 10, 11 or 12. The purpose of the focus group sessions was to foster a conversation about their usual sources of tobacco products while in high school and under 18 years of age. Additionally, the Center sought to discover the strategies that these individuals employed for maintaining access to tobacco products while underage.

## Materials and Methods

The study design employed Facebook, Instagram and Craigslist advertising to recruit participants for the focus groups, offering an incentive of $75 for participation. Four focus group sessions were conducted in locations around Maryland. In order to participate, individuals had to be 18 to 21 years of age and a user of tobacco products while underage and in high school. Young adults were not required to be smokers at the time of the study; the goal was to gain the retrospective perspective of high school students who were using tobacco products while underage. The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the recruitment methods, moderator’s guide and card sort materials.

## Strategies for Obtaining Tobacco

Most respondents initially obtained tobacco products from friends or family members. This included stealing cigarettes from a parent or borrowing them from older siblings or friends. Once they began to smoke regularly, they continued to obtain tobacco products from friends and family members, but also began to buy cigarettes and other tobacco products themselves at a gas station, convenience store or tobacco store. Asking strangers to buy cigarettes for them as underage smokers was less common, but many respondents had done this at least once.

## Purchasing Tobacco Products Underage

Overwhelmingly, participants bought their own tobacco products themselves, while underage, at gas stations, convenience stores and tobacco shops. The discussion of purchasing tobacco underage included descriptions of the desirable characteristics of the store, the clerk, the timing and the ways the buyer presents themselves to complete a successful purchase. Consequences of being caught purchasing tobacco products were described as minimal.

## Product and Brand Preferences

Respondents reported that when they first started smoking they smoked the brands provided by friends or family who smoked. As they began to smoke more frequently participants developed brand preferences. Respondents said that the brands they smoked in high school were very important. They often chose brands from among those their friends used. Once they selected a brand, many expressed a great deal of loyalty to that brand. Several respondents mentioned the prestige associated with their favorite brand. Several discussed the cost.

## Reasons for Smoking

Peer pressure, the influence of family members and stress relief were some of the reasons participants began smoking. Several also mentioned that they worked in a job where others went outside for smoke breaks and they began smoking to participate in that group. Others talked about the social aspect of smoking and how it offered an opening into various social groups. The image of smoking as portrayed in classic movies and popular culture as romantic and rebellious was attractive to many participants.

## Deterrents to Smoking

Participants described the drawbacks of smoking. These included the cost, the smell, the judgement of peers, minor health effects and logistical challenges to managing smoking while underage and under the supervision of parents and other authorities.

## Awareness of the Health Risks

Most participants were aware of the long term health effects of smoking and had seen graphic warning labels on cigarette packaging. Participants learned about the health effects of smoking at school, as well as through a range of media sources. A few had family members who had suffered health consequences from smoking. Most were not deterred by these things. Many participants thought warnings were exaggerated or represented a very small likelihood of occurring to them.

## Risks of Getting Caught

The greatest risk of smoking for most participants when they were underage was being caught by their parents. The fear of being caught by school or other authorities was often that those authorities would notify their parents. Losing the cigarettes themselves was also an important consideration.

## Lack of Formal Consequences

The lack of formal repercussions for smoking underage was well-established among the participants. Participants viewed many adults as being ambivalent toward underage smoking, with the exception for many, of their parents. Many viewed the process of being caught trying to purchase cigarettes as part of gaining skills and confidence. The embarrassment of being turned down was a deterrent to early purchasing, but quickly overcome with practice.

# Background of the Study

The Center for Tobacco Prevention and Control (the Center) contracted with Analytic Insight, LLC to conduct focus group sessions with Maryland adults ages 18 through 21 who used tobacco products on at least 20 out of 30 days while in high school grades 10, 11 or 12. The purpose of the focus group sessions was to foster a conversation about their usual sources of tobacco products while in high school and under 18 years of age. Additionally, the Center sought to discover the strategies that these individuals employed for maintaining access to tobacco products while underage.

Both State and Federal law prohibit the sale or distribution of any type of tobacco product to persons less than 18 years of age by a retailer or any other person, including family members. Nonetheless, underage Maryland adolescents have persistently been successful in acquiring and smoking cigarettes and cigars for decades, and continue to do so today.

When experimenting with smoking, it is common for underage youth to “bum” a cigarette from someone, or take a cigarette from an unsuspecting family member. Such acquisition strategies, however, generally prove insufficient to support a regular frequent smoker, i.e. someone who is smoking on at least 20 out of every 30 days. Through biennial surveys of high school youth, the three primary acquisition strategies identified by such smokers are: (1) direct purchases at a gas station and/or convenience store; (2) proxy purchases (giving someone else money to buy tobacco for them); and (3) “some other way.” This study is designed to help the Center better understand underage access to tobacco products, particularly for regular frequent smokers, i.e. those who were underage and using tobacco products on 20 or more days each month.

# Materials and Methods

The study design employed Facebook, Instagram and Craigslist advertising to recruit participants for the focus groups, offering an incentive of $75 for participation. The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the recruitment methods, moderator’s guide and card sort materials.

Young adults aged 18 to 21 were recruited through Facebook, Instagram and Craigslist advertisements. Ads instructed interested respondents to click on a link which brought up a landing page with information about the purpose, location and timing of the groups, as well as a phone number to call to reserve a place in the group. In order to participate, individuals had to be 18 to 21 years of age and a user of tobacco products while underage and in high school. Young adults were not required to be smokers at the time of the study; the goal was to gain the retrospective perspective of high school students who were using tobacco products while underage.

Four focus group sessions were conducted between September 26 and October 4, 2017. Each focus group was conducted in a casual, public environment. Three took place in hotel conference rooms, and the fourth in a business meeting room facility. Refreshments were served.

The sessions each had one moderator and one note-taker. The note-taker's purpose was to take notes using a smart-pen and to watch for body language, facial expressions, and group reactions that would not be picked up by sound recordings. The note-taker and moderator met with the Center’s project manager after each focus group meeting to discuss the group that had just taken place. Each session lasted approximately one hour. All sessions included between 8 and 12 young adults with an average of 10 participants per group. A fifth group was recruited in the city of Bowie, however not enough participants were available. The Bowie group was cancelled and participants redirected to other cities.

All sessions were tape-recorded and broadcast via Skype for viewing by Center staff. Groups were not video-taped. Transcriptions of each group are provided in Appendix A.

At the beginning of each group, the moderator introduced herself and gave a brief explanation of the purpose of the study and the procedures of the focus group session. A disclosure statement was given to each participant on arrival. Each participant received a $75 gift card at the conclusion of the group.

The moderator’s guide is provided in Appendix B. In addition to the questions listed in the moderator’s guide, AI conducted two group exercises. The first exercise was a card sort where participants read various strategies typically employed by youth to obtain tobacco products while underage. Participants sorted the cards into three piles: things they have done as an underage high school student, things they would have done and things they would never do. The groups then discussed each strategy, as well as explored other ways that the participants may have obtained tobacco products while underage that were not listed.

For the second exercise, participants listed all the slang words they knew for a series of photographs related to tobacco products.

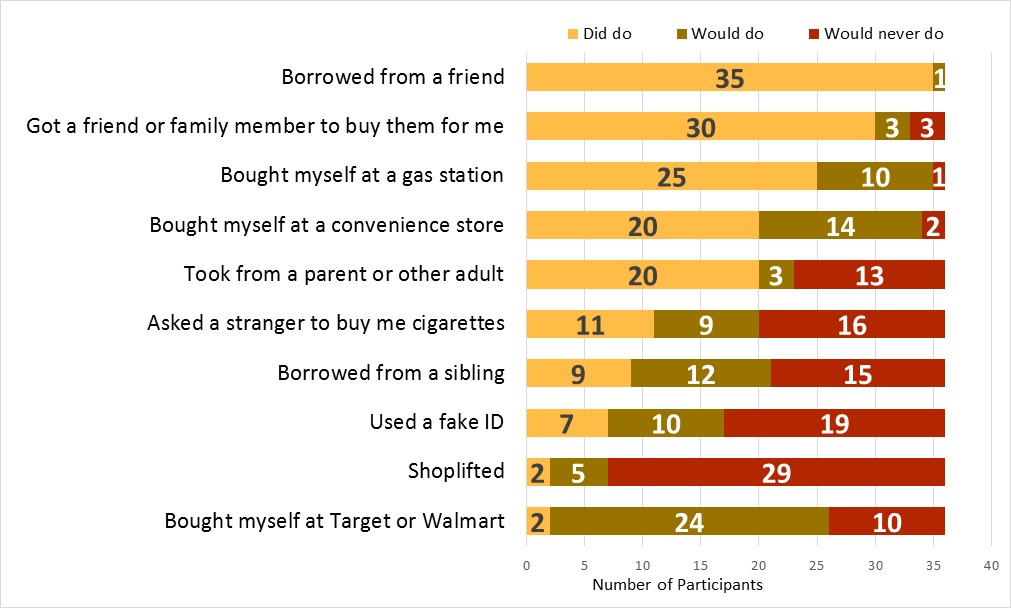
Qualitative analysis of each focus group session was done using a process of thematic analysis. The process began with an initial read of the transcribed data and reading of the notes taken during the session. The analysis procedure consisted of multiple readings of the transcripts to identify key words or phrases. Coding began during the second read of the data. The relevant passages were coded initially using words from the young adults themselves. Subsequent readings of the transcripts and the passages coded in similar ways yielded categories of data describing the critical issues for young adults. Categories from each topic were combined to form themes, which provided a comprehensive view of the data.

# Strategies for Obtaining Tobacco

Most respondents initially obtained tobacco products from friends or family members. This included stealing cigarettes from a parent or borrowing them from older siblings or friends. Once they began to smoke regularly, they continued to obtain tobacco products from friends and family members, but also began to buy cigarettes and other tobacco products themselves at a gas station, convenience store or tobacco store. Asking strangers to buy cigarettes for them as underage smokers was less common, but many respondents had done this at least once.

Figure : Strategies for Obtaining Tobacco Products While Underage

Figure : Card Exercise ExampleFigure : Strategies for Obtaining Tobacco Products While Underage



During the focus group discussion, some strategies elicited detailed conversation. The remainder of this section presents the results for those topics.

## Borrowing from a Friend

All but one participant borrowed cigarettes from friends on at least some occasions. Sharing was often described as an act of generosity or friendship. Indeed, several participants said that they made friends by approaching a stranger and asking to borrow or “bum” a cigarette.

* I feel a lot of people just give you cigarettes. Like the dude at my work. He said he had this young guy come up to him and ask him, and he gave him one. And the guy was like, “can I get two?” So he gave him two. People are pretty generous.
* Yeah, I agree with that too [above]. A lot of times people won’t make you pay. You just ask them for one to bum.

## Using a Fake ID

About half of the respondents had used or would have used fake identification as a strategy to obtain tobacco products. However, during the discussion it emerged that this was not a regular strategy and instead was generally a circumstance where a fake ID was available for a single purchase. Most said it was not worth the risk of being caught with a fake ID when the risk of purchasing tobacco underage without any identification is low. Additionally, the regularity of tobacco purchases increased the risk of being caught with the fake ID, as compared to an occasional use for alcohol or entry to a bar. A few respondents reported that they had used genuine identification belonging to an older sibling in lieu of a fake ID.

* People don’t really do that for cigarettes unless they already have it for alcohol. It’s not really a thing for cigarettes.
* Like when you have a fake ID and you’re using it to buy alcohol, you may only use it once a month or even less, depending on how much you drink. But with cigarettes, you’re going to be using it a lot more and it’s not really worth it.
* You can get cigarettes quite easily, you don’t have to have a fake ID for that.

## Approaching a Stranger

Many respondents had approached strangers to buy them cigarettes while underage. Two respondents in separate groups described a game that they played with friends which was familiar to many other respondents in each of the two groups. Participants described how to identify an appropriate stranger. Someone who is currently smoking, male and young (but over 18) were desirable qualities. Approaching a stranger was common, but seen as a “last resort,” risky or a special activity, but not suitable for daily smoking needs.

* They got to look cool.
* When we were in school we played this game called ‘Hey Mister’, where we just walked up to some random person and said “hey mister, can you go buy this and this from the gas station over there for us?” Somebody’s going to do it.
* I definitely found it easier communicating with men rather than women. I think I’ve only done it with one or two women, just ask them, ‘Can I bum a cigarette” or “Can you buy a pack for me?” I’ve only done it with like, two women. But I’ve always usually found a guy to do it for me.
* I mean, you get some nerves. But basically, if you’re persistent, someone’s going to buy you cigarettes.
* Around where we live, it’s typically a bad idea because that’s taking a chance with your money.

# Purchasing Tobacco Products Underage

Overwhelmingly, participants bought their own tobacco products themselves, while underage, at gas stations, convenience stores and tobacco shops. The discussion of purchasing tobacco underage included descriptions of the desirable characteristics of the store, the clerk, the timing and the ways the buyer presents themselves to complete a successful purchase. Consequences of being caught purchasing tobacco products were described as minimal.

## Characteristics of the Store

Participants generally agreed that smaller stores, including gas stations, convenience stores and tobacco stores, are the best place to buy tobacco while underage. Many respondents obtained information from their friends about which stores were most amenable to underage tobacco sales. Trial and error was also a popular means of identifying stores for purchases.

* Kids in the neighborhood know what corner store will sell you cigarettes. It doesn’t matter who’s running it, there’s always one or two stores in every area that have a reputation of selling to kids and that’s how you know where to go.
* Everybody knew [the best places to buy cigarettes underage].
* The smaller the better, usually.
* They’re more likely to want your business, to not really care about your age. Either way, it’s money in their pocket or in their Dad’s pocket or whoever they’re working for. Usually they’re all tied together at the smaller stores.
* If there are bars on the windows, chances are they aren’t going to check your ID.

Because it was easy for most respondents to buy cigarettes underage, convenience played a large role in their selection of a retailer. Many reported that they purchased from stores close to the high school or their home.

* You don’t have to get that desperate [to go out of your way to find a retailer].

Smaller, non-chain establishments including gas stations, convenience stores and tobacco specialty stores were preferred. Large retailers and chain stores like Walmart, Target or Wawa typically were avoided.

* Gas stations are not going to get that much more money by selling to kids because that’s not what they do. But a tobacco store, when they sell to kids it’s a lot of people. They no limits. If you come in there, and you want cigarettes, they’ll sell to you.
* I feel like any big chain store won’t sell to you. Like 7-11 or anything, they won’t.
* I wouldn’t go to Wa-Wa or something like that, they would check IDs. They’re more official.

Respondents preferred to go when the store was not very busy, although the groups were divided on this issue.

* There's a few places where if it's rush hour and everyone's moving through trying to get gas and everything, there's a few of them that might not card you and just give you it so you just move along.
* I think it’s worse when there’s people in line. Kind of like they (the clerk) are being watched.
* The walk of shame is worse when there’s more people.

## The Clerk Factor

Several respondents discussed developing a relationship with a clerk. Once known as a regular, many were able to bypass the formality of providing identification.

* I generally went to the same store. I’ve built a relationship doing that, they just trust you and then they don’t even think about it.
* Even if you got past them once, eventually they just assumed that they carded you before and they’re just like ”Oh, whatever.”
* Once you get one pack from somewhere, you know pretty much you can get them anytime.

The bond established by a shared ethnic heritage, language or neighborhood was cited by several respondents as a way to gain access to tobacco products. One respondent described a neighbor who offered an informal store out of their apartment where single cigarettes could be purchased.

* Sometimes the person working there, if there’s a Hispanic there, I can easily talk with them in Spanish.

One participant from an immigrant family said that in his culture, smoking was accepted at an early age. He recalled that as a young teenager his father let him smoke a hookah at a family gathering. The adults present did not question this and were amused by his coughing.

Several respondents said that targeting stores operated by immigrants was a fruitful method. Respondents also mentioned that older, white male sales clerks were less likely to sell tobacco to underage customers, as were female clerks of any age.

* A lot of people from other countries, they don’t really care as much.
* They just came to this country to get their money and go. They’d typically be the ones who’d own their own smoke shop.
* Pretty much any white, older gentleman [is to be avoided].
* I know the one place at the mall. If it was the dude working, you get tobacco. But if it was the chick, she was going to card you. So you’ve got to kind of wait until they change shifts, and then you could go.

At least one respondent said that older clerks are more like to sell to underage customers.

* I feel like older cares less. I feel younger people just don’t want to get in trouble. Older people kind of know that they’re not going to get in trouble.

It was generally considered easy for participants to buy tobacco products underage and the repercussions of failure were small. Therefore, issues surrounding “the clerk factor” were not paramount and some participants said they would attempt a purchase despite clerk characteristics that were less than optimal.

* Usually, once I walk into the store, I’m going to ask either way. I never turned around because I didn’t like the look of the clerk.

## Characteristics of the Buyer

Participants agreed that there is a learning process to buying cigarettes underage. Confidence, appearance, gender and presentation at the store all contribute to a successful purchase.

##### Confidence

* Eventually you don’t even think about yourself being underage. You’re just going to get tobacco. It’s no stress at all.
* They card, but if you’re confident enough, they’ll sell it to you without asking.
* If you’re confident, then you get it.

##### Lookingolder

* My trick would be, if I was going in and I didn’t have cigarettes, I’d try to make myself look as old as possible. I’d make sure they see me getting out of my car, make sure they see the pack in my pocket, stuff like that.
* For me when I was younger, I looked older. So I would just go and buy and them.
* Some people it’s easier. You just have facial hair and they just think you’re older than you are.

##### Gender

* They (girls) usually get caught because they look younger.
* Fake, deep voice. Easier for dudes because you can grow a beard.

## Timing of Purchases

Many participants thought that going to the store to purchase tobacco during school hours or at night was best. During these hours, some clerks would assume that only adults would be out or that underage people would be in school.

* You go really late at night. A lot of times they won’t ID you just because they think you’re out so late, you must be an adult.

Several respondents discussed leaving school during school hours to purchase cigarettes and then returning to school.

* I’ll say while during school time [is the best time], if you are under 18. You’d be in school.

However, purchasing tobacco was easy enough that many did not regard the timing to be important.

* The best time to buy cigarettes? Whenever my last cigarette runs out.

## Consequences

The lack of consequences to purchasing tobacco products underage lead many participants to attempt purchases without identification on a regular basis. It also enabled them to practice purchasing and gain the confidence needed to be successful in this enterprise.

* I’d say it’s common to get stopped. So I just tried it at different places.
* Yeah, I’ve been stopped a couple of times. I feel like they kind of know. Like, you’ll make up some excuse about not having your ID. But everybody doesn’t have their ID, you know? They kind of know, but they don’t really care. They don’t get mad.
* If they had gotten mad, I’m not sure that would have affected me. It’s not their decision.
* You say you left it in the car. Then you never go back in.
* Say that’s fine and just leave. That’s like the walk of shame.
* The extent of the reaction is just not to sell me cigarettes.
* If they’re not going to sell to me, I just walk out.
* I’ve even bought in front of cops before. Nobody cares.
* Slide an extra dollar.

# Slang for Tobacco Products

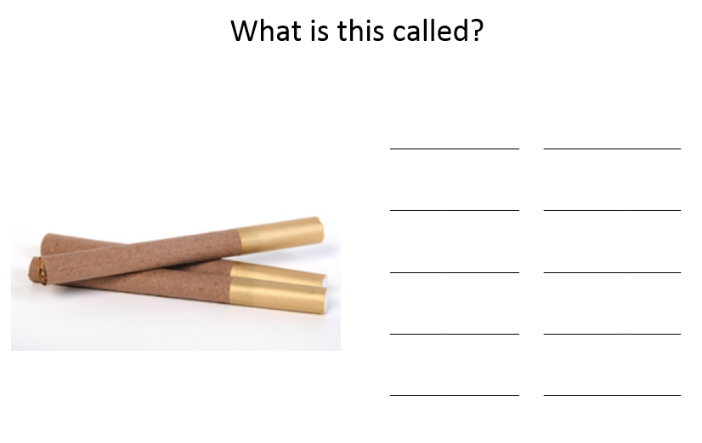
This section provides respondents’ knowledge of slang and colloquial terms for tobacco products. Respondents filled out cards showing pictures of a product and asking for slang words representing that product. An example card is shown to the right.

Figure : Card Exercise Example

Figure 4: Slang for CigarFigure : Card Exercise Example

Word clouds are an interpretive device for qualitative data. The more often a word is mentioned, the larger it appears in the word cloud. The word clouds below show the terms that respondents provided for common tobacco products. A full list of the terms is provided in Appendix C.



Figure 4: Slang for Cigar

Figure 5: Slang for Little CigarFigure 4: Slang for Cigar

Figure 5: Slang for Little Cigar

Figure 3: Slang For CigaretteFigure 5: Slang for Little Cigar

Figure 3: Slang For Cigarette

Figure : Slang for CigarilloFigure 3: Slang For Cigarette

Figure : Slang for Cigarillo

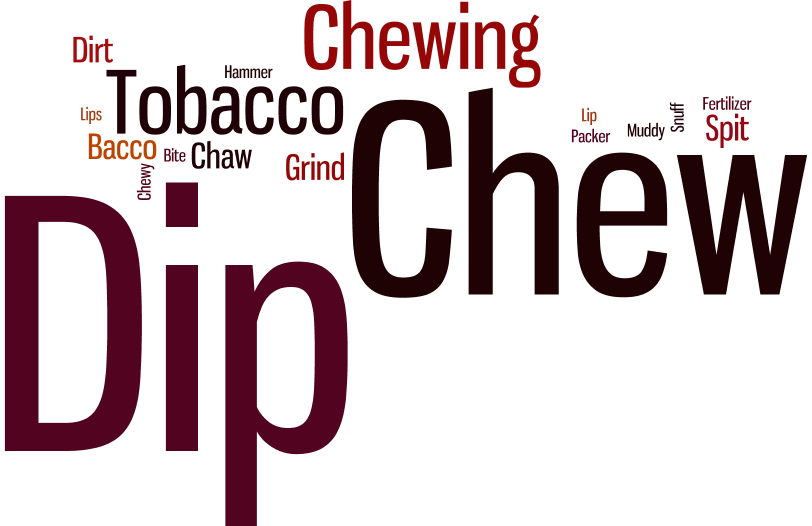
Figure 8: Slang for Clove CigarettesFigure : Slang for Cigarillo

Figure 8: Slang for Clove Cigarettes

Figure 7: Slang for Chewing TobaccoFigure 8: Slang for Clove Cigarettes

Figure 7: Slang for Chewing Tobacco

Figure : Slang for Loose TobaccoFigure 7: Slang for Chewing Tobacco



# Product and Brand Preferences

Figure : Slang for Loose Tobacco

Figure : Slang for PipeFigure : Slang for Loose Tobacco

Figure : Slang for Pipe

Figure 9: Slang for Bidis

Figure 10: Slang for Hookah

Respondents reported that when they first started smoking they smoked the brands provided by friends or family who smoked. As they began to smoke more frequently participants developed brand preferences. Respondents said that the brands they smoked in high school were very important. They often chose brands from among those their friends used. Once they selected a brand, many expressed a great deal of loyalty to that brand. Several respondents mentioned the prestige associated with their favorite brand. Several discussed the cost.

* My sister stopped for good and she definitely looked down on it. She was like, “This is gross. When I had you smoking, you smoked American Spirits, you didn’t smoke Newports. You have to start smoking something classy.”
* You’re doing good if you’re the type of person, if someone’s like “Yo, can I get a fug?” and you’re like “Nope, I only smoke Newports.” But I was the type of person, I didn’t care what it was as long as it had a filter, I was all for it. After a while, I started to get really particular.
* I smoked Santana. You can only get them on the Indian Reservation. They are like, $23 a carton. Gotta save money.
* I always went with Marlboro. But I would like to try other things where if it was a lot money, I would get something cheaper like Pall Mall or something.

## Cigarillos

Cigarillos were a well-recognized and popular tobacco product. Participants described them as inexpensive, flavorful and interesting.

* They’re very cheap.
* You don’t have to buy a whole pack of cigarettes.
* And they’re flavored.
* Definitely the wooden tip made it a bit more attractive.
* You usually pass it around in rotation for your friends. It’s more of a social thing instead of just sitting there and smoking a cigarette.
* It looked fancy with the plastic tip. It was just amazing to me.

## Menthol Cigarettes

Several participants smoked menthol cigarettes, however many associated them with adverse health effects. Camel Crush and Newports were a popular menthol brand, mentioned by participants in several of the groups.

* Those are really nice.
* They’re nice, but they’re really bad for you.
* It’s a lot more attractive to use Camel Crush, because then you have to pop the little ball inside and that’s honestly nice to do.
* R1: I would not smoke Newports because they have fiberglass in them. I knew people who smoked them and had issues with bleeding and stuff like that. Somebody here smokes Newports. R2: Yeah, that I do. They’re awesome.

## Chewing Tobacco

Several participants talked about chewing tobacco in connection with sports, baseball in particular.

* My cousin’s from South Carolina. He’s 14 and does all kinds of sports, but he buys chewing tobacco like the dip. To them, that’s the thing right now. I tell him like, “Yo, your teeth are going to rot pretty soon.” It’s really nasty.
* I played baseball in high school and that was a big thing, because all the major league players do it.
* It’s a big thing in baseball culture.
* All the coaches do it. My team wasn’t big on it, but I knew other teams that all did that while they were playing.

## Hookah Bars

Many of the participants indicated they were able to go to Hookah bars while underage, especially if they were part of a group with girls or were predominately female. These participants found that hookah is a social way of smoking.

* You kind of go to the bar, and it’s a hookah bar and you sit around and casually smoke it.
* Yeah, that’s popular. It’s more like a social thing.

# Reasons for Smoking

Peer pressure, the influence of family members and stress relief were some of the reasons participants began smoking. Several also mentioned that they worked in a job where others went outside for smoke breaks and they began smoking to participate in that group. Others talked about the social aspect of smoking and how it offered an opening into various social groups. The image of smoking as portrayed in classic movies and popular culture as romantic and rebellious was attractive to many participants.

### Peer Pressure and Family Influence

Almost all participants acknowledge feeling peer pressure. Some also described how their family members who smoked or had smoked influenced their decision to begin smoking.

* Mine was a dare. They said I dare you to go buy some cigarettes. So I did. And we smoked them.
* Well I started because all my friends. They all started it and it became a thing.
* I didn’t want to look like a loser.
* I was just always curious about it since I was a kid. My Dad used to smoke. Even as a kid, I knew I was going to try it. But he’s quit since then, so I couldn’t get them from him. But yeah, my group of friends, they all smoke. So it’s just kind of worked out that way.

### Stress Relief

Smoking was seen as a way to reduce stress for many participants. Sometimes the stress being relieved was the stress of peer pressure or bullying.

* Bullying. Just being cast out. It gave me a sense of just cooling down. Not having to really worry about it. I could just throw into the back of my mind and just leave it there.
* It was definitely a stress reliever for a lot of different people. But I think it differs for everyone, the reasons. A lot of times it’s because of stress, but sometimes it’s just because my friends do it and it’s the fad. I don’t want to feel left out when they’re all smoking and I look like the loser in the group.
* When I have intrusive thoughts, it just hushes my mind completely when I overanalyze things. Smoking while you overanalyze things doesn’t make you think you’re being anal. You think you’re being thorough. You have mapped everything out, and it’s the physical sensation they get out of it. Some people like cigars because they like to clip it. It’s like the ritual of it.

### Job-Related

Several participants began smoking while at work. Joining coworkers outside for smoke breaks was a popular activity. The money made from working also enabled participants to buy their own cigarettes.

* I worked at a job where smoking was a good way to fill the time. I would just bum cigarettes from people. Eventually I was like, hey, give me a pack and it just kind of went up from there.
* Smoke breaks.
* I had a job and I started smoking because of the job. At the job, and the money I got from that, I had someone buy cigarettes for me.
* I worked at 16, so I had money and could buy cigarettes. It wasn’t a problem.
* I worked in the restaurant industry. I always had extra tips on me, so I’d just walk across the street to the gas station and buy a pack.

### Social Acceptance

Participants used smoking as a way to enhance their social experiences. It was seen as a conversations starter and ice-breaker. Additionally, by smoking, participants gained access to an elite group separate from their larger social networks.

* It was an ice-breaker. It was totally an ice-breaker for me. Here in Baltimore, you say “Yo, can I get a fug?” and you’ve made a new stranger-friend.
* It’s like a conversation starter. I guess it brings people together.
* That’s a reason why people start. It’s like a social fare to get along with others.
* For me, it was like a social thing. You go out to a party, and one person has one. You end up hitting it, and then all of a sudden you have your own cigarette. And everyone has their own, and you’re talking. Always on the porch. So it’s more like an outdoor setting.
* It gets you out of the crazy, social party, and then you’re out smoking cigs, chilling.
* That was just how I make friends. Like hey, you got an extra cig? And they would like the company and they would look forward to me coming there on Monday after school, or a Tuesday.

### Defiance and Romanticism

Since the days of James Dean, high school students have regarded smoking as dangerous, glamorous and classy. Smoking was also seen as an act of defiance or rebellion.

* They make me feel dirty glam. I was totally dirty, but glamorous.
* Definitely rebellion. Yeah.
* R1: There was a time in high school when I watched a bunch of French films. They all smoked cigarettes and they all looked so elegant. It really romanticized cigarettes. R2: Yeah, that happened to me with cigars. Cigars are very classy. So I would smoke cigars.
* Like my mom. She knew I was smoking. She was waiting to catch me smoking so she could kick my ass. So I’d wait for her to be gone. That was my ritual. No one was in the house and I’d get to spark up in the house and have that whole ritual of getting the smoke out or saying F. U. So what if one of my neighbors sees me outside smoking? My mom’s not home.

# Deterrents to Smoking

Participants described the drawbacks of smoking. These included the cost, the smell, the judgement of peers, minor health effects and logistical challenges to managing smoking while underage and under the supervision of parents and other authorities.

### Cost

The cost of tobacco products was an obstacle for many participants.

* The cost of it. Tobacco products in general. If you’re smoking every day, it racks up a bill. You have to pay that and then also in high school, you don’t really have a job, so you have to join with other people and pool all your money together and buy what you’re going to buy.
* You spend a lot of money.
* On a really bad day, you smoke a pack. Say, you want to have a drink, then you smoke two packs. That means you just spent 15 or 16 dollars on cigarettes that day. On a bad day, you’re going to spend a lot of money on cigarettes, and then you’re going to need cigarettes for the next day. It’s not a cheap habit.

### Smell

Almost all participants agreed that the smell of cigarette smoke is unpleasant and imposed a risk of being caught.

* They stink.
* All your clothes smell like cigarettes. Like, everything.
* When I pull out old things I still smell the cigarettes on them, even though it’s been like two and a half years.
* You’re hair smells like cigarettes. Everybody is worried, “Oh man, I’m going to smell like smoke.”

### Judgements of Peers

Underage smokers interact with a variety of peers, both smokers and non-smokers. Participants were aware of the judgement from their non-smoking peers.

* Judgement from you peers more than adults. People just think, like, you’re an idiot.
* People thinking that you’re gross.
* When you’re doing it, the taste isn’t the focus. But when you kiss someone and you taste it that feels dirty to me.

### Minor Health Effects

Many participants said they felt health effects while smoking as high school students. A few noted that the health effects took some time to materialize and that they were not impacted until after leaving high school.

* I noticed when I did it, when I smoked occasionally, there wouldn’t be too much of a problem. But when I was smoking more heavily, I would notice that I would get tighter breath and I could hear a difference in my breathing.
* It affects me in ways that suck. In high school I used to have migraines and I thought it was from sleeping in or too much sun, but it turned out my cigarettes were actually playing a role in my headaches.
* A smoker's cough is deadly.
* I was an athlete growing up, playing soccer for a while. I was very, very close to becoming professional soccer player for my country, Honduras, but I started smoking at 15 going on 16. At a young age you really don't feel it because you're always active. I used to be really, really good at running and just slowed down and I couldn't last 90 minutes on a field. Not that they [coaches] wouldn't notice you, it's just that you wouldn't be at the top five or anything like that. So that made me want to stop and I stopped for a little bit, but then I realized that I wouldn't make it so far anymore because I was getting too old for it, so I continued smoking.
* I feel like if I get a cold, my colds last longer after I started smoking.
* I would get bad stomach aches.
* I smoked a lot of cigars and they’re not filtered. But you don’t breathe into your lungs, so they’re not as bad for your lungs. But your mouth and your throat dries. It’s really bad for you. You’re throat hurts, and your stomach, like everything.
* R1: I couldn’t run down the hallway without being out of breath. R2: I couldn’t walk up the stairs without passing out. R3: I took the elevator.
* Honestly, it took me a while. But then you graduate, and you’re like, “Oh my God, all of a sudden, I feel terrible.”

### Logistical Challenges

Smoking can be a difficult habit to manage for an underage smoker.

* I picked up smoking when I was just about to get out of middle school. My sister would want to go running, and then I would have to go running with her. I was smoking at the time so I would be running way behind her and she would get home ten minutes or so before me. So I would try to smoke before going into school and that was even harder, because I only had ten minutes at home. So I'd have a shower and go. So I'd have to smoke on the way to school, and that's even worse, because my parents would drive me to school.
* I had to spread out my schedule, make sure I didn’t do it before school or before I saw my parents. If I was doing it late at night, I had to make sure I was really quiet doing it out my window or sneak out to the backyard and do it.

# Awareness of the Risks

Most participants were aware of the long term health effects of smoking and had seen graphic warning labels on cigarette packaging. Participants learned about the health effects of smoking at school, as well as through a range of media sources. A few had family members who had suffered health consequences from smoking. Most were not deterred by these things. Many participants thought warnings were exaggerated or represented a very small likelihood of occurring to them.

* R1: I feel like when DARE was a thing, they exaggerated. Like you’d be a bad horrible person if you smoke cigarettes. R2: They make it to the point where it’s almost like they are lying, with all the stuff they are telling you, it’s like I don’t even believe it.
* They’re extreme. They warn you about the effects that will happen way, way out. That side of my family, they all died from smoking. Like they all died from lung cancer. It’s not just a thing that they say. A lot of people do die from smoking. And then there’s a lot of people, like this World War II vet, he’s ninety something, hundred something, and he says he smokes eight cigars a day. And he breathes it into his lungs too. He said this is his habit and he’s never going to die. There are people like that too, so… it’s just a choice you can make.
* R1: I think everybody kind of knows that it's bad for you, but it's just like anything else, like, eating pizza is bad for you. R2: Drinking out of a water bottle is bad for you. R3: You know, everything is kind of bad for you. And it's just a matter of -- you don't think you're going to get to that point. R4: It won't happen to me. R5: I'm going to do it in moderation, and then you get more comfortable with it and you do it more and more. That was the case with me. R1: Because you don't see the effects until they are already there. R5: Yeah.
* You’re constantly hearing about people who’ve been smoking for x amount of time, what they look like and what state they’re in. It’s always like in the back of your head. But you really want a cigarette, so you just shove it further back there.
* Yeah, it's definitely those health videos that make us recall high school. Like, here's what's going to happen if you keep smoking for 20, 30 years, you're going to have a hole in your neck.
* Or you're just going to die, because of cigarettes, which is . . . Makes you not want to smoke. That's not how addiction really works.

# Risks of Getting Caught

The greatest risk of smoking for most participants when they were underage was being caught by their parents. The fear of being caught by school or other authorities was often that those authorities would notify their parents. Losing the cigarettes themselves was also an important consideration.

* My Mom basically scoured my room for cigarettes because I smelled like it. She took all of them away from me.
* Or when you’re Mom finds your pack and breaks all your cigarettes. That happened to me on more than one occasion.
* R1: My Dad would take mine and smoke them. R2: That’s the worst, the smoking them in front of you.
* In school, one time smoking outside, the resource officer was leaving and saw all of us. We ran through the halls and threw them in trash cans. They went and viewed the cameras and came in and smacked them down on the desk. I got suspended.
* R1: You would just get taken down to the office. You would get suspended or an in-class suspension, like two days. R2: The worst part is that they take away the pack. R1: Yeah, that’s the worst part.
* Probably parents [are the worst consequence of smoking.] Or I guess if you do it at school, because that also involves your parents. Some people don’t care about getting in trouble at school, but it’s going to involve your parents in some way or other.

### Being Recognized in Public

Participants expressed concern about smoking in public in case they were seen by someone who might notify their parents.

* Someone from my church saw me smoking a cigarette on the way to baseball practice when I was younger. The next day in church, they pulled me aside, and tried to ask me if I was addicted to drugs and stuff. I was -- I'm just having a cigarette. And then my parents found out. Getting recognized, and people knowing you who -- maybe you hold a different standard for that person. Or maybe you don't smoke around them. And maybe you tell them... Maybe you lie to them and say -- I don't smoke, I don't smoke. But then they see you and that's heartbreaking.
* That’s the biggest worry, because I knew my father knew many people around. So I was cautious about who saw me smoking. I was always hiding.
* There’s a gas station near my house. In that area, there’s a lot of people that you know, because you go to high school with them. So I knew the girl that worked at one of the gas stations. Her father knew my father. So I was always a little scared to do it. But she never said anything.

## Lack of Formal Consequences

The lack of formal repercussions for smoking underage was well-established among the participants. Participants viewed many adults as being ambivalent toward underage smoking, with the exception for many, of their parents. Many viewed the process of being caught trying to purchase cigarettes as part of gaining skills and confidence. The embarrassment of being turned down was a deterrent to early purchasing, but quickly overcome with practice.

* Honestly, high school. They didn’t care. We smoked in the parking lot and they’d have the signs all over the campus saying no smoking. But we smoked in the parking lot, and they’d have the deputy officers driving around. They didn’t say anything.
* R1: Those alarms. They go off so often. R2: In the bathroom. R1: All the time. They were dumb, they kept going in there. R3: We would take a sock and put it over it.
* I got caught at school. He told me “put it out” (Chuckles.) That’s pretty much it.
* They’re not going to call the cops. That’s just not something they’re going to do. They usually don’t care.
* There’s no repercussions for the person just asking. The worst they can say is “no.” It’s not like you’re going to get fined for asking.

# Conclusions

## Strategies for Obtaining Tobacco

Most respondents initially obtained tobacco products from friends or family members, but began to purchase their own themselves at a gas station, convenience store or tobacco store. Participants targeted smaller retailers in their neighborhoods or near the school and frequented them during school hours or at night. Immigrant-owned establishments were also targeted.

## The Importance of Practice

Participants practiced purchasing tobacco through repeated attempts. The lack of consequences provided the opportunity for participants to gain confidence and expertise.

## Product and Brand Preferences

Brand preferences were important to participants’ social identity. Many expressed a great deal of loyalty to their chosen brand and noted the social prestige associated with the brand. Although cost was also an issue, the social characteristics associated with brands specifically and smoking generally, were “classy”, “cool”, “rebellious” and “glamorous”.

## Reasons for Smoking

Peer pressure, the influence of family members and stress relief were some of the reasons participants began smoking. Although some family members had quit at the time of the respondents’ initiation of smoking, their influence was still felt.

## Deterrents to Smoking

Participants described many drawbacks to smoking, including cost, smell, judgement from peers, health impacts and logistical challenges. These deterrents were effective for some who had quit smoking after high school. Major health risks of smoking, although well-known by participants were not a major deterrent.

## Lack of Formal Consequences

Participants acknowledged the lack of formal consequences for smoking underage. Parental disapproval and the subsequent consequences were the most powerful deterrents, along with peer disapproval.

# Appendix A: Transcripts

## Annapolis

**Interviewer:** So in order to get to know each other a little bit before we get started, I thought we would go around the table and if you could introduce yourself if just your first name and where you got your first cigarette.

**Answer:** I’m XXX. First… I don’t know. I was probably around 14 and it was probably a friend.Cause I was, all throughout high school I was really lazy about it, I was really bumming them so.

XXX. I did cigars. I think I got my first one from a smoke shop that just didn't really ID, didn't really care. They kept the change. They took the extra money, right.

**Interviewer:** OK. Interesting.

**Answer:** I'm XXX. I think I had my first cigarette when I was like 12, 13. Found a pack on the ground, I'm like try one.

**Interviewer:** Aha, oh really?

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** That's interesting too.

**Answer:** I'm XXX. I think I had my first cigarette when I was like 16 or something, friend bummed me one.

I'm XXX, I had my first cigarette when I was 14, I took a pack from my Dad.

I'm XXX. I smoked my first cigarette when I was 13 and I got it from my friend.

I'm XXX and I also just bummed it from a friend, when I was skipping school.

**Interviewer:** OK. When you were skipping school you said? OK.

**Answer:** XXX. My cousin stole some cigarettes from his, my uncle and we just smoked them. I was 14.

**Interviewer:** Ah, very young.

**Answer:** Name's XXX. Stole couple cigarettes from my Mom before a baseball game when I was 12, yeah.

Alright, my name is XXX. First time I had a cigarette was when I was 15, my friend just had it so.

My name is XXX and first time I had a cigarette I was 13 and my Mom just handed it to me, she said -- "this is when I started smoking, you want to try one?" I was like, I guess.

**Interviewer:** Wow, OK. Great. So the next thing we're going to do is kind of a little exercise. And there are two sets of cards in front of you. So this is a focus group exercise called a "card sort." So if you take the ones that have the words on them, we're going to sort them into three piles. The first pile is things that you've done, that you did when you were in high school at some point. The second pile is things that you didn't actually do when you were in high school but you would have done if the opportunity arose. Then the third pile is things that you would never do, even as a high school student.

**Answer:** When you say high school, do you mean underage or just...

**Interviewer:** No, underage and in high school, thank you for that.

**Answer:** First, what we did, second what we would have done, third never.

**Interviewer:** Yes, exactly. So did, would do, never did.

**Answer:** If I... I didn't personally have a fake ID, but I've gone with someone that had one.

**Interviewer:** I think that counts. Also I should add too, that when you're done with the card sort, if you could take one of the sticky yellow tabs and just mark your three piles as -- did, would do, never do. And then put them all together and just so you know for your sorting technique too, we're not going to ask you to read them out loud to the group or anything like that. So you can sort them in all honesty and they will never be tracked back to your name.

**Interviewer:** And then if you wouldn't mind putting them together for me with the little paperclip, I'll come around and pick them up from everybody.

**Interviewer:** OK, so we're ready. So what about -- "bought it myself at a gas station." How many people ever while you were underage bought cigarettes yourself at a gas station? Almost everybody, all but one.

How about at a convenience store? OK. Is that how you would usually get cigarettes underage, is just buy them yourself?

**Answer:** It's how I would.

Just go in and ask for cigarettes . . . still give them to you.

There's like always a place.

If they ask -- sorry I just forgot my ID.

**Interviewer:** It's really important to speak just one at a time too. So it was easy to buy them yourself is what you're saying?

**Answer:** I'd usually go in and try and if they said no, I'd run out and grab a friend or just ask somebody who was standing there.

That's what I would do.

Typically it was like the stores that had tons of signs that say "no-one under 21" all those signs, the more signs, the easier it is to buy something there.

**Interviewer:** Oh really?

**Answer:** Yeah, because those are the places that have got tons of warnings, so they keep putting up more signs. Yes, there was like one place that we had where there was tons of signs and he had gotten maybe five or six warnings, fines, all kinds of stuff and just didn't really care.

I'd just wait until there was nobody in there and they usually do it, usually, one out of three times.

**Interviewer:** How many people would kind of time your purchase and wait until the register clears out or maybe there's a line, is it better to have a clear register and make it fast or is it better where there's a line and there's pressure on them to keep going fast?

**Answer:** I think it's worse when there's people in line.

Kind of like they're being watched.

So that's why I said, if they're not being watched, then....

**Interviewer:** And are there clerk factors? Young clerk, old clerk?

**Answer:** I feel like it's just where, I don't know. A lot of people from other countries they don't really care as much.

I feel like older cares less too. I feel younger people just don't want to get in trouble, older people kind of know that they're not going to get . . .

Usually once I walk into the store I'm going to ask either way. I never like turned around because I didn't like the look of the clerk.

**Interviewer:** Really? OK. Has anybody ever gone in a store and then turned around because it just didn't seem like it was going to work?

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** OK, couple yes, couple no's.

**Answer:** Yeah, because there's no repercussions for the people just asking, I mean the worst they can say is no. It's not like you're going to get fined for asking.

**Interviewer:** And if they do say no, what do you say? What do you do?

**Answer:** Walk away.

Just say have a good day.

Go to the next store.

**Interviewer:** What was that?

**Answer:** I say "thanks anyways," and just walk away.

**Interviewer:** Oh, OK, that's polite. What about at Target or Walmart?

**Answer:** No.

**Interviewer:** Does it have to...

**Answer:** Too big of a store.

I feel like any big chain store won't sell you, like 7-Eleven or anything they won't.

**Interviewer:** Oh not even 7-Eleven?

**Answer:** They get their most uptight person to work at the specific register they sell cigarettes at.

Unless you know somebody, that's like the only way. Sometimes you know people and...

Safeway.

-- Yeah like Safeway, all those places, you know somebody and they just don't really care, they not going to card.

**Interviewer:** Does anybody else... Have you ever had a friend who worked at a convenience store or a market or somewhere, where you could just go when they were working?

**Answer:** Safeway, that's a little bit bigger, but yes.

**Interviewer:** Safeway.

**Answer:** 7-Eleven.

**Interviewer:** 7-Eleven, OK. What about getting a friend of family member to buy them for you?

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Is like the easiest? So what's...

**Answer:** A friend.

**Interviewer:** A friend. OK. So let's talk about family member first. Has anybody gotten a family member? Yeah, you mentioned. And you too. A couple, oh, a lot actually. OK. So is it mostly, other than you, is it mostly siblings, brothers, sister, as opposed to parents, or parents too?

**Answer:** Older brother.

**Interviewer:** Older brother.

**Answer:** Yeah.

I hate to say it, my Grandma.

**Interviewer:** Your Grandma? OK.

**Answer:** Yeah, when I was younger I just couldn't buy them and she knew I smoked them, I was honest, so she bought them for me. She kind of knew I wasn't going to stop so...

**Interviewer:** Anybody else?

**Answer:** My cousin and my aunt.

**Interviewer:** And aunt is usually, I assume older than you at the time? OK.

**Answer:** My older siblings smoked, so they would buy for me out of compassion.

My Mom did it for me when I felt depressed.

**Interviewer:** Oh, really? OK. And what about friends?

**Answer:** Oh yeah.

Yeah.

They're not your friends if they're not going to do that for you.

**Interviewer:** So when you're younger at 15, 16 does it get easier? I assume as you get older you're more likely to have friends who are over 18, so is it harder at 15, 14, 16 to get a friend to do it for you, do you have to kind of wait until you're 17, 18 and then your friends are closer?

**Answer:** I did it for younger kids for cigarillos etc., because I looked older when I was 15 they thought I was 18.

Yeah, honestly once I turned 15 I'd just go into any store and buy it.

**Interviewer:** Really? OK.

**Answer:** Fake deep voice.

Easier for dudes, because you grow beards.

Yeah, some.

Yeah like I said some people it's easier, you just have facial hair and they just think you're older than you are at a certain age.

**Interviewer:** OK, so that's something I've heard before about growing beards. How many of the guys here have had beards partly or wholly in order to purchase cigarettes while underage?

**Answer:** Part of it.

**Interviewer:** OK, part of it.

**Answer:** This worked until I shaved it and then they started actually carding me when I was 18 and I'd never been carded.

I get carded more now than I did.

Yeah me too.

Yeah I feel like that is true. I never got carded when I was underage, but now that I'm overage and just trying to buy something, I get carded all the time and I'm like...

Thank you. You thought I was older when I was younger, but you think I'm younger when I'm older. I don't... That's how it works though.

**Interviewer:** What about borrowing from a sibling? So the difference is having them go and purchase them for you where you give them the money for it, versus just bumming them from people. Were cigarettes easy to come by when you were underage, just by borrowing, bumming, asking people?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Have you ever gotten cigarettes from a friend?

**Answer:** Yes, yes, that's how I got most of my cigarettes. I would have a friend go and buy it for me.

**Interviewer:** So how many of you would rely on someone else to buy them for you, as opposed to buying them yourself?

**Answer:** Couple, OK, pretty good sprinkling. What about approaching a stranger and asking them to buy cigarettes?

**Answer:** Never.

I didn't do that.

**Interviewer:** OK, so couple yes's.

**Answer:** Just too weird.

**Interviewer:** So the yes's how did you pick the stranger?

**Answer:** When we were in school we played this game called "hey Mister," where we just walked up to some random person and say, "Hey Mister, can you go buy this and this from the gas station over there for us?"

Somebody's going to do it...

Like someone's going to do it, no-one cares about us, they'll just do it.

**Interviewer:** So it sounds like it was a group pf people, not just you going to do it as a way to get cigarettes, but it was more like a game where it was a group of people.

**Answer:** I mean for us it was like that.

I did it solo, when I was really desperate. It wasn't like totally random, I wouldn't just cold-call people on the street, but if I was talking with someone, I'd be like -- hey can you buy me a pack of cigarettes?

**Interviewer:** Aha.

**Answer:** And I think that always worked.

I feel like a lot of people did that. People come up to me all the time asking me, people that forget their ID because now they're carding like everybody, even people who are 40, 50. I get 50 year olds coming up to me, like -- hey can you buy me cigarettes, at the store, which is really weird.

When I was 13 or 14 a few friends and I would hang out behind the gas station, just one in the neighborhood, and we'd just kind of take turns going up and asking somebody and about every cycle through all of us somebody would get it.

**Interviewer:** What about taking them from a parent or other adult? First of all, do you kind of think that's fair game if your parent's a smoker and you're a teenager, if you kind of sneak a cigarette out of their pack is that? How do you feel?

**Answer:** I mean you could steal them, if you can finesse them you deserve it. If they don't realize it, smoke it.

**Interviewer:** Oh and fake ID, what about using a fake ID?

**Answer:** Nah.

What if it was a real ID, but it wasn't you.

People don't really do that for cigarettes, unless they already have it for alcohol, it's not really a thing for cigarettes.

Like a friend once or twice for me, but it was way more often people were asking to buy alcohol.

You can get cigarettes quite easily, don't have to have a fake ID for that.

I've lost my real ID and used my fake ID to buy cigarettes, but not ever intentionally.

**Interviewer:** So it sounds like it's basically not necessary?

**Answer:** No.

**Interviewer:** So when you are thinking about buying cigarettes as an underage person, how do you pick the retailer? Is it just convenience to your house, do you go to the same place over and over again?

**Answer:** Arabs.

Yes. I was going to say, I was holding it, I don't want to say... [inaudible]

I think that is a statistic, like that's just real.

They just came to this country to get their money and go. . .That's all they want to do.

They'd typically be the ones who own their own smoke shops.

Yeah a lot of them do.

So and it's pretty easy, they get as much money as they can get. I mean they just act stupid, yeah they just act stupid whenever they get fined or warnings, they just act stupid and they're just like -- oh I didn't know, he showed me something. There's always one smoke shop you know about that's like...

**Interviewer:** OK, does everybody agree...

**Answer:** It's not always immigrants. Definitely not always immigrants though...

No, no, no, it's just a lot.

Good percentage of the time.

You could find a crack head cracker somewhere.

Usually go store by store, like kids in the neighborhood know what corner store will sell you cigarettes, doesn't matter who's running it. There's always like one or two stores I guess in every area that just have a reputation of selling to kids, and that's how you know where to get them.

But overall it's the actual tobacco stores I would say, more than the gas stations.

Yes.

**Interviewer:** OK, so tobacco stores, small tobacco stores.

**Answer:** Gas station's not going to get that much more money by selling to kids, because that's not really what they do. But like a tobacco store when they sell to kids it's a lot of people, especially like the one where we live, they'll sell to 13 year olds. They have no limits. If you come in there and you want cigarettes, they'll sell to you.

**Interviewer:** Does it need to be close to your house or on the way to school or do you have to go, will you go way out of your way if you know there's a store farther away?

**Answer:** I mean you don't have to get that desperate, usually.

**Interviewer:** OK, so they're abundant here in Annapolis, you don't really have to go across town to try and find a place to buy cigarettes?

**Answer:** You can buy cigarettes off somebody.

People sell cigarettes on Facebook.

From other states yes.

Because they bring them in with no tax and they make a little bit per pack.

**Interviewer:** Oh right yeah.

[chatter]

**Answer:** Some people buy them off the Native American places or whatever and they're even cheaper, they're like $20 a carton. Not even kidding. $20 a carton.

Super good reason...

**Interviewer:** So was it one retailer that you went to over and over again, or did you move around to different ones?

**Answer:** I generally went to the same . . . that I just took my friend to, he was like 18 and I was like -- get me this pack and he was like OK.

I've build a relationship doing that, they just trust you and then just don't even think about it.

I had two places that wouldn't card me that within walking distance of my place and I just went there.

It's like eventually they just like... Even if you got past them once, eventually they just assumed that they carded you before and they're just like, oh whatever.

In all honesty most places out here just do not card you. It's really weird. I don't know if any questions are going to pertain to this but part-time I lived up in the city in Baltimore with my mother and part-time here and it seems like the weirdest thing. It seems like in the city it was a lot more often that they would card you, but like out here you could just go to any place out in the sticks and they just don't care.

It's because of how often a patrol car goes by.

Yeah.

If you're white in the city going in, they think you're a cop trying to card them.

**Interviewer:** So what about... And just have a couple more questions about buying it. So day of the week. Was there a day of the week or time of the day that was better or worse?

**Answer:** In between rush hours.

Yeah that's the best time.

Very late at time.

**Interviewer:** When it's kind of quiet in the store, not a lot of people?

And were you usually alone or part of a group?

**Answer:** Alone.

**Interviewer:** Is it better to be alone?

**Answer:** Yes.

It's like 50/50 for me.

I've had it before where I'll go in with my friend to buy, he's going to buy the cigarettes and I go in to buy a Pepsi or whatever and then they're like -- hey you can't do that, because unless he's not a minor then I can't sell you the cigarettes. So we would formulate a plan where he'd go and get the cigarettes and then I'd go in and get whatever else I needed.

**Interviewer:** Has anybody ever bought cigarettes for someone else who's underage?

**Answer:** Yeah.

Yeah.

I don't know about cigarettes, but cigarillos, lot of kids where I worked were way into them.

**Interviewer:** Well that's a perfect segue in a way to the next exercise, the cards that you have. And again, feel free to get a piece of pizza, it's OK. if it gets the cards a little greasy, it's not going to matter a bit.

If you go through the cards. What we're asking with this -- each one has a picture and we're really looking kind of what the slang words are for them, that kids use to describe that object. And if you have any questions about what the picture actually is of, feel free to ask, because sometimes it can be a little hard.

**Answer:** I feel like a snitch.

We're all snitches right now.

**Interviewer:** It's... We just want to learn the lingo.

[chatter]

**Interviewer:** So is everybody done with their cards? OK. So what do you call the cigarettes. So first of all, what are the words that you know of, that kids call cigarettes?

**Answer:** Loosie.

Fugs.

**Interviewer:** OK, that was Loosie? Loosies. OK and what was the other one?

**Answer:** Thugs.

**Interviewer:** Thugs?

**Answer:** Fugs.

**Interviewer:** Fugs. F-U-G-S.

**Answer:** Yes.

Or fug for one.

Fags.

**Interviewer:** Oh right, I've heard fags, but fugs.

**Answer:** Dart.

**Interviewer:** Dart?

**Answer:** Yeah, I'm smoking on a fat dart, yeah.

**Interviewer:** Did I hear a couple people kind of nod in agreement to dart?

**Answer:** I forgot about dart.

**Interviewer:** How many of you heard it called it called dart. But forgot about it means you kind of heard it at one point.

Anything else?

**Answer:** Stogies.

**Interviewer:** Stogies. For cigarettes, right? OK.

**Answer:** Smokes.

People say this as a joke but bigarettes.

**Interviewer:** Bigarettes? OK. What about cigars?

**Answer:** Cigars. Also stogies.

Yeah, stogies as well.

**Interviewer:** Stogies. OK.

**Answer:** Fatty.

**Interviewer:** Fatty, OK.

**Answer:** [unintelligible]

**Interviewer:** What about this one?

**Answer:** I don't know what that is.

Black cigarette.

**Interviewer:** A black cigarette.

**Answer:** That's what I would have called it.

**Interviewer:** OK, it's not black.

**Answer:** It's not regular cigarette though.

**Interviewer:** OK, yeah, it's a cigarillo.

**Answer:** I've never seen it.

**Interviewer:** How many of you ever smoked a cigarillo when you were under age?

**Answer:** That looked like that?

Like that?

**Interviewer:** No any cigarillo.

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** OK and what did they look like?

**Answer:** Not like that.

Like the other one.

The plastic ticket at the end.

With the black and mild.

Or the one that didn't have the tip on it.

**Interviewer:** OK and that's why you call it those other names that have to do with it being black, because usually they are black?

**Answer:** Yeah.

The inside yeah.

**Interviewer:** What about these? These have a tip.

**Answer:** Blacks.

**Interviewer:** Those are the blacks?

**Answer:** Black and mild.

**Interviewer:** Black mild.

**Answer:** No matter what brand those are people call those Black and Mild.

Black and Mild's the brand.

**Interviewer:** OK and has anybody here ever smoked Beedis when they were underage? There's one, yes. As an adult, have you ever as an adult? OK, just one.

Did anyone recognize what these are?

**Answer:** Cloves.

**Interviewer:** Awesome, OK. And what other names did you know them by?

**Answer:** Shayane.

**Interviewer:** Shayane? Really.

**Answer:** I mean Shayane makes those.

**Interviewer:** Oh, OK.

**Answer:** I know them as Blacks because there is a brand that makes them called Black and they have different flavors.

**Interviewer:** What about this one?

**Answer:** Chaw, chew.

Dip.

**Interviewer:** Chaw, dip, chew.

**Answer:** Dirt.

**Interviewer:** Dirt?

**Answer:** Snuff.

Chew.

**Interviewer:** What about this?

**Answer:** Guts.

Mook.

**Interviewer:** Guts.

**Answer:** What did you say?

Mook.

**Interviewer:** How do you spell that?

**Answer:** M-O-O-K.

**Interviewer:** Or just tobacco.

**Interviewer:** Tobacco, yeah, OK. And I feel like I'm hearing from mostly male persons about... So what about... Because do girls have a different language? Do you use all these same words to describe them?

**Answer:** Like, I just smoke cigarettes.

Yeah.

**Interviewer:** OK and you two, just cigarettes and not... So you didn't really worry about what these things were called, because they weren't part of your life? Is that right?

**Answer:** I mean they were but I just called them cigarette. Like I didn't have to call them anything fancy.

Someone just said cigs.

Aha.

Yeah cigs.

**Interviewer:** What about?

**Answer:** Pipe.

**Interviewer:** And this one.

**Answer:** Hookah, water pipe.

**Interviewer:** Hookah, water pipe. Any other names for it? Did anyone smoke a hookah when they were under age? Pretty much everybody seems like. Did you do that in somebody's house, in private, did you go to a hookah bar, how did...?

**Answer:** Well Hookah Bar's ID a good bit.

**Interviewer:** OK and you can get in under 18?

**Answer:** In some of them. Like I said they do ID you a good little bit, because they're a tobacco bar, they know what they got there and know what to look for.

You have to sit in there, it's not like you're just buying something. Somebody can come in and their person's there so...

Can usually get in if you just went with a group of girls, they don't want like a bunch of 13 year old boys in there.

**Interviewer:** Aha, that's probably true too.

**Answer:** Bunch of 13 year old girls though.

That's completely different.

**Interviewer:** Among the girls here did you ever... Do you feel like it was easier for you to get cigarettes being female.

**Answer:** Yes possibly.

**Interviewer:** Possibly, OK.

**Answer:** I guarantee you it was.

People who like the girls, I used to work in a convenience store and the girls used to be like -- "please," like they'd try to make you feel all good. And you were just like, no sorry sucks. But I was, but other people probably not so much.

But because they're girls it's also easier for them to get a person that is above age as a dude to go get them. Because they do the same thing to somebody else and then they're like, oh yeah.

**Interviewer:** And do you think that's true? Do you guys agree with that? Because maybe it's easier for boys because they have guy friends who are...

**Answer:** Women definitely use their gender to...

I have seen...

[crosstalk]

[inaudible] . . . buy them in stores and stuff, but it was definitely probably easier for me to get them.

**Interviewer:** OK, so harder to get them in stores, but easier to get them from friends.

**Answer:** I have seen a girl trade her phone number for cigarettes from a smoke shop and she was like 15.

**Interviewer:** So what brands of cigarettes did you like?

**Answer:** Marlboros.

Also American Spirit.

**Interviewer:** OK, American Spirit. Any other brands that stand out, popular among your friends?

**Answer:** Camels.

Winstons.

**Interviewer:** Winstons.

**Answer:** Parliament.

**Interviewer:** Parliaments.

**Answer:** My friend liked Parliaments because you could chain smoke them.

**Interviewer:** OK. What is it about Parliaments that let you chain smoke? Anything?

**Answer:** They're light.

They burn really fast.

Yeah and they burn fast.

**Interviewer:** What about menthol cigarettes?

**Answer:** Newports.

Marlboro Menthol.

Black 100s.

**Interviewer:** How many people here smoked Menthol cigarettes regularly when they were underage?

**Answer:** I did, but I started smoking menthol for four years and then switched to Red, now I smoke Reds.

**Interviewer:** Is there anybody else who started with Menthol and then just kind of eased into regular?

**Answer:** Yes. . . . smoked menthols when I was underage.

**Interviewer:** So did you have a brand, like was that your brand that you always smoked or did you kind of... How did you sort of manage that preference? Was that all you smoked, the brand that you liked or did you kind take what you could get, but your favorite was...

**Answer:** Being underage usually money was also a factor, so usually what was on sale was a good deal what you chose from.

I always went Marlboro but I would like to try other things where if it was a lot of money I would get something cheaper, Pall Mall or something.

**Interviewer:** OK what are the reasons that you think you started to smoke in the beginning?

**Answer:** Boredom.

Bordom.

I didn't want to look like a loser.

I worked at a job where smoking was a good way to fill the time and I would just bum cigarettes from people, eventually I was like, hey give me a pack and then it just kind of went up from there.

Smoke break.

**Interviewer:** Yes, smoke breaks.

**Answer:** It was definitely a friend thing, like hanging out every day, friend's basement, everyone's smoking, like might as well.

I smoked when I was drunk at first.

**Interviewer:** What was that?

**Answer:** I smoked when I was drunk at first.

**Interviewer:** So alcohol, how many people kind of mixed cigarettes and alcohol together?

**Answer:** [crosstalk]

If you have a beer you got to have a cigarette, it's like code.

**Interviewer:** At what point did you start to get your own cigarettes? So you mentioned, you started out bumming cigarettes and then eventually you were smoking enough of them that it was worth it to get a pack. When you were underage did you typically buy packs or did you just buy singles?

**Answer:** Cartons.

**Interviewer:** Cartons? OK. And did you start to say something too?

**Answer:** I said that I bought packs.

Singles in most states which are loosies are considered illegal to sell, you can't sell them individually. Like in North . . . they will sell them at some of the actual tobacco stores like 50 cents apiece and stuff like that, but it's actually illegal to do.

**Interviewer:** And here in Maryland, is that legal?

**Answer:** I've never seen anybody do that.

I haven't found it.

Convenience store close to me got shut down because of it.

**Answer:** Oh really?

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**Answer:** That's so weird, I didn't know that.

**Interviewer:** About how old were you when you started buying your own? And where did you get the money? Did you have a job or was that... How did you kind of manage that?

**Answer:** Holiday money.

**Interviewer:** Yeah OK.

**Answer:** Focus group money.

I had a job and I started smoking because of the job, at the job and the money I got from that I had someone buy cigarettes for me.

I worked at 16, so I had money and I could buy cigarettes. it wasn't a problem.

I worked in the restaurant industry, I always had extra tips on me and so I'd just walk across the street to the gas station and buy a pack.

**Interviewer:** So was money an issue, like if the price of cigarettes went up do you think you would have smoked less or would it just not be a problem?

**Answer:** It's a problem, I don't think it actually would disincentivize me enough to not buy them though.

Yeah.

Where I was working was at Annapolis Mall, literally right down there at the movie theater and there was a little mini mart there and it was like $9 a pack but I was like screw it here's $10 get me a pack.

I'd think it would just piss you off more than anything.

I didn't pack so often because I'm kind of cheap, but I usually had them on me, but I had them last, because I always pretended like I didn't have any and I'd bum from people, I'm that asshole. Pardon my language.

You're the one we all hate.

**Interviewer:** So how did your strategies change as you got older? Like did they at all, it sounds like for the most part you just bought cigarettes at a store when you were underage -- did any of that change when you got older, when you were over 18?

**Answer:** Over 18?

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Answer:** When you're over 18, you don't got to worry, you can just go. You don't have to worry about doing these little tiny places, you can go to Walmart, 7-Eleven -- if they sell cigarettes, you can go there.

**Interviewer:** And does everybody here still smoke?

**Answer:** Yeah.

No.

**Interviewer:** Who's quit smoking, because I heard a couple of no's. So, one, two, three, four people.

**Answer:** Mostly.

Why do you all do that? What's the secret, you all tell me please?

I need to know.

I quit. I was strictly vaping for a while, but then one day I was like, I'll have a cigarette and then [snaps fingers] -- back on.

[inaudible] . . . vaped though, but it's like it's not the same.

Thank you.

I get the highest nicotine, it's just not the same. I've smoked that for 20 minutes and I'll still want a cigarette.

The difference between the two doesn't really matter to me, it's just like keeping up with the maintenance for like the coils and you've got to do the cleaning and...

That coil is $30, it's ridiculous.

When I vaped I used an RDA...

You had to get an actual wire and everything.

-- I had to drip...

So much maintenance.

Wire, cotton everything, that's a lot.

It piled up.

I quit because money, asthma. I kind of beat my asthma when I was younger, but after a couple of years it just kind of came back from it.

**Interviewer:** Hang on just one second...

**Answer:** I did not feel very good. I'm finally getting my breathing back, yeah.

Same with me I got asthma when I was around 18 or 19.

[inaudible] . . . started coughing up blood from Newports.

Because of the fiberglass, Newports have fiberglass in it, yeah.

Yeah Black and Milds have cardboard in them.

**Interviewer:** So how many of you have felt health effects from smoking? Basically . . . [inaudible crosstalk]

**Answer:** I couldn't run down the hallway without being out of breath, seriously.

I couldn't walk up the stairs without passing out pretty much.

I took the elevator.

[laughter]

I even dated a girl that smoked more than me when I was 16, she . . .

**Interviewer:** So why did you keep smoking? Once you started. Well let's start with that, how long after you started smoking did you start to feel worse.

**Answer:** Honestly, it took me a while. Because I played high school soccer. So while you're playing soccer and smoking, you know, you're keeping it so it doesn't... But then you graduate and you're like -- oh my god, all of a sudden, like I feel terrible.

**Interviewer:** OK. So kind of after high school you started to feel it.

**Answer:** One to three years maybe.

Yep.

Definitely.

It takes a while to start feeling the effects.

It took about a year. But I think I smoked for like a total of two and a half to three years. But it started... Started to feel like at a year, but that was when it was really noticeable, but it was slow from then on.

**Interviewer:** Were there any other downsides to smoking? Besides the health risks?

**Answer:** Money.

People thinking that you're gross.

Yeah.

Kiss girls that don't smoke.

Like an ashtray.

Especially if your parents don't smoke and you get caught for that.

I mean like when you're doing it the taste isn't the focus, but when you kiss someone and you taste it, that's like, that feels dirty to me.

Especially when . . . smoking regularly. Really gross.

**Interviewer:** So hang on a second. Hold that thought in the back corner, OK, until they finish, and then tell the rest of us what it is that you're going to say. So I'm sorry...

What were you going to say?

Because it distracts me, because I can't listen to two conversations at the same time.

**Answer:** I was saying that I didn't get caught until I was 18, and then at that point I was like -- I'm 18, I can smoke. My mom wasn't happy with it, but she was like, whatever...

**Interviewer:** So for how many of you was like, the riskiest part of smoking getting caught by your parents?

What was the worst that could happen?

**Answer:** I got kicked out of class for smelling like cigarette smoke in high school.

Yeah. Dropping my cigarettes out of my pocket in the halls. A lighter. Right in front of the administrators.

**Interviewer:** And what happened?

**Answer:** You would just get taken down to the office; you would get suspended, or an in-class suspension, or like two days.

The worst part is they take away the pack.

Yeah, that's the worst part.

Honestly, high school, they didn't care. We smoked in the parking lot. And they'd have the signs all over the campus saying no smoking. But we smoke in the parking lot and they'd have the deputy officers or something driving around and everything. They don't say anything.

Those alarms. They go off so often.

In the bathroom.

-- all the time. They were dumb. They kept going in there.

We would take a sock and put it over it.

[laughter]

**Interviewer:** In high school. So you smoked sometimes in the bathroom...

**Answer:** Always.

**Interviewer:** OK. Where else would you go to smoke a cigarette?

**Answer:** I drove around on my lunch break.

Behind the portable.

Yeah, we had . . . behind the school in the woods. There was this huge clearing just like 100 feet wide, a perfect square, and we would just go there and hang out and smoke weed, cigarettes, anything.

The tennis courts.

**Interviewer:** So where did you learn that smoking was bad for you?

**Answer:** Health class.

TV.

Kindergarten.

You start tripping.

**Interviewer:** So you've heard those messages from an early age.

**Answer:** I think everybody kind of knows that it's bad for you, but it's just like anything else, like, eating pizza is bad for you. And it's just a level of like...

Drinking out of a water bottle is bad for you.

You know, everything is kind of bad for you. And it's just a matter of... Yeah, you see all the things people -- you don't think you're going to get to that point...

It won't happen to me.

I'm going to do it in moderation, etc. and then you get more comfortable with it and you do it more and more. That was the case with me.

Because you don't see the effects until they are already there.

Yeah.

You start hearing it. You start hearing it in your breathing. You'll start hearing a little whine when you inhale. Like all the way. Start coughing and stuff regularly in the morning.

**Interviewer:** And what would have stopped you from smoking? Even just made you cut down on the amount that you smoked? Was there anything do you think?

**Answer:** My dad caught me. And he was like -- that's going to kill you. And he's like -- and if this isn't going to kill you, I'm going to make you want to kill yourself until you stop. He's like...

And than you vape.

My siblings were already quitting smoking by the time I started. They were older. So I feel like I should have seen reasons not to smoke, and even that didn't... I saw how shitty it was for them trying to quit, and even that wasn't...

**Interviewer:** How many of you saw... Because a couple people, a lot of people mentioned an older sibling or friends, older friends who smoke. How many of you saw them when you were underage, just as you were starting? How many of you saw them trying to quit? And either didn't care? Or...

**Answer:** I saw my aunt who'd quit smoking and she was like 50 something. She'd been smoking since she was like 14. And like for an entire week it was like, if you talked to her it was like dealing with a pissy alligator. So... But then I was... Oh, I'm going to keep smoking. And I did.

I'm thinking about smoking right now. What time is this session over? [laughs] I didn't think this through.

**Interviewer:** So what are the other downsides to smoking. So there's the health impact, that takes a while to sink in. But what about early on? Were there any downsides? When you were first starting? What were? Was there a downside?

**Answer:** All your clothes smell like cigarettes. Like everything. Car, and...

When I pull out old things, I still smell the cigarettes on them. Even it's been like two and a half years.

Your hair smells like cigarettes. Everybody is worried. Oh man I'm going to smell like smoke.

Your teeth are yellow all the time.

**Interviewer:** And... OK. I think that's all the questions I have for you today.

**Answer:** Cigarette break.

**Interviewer:** So we will go around. You will initial out. And thank you so much for coming too. I'd have to tell you, you've been a great group. Really forthcoming and it's been really helpful. Thank you so much.

## Baltimore

**Interviewer:** So, in order to get to know each other a little bit before we actually start the actual group, what I'd like to do is just go around the table and introduce yourself by your first name, just your first name and where you got your first cigarette. What the circumstances were when you tried smoking for the first time? So, is it okay if we start with you?

**Answer:** Sure, my name is XXX, I got my first cigarette when I was 12. I just bought it, I bought a pack, from the gas station.

My name is XXX I got my first cigarette when I was 15. My best friend gave it to me.

My name is XXX. I smoked my first cigarette when I was 16 and I also got it from my best friend.

My name is XXX and I think I got my first cigarette, was from my friend.

Okay, my name is XXX, I actually got my first cigarette from my older brother. I bribed him and he gave me one. I was 16 when I had it. That’s how it kind of happened.

My name is XXX, and I got my first cigarette when I was like 13. Me and my friends took the tobacco out of his dad’s box and actually rolled one.

**Interviewer:** Okay, so first thing we're going to do is sort the cards in front of you, there’s two sets of cards. The first one is the one with the words on it. Oh, I also forgot, the disclosure that’s is in front of you. That is something just for your information. You can leave it, you can take it with you if you like. You don’t need to sign it and give it back. So, actually one other thing, if you could turn your name placard this way, so I can see it, that would also be great. So, the cards, what happens with these is if you could sort these into three piles and three piles are things that you did when you were under 18 in high school. Things that you didn't necessarily do but you would’ve done if the situation. And then the third pile is the things that you would never do when you were in high school. So, it is things you did, would have done, would never do.

[chatter as participants sort cards]

The first card, oh. I should’ve told you earlier, we aren’t going to discuss how you sorted your piles. So that’s kind of private. But I do want to ask you generally, how many of you have bought a cigarette at a gas station when you were under age? Okay, all but two. And what about the convenience store? Okay, few less. And what about at Target or Walmart? And so how did you usually get cigarettes when you were under 18?

**Answer:** Corner store

The corner store, yeah.

**Interviewer:** The corner stores? Okay, gas station?

**Answer:** I usually got them form friends

Gas station

**Interviewer:** The gas station, and how about you?

**Answer:** Gas station

**Interviewer:** Okay, what about getting a friend or family member to buy them for you?

**Answer:** I had someone.

**Interviewer:** Ok yeah. Everyone is kind of nodding.

**Answer:** I would try not to.

**Interviewer:** Try not to, how come?

**Answer:** It’s not just something I like, I would ask my sister for it, not a family member.

For me when I was you younger, I looked older, so I would just kind of go and buy them.

[unintelligible]

**Interviewer:** Okay. What about approaching a stranger and asking them to buy a cigarette, has anybody ever gone up to a stranger in the parking lot, or…?

**Answer:** Yeah, like last resort, yeah

**Interviewer:** A last resort, okay. And how did that work?

**Answer:** I mean, you get some nerves. But basically if you’re persistent, someone’s going to buy you cigarettes.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and what about buying them in the store? Whether it’s a gas station or a convenience store. First of all, how do you kind of pick the store? What kind of store would you go to?

**Answer:** Location, like the corner store. I would go to the corner store rather than Wal-Mart.

I wouldn’t go to Wawa or something like that.

**Interviewer:** You wouldn’t go to a Wawa? Why not?

**Answer:** They would check IDs for you.

[unintelligible]

They’re more official.

**Interviewer:** They’re more official? So, that means they are more likely, I take it, to check ID’s?

So, smaller kind of like off-brand or not-chain, mom and pop store?

**Answer:** Yeah

**Interviewer:** Okay. And how do you know that?

**Answer:** What do you mean?

**Interviewer:** Like how do you know it's better to go to a small store than to a Wawa?

**Answer:** Well, they're more likely to want your business to not really care about your age because either way it's money in their pocket or in their dad's pocket or whoever they're working for. Usually they’re all tied together at the smaller stores.

It’s more about single cigarettes versus whole packs.

**Interviewer:** Okay, so that brings up a whole another question. So, did you buy packs? The rest of you when you were under 18?

**Answer:** I bought both

Mostly packs, I mean, if you can’t see someone smoking and give a dollar for a cigarette.

I’ve never really seen single cigarettes be sold. Maybe from someone outside the store.

Some stores will sell you single cigarettes.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and did you have a sense that was illegal or legal, or did it matter?

**Answer:** It didn’t really matter because everybody else was buying their cigarettes.

**Interviewer:** Okay. So, did you know like best locations, best stores to go to? And how did you find that out?

**Answer:** West Baltimore [laughter]

Like it’s the area, the type of store in the area, where the store is.

Like if there are bars on the windows chances are they aren’t going to check your ID.

**Interviewer:** And I think you mentioned giving someone a dollar for a cigarette?

**Answer:** Yeah

**Interviewer:** Just like a friend or someone who was pulling out a pack of cigarettes?

**Answer:** Depends on how desperate you are. Depends on how comfortable you are or not comfortable.

[unintelligible]

**Interviewer:** Okay, and how else, what other ways would there be, imagine if you were 18, maybe you didn’t have the money or didn’t have the transportation to get to the corner store to get a pack of cigarettes. How else might you get cigarettes?

**Answer:** A friend of mine had a fake ID. I’d just pay him extra and he’d go and get them from this other stores.

**Interviewer:** So a friend with a fake ID opposed to your own fake ID?

**Answer:** Yeah I didn’t want to do it, so I was like, yeah you can go ahead and do it.

[laughter]

Yeah, I feel a lot of people just get you cigarettes. Like the dude at my work, he said he had this young guy come up to him and ask him, and he gave him one. And the guy was like, can I get two? So he gave them two. But like, people are pretty generous.

Yeah, I agree with that too. A lot of times people won’t make you pay. You just ask them for one to bum.

**Interviewer:** Okay, so did anyone have their own fake ID?

**Answer:** Not for buying cigarettes.

**Interviewer:** Okay. So, fake IDs, is that like overkill, because you don’t really need it? Why is that?

**Answer:** Isn’t important getting caught up with a fake ID for cigarettes.

You get cigarette so easily, like everybody always has cigarettes. And you only have to be 18 so it’s not [unintelligible] like 21.

**Interviewer:** So if you had a fake ID, you wouldn’t use it to buy cigarettes?

**Answer:** You might.

**Interviewer:** It was more risky?

**Answer:** Like when you have a fake ID and you’re using it to buy alcohol, you may only use it once a month, or even less, depending on how much you drink. But with cigarettes, you’re going to be using it a lot more and it’s not really worth it.

**Interviewer:** And so, what are the consequences? Like if you get caught, what’s the worst that can happen when you were buying cigarettes underage?

**Answer:** I got caught at school, and he told me “put it out” [chuckles] and that’s pretty much it.

I got like grounded by my mom.

[unintelligible]

My mom basically scoured my room for cigarettes because I smelled like it. She took all of them away from me pretty much.

I feel like.. I’ve never had anyone get mad at me. But I feel like in a store or something. They’re not going to call the cops. That’s just not something they’re going to do. They usually just don’t care.

Yeah, I didn’t really have big problems with getting caught with cigarettes. In school, one time like smoking outside, when the resource officer was leaving and saw all of us, we ran, it was pretty much only reason that we got into trouble.

**Interviewer:** For running more for smoking?

**Answer:** Yeah. We ran through the halls and throw them in trash cans and they went and viewed the cameras. They came in and smacked them down on the desk.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and what happened as a result?

**Answer:** I got suspended.

But I don’t anyone that like get in trouble with police officers for trying to buy cigarettes.

**Interviewer:** So, what’s the difference between buying at a tobacco store? Has anybody ever bought cigarettes at a tobacco store?

**Answer:** Not until I was over 18.

**Interviewer:** Not till you were over 18? Okay, anybody else?

**Answer:** I feel like it was way easier at a tobacco store.

**Interviewer:** Okay, why do you think that is?

**Answer:** I don’t know particularly, I just felt like they would always do it because that was all they did and they will get a lot more business doing that then selling to normal people. Certain stores will only sell to normal people and certain stores will sell underage. So it was way easier. And they have a bigger selection of stuff.

Most of the times, when you go into like tobacco stores, I find that they like ask me for ID. Like even now, like I’ll into a tobacco store and they still ask to see my ID.

Yeah, they will ask for ID before you even try to buy anything.

**Interviewer:** Did you go to the same place over and over again or were they different?

**Answer:** Once you get like one pack from somewhere, like you know pretty much you can get form them anytime.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and do you think that’s because they recognize you, you’re a regular customer, or they know you? Why is that?

**Answer:** Pretty much, yeah.

They assume, if you’re in there, they assume that you’ve been verified.

My trick would be, if I was going in and I didn’t have cigarettes, I’d try to make myself look as old as possible. I’d make sure they see me get out of my car, make sure they see the pack in my pocket, like stuff like that.

**Interviewer:** And was there anything about the clerk that made it easy or hard? Have you ever walked into a store, seen the clerk and thought “no, it’s not a good idea with this particular person?

**Answer:** Pretty much any white, older gentleman.

Interviewer: Okay, to be avoided?

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** And is that just funny, or is that your MO too?

**Answer:** That’s true.

I never had that problem.

**Interviewer:** Really?

**Answer:** I look older. I was fortunate growing up. So. I had a mustache and all that, so.

Yeah.

**Interviewer:** And was it close to home? Did you have to travel to get it? Or just

**Answer:** Right next to the school

**Interviewer:** Okay, and did the other high school students kind of know that that was the place where you got to buy cigarettes?

**Answer:** Everybody knew.

**Interviewer:** Okay, have you ever been stopped by a clerk who said no I’m not going to sell you cigarettes?

**Answer:** No.

[unintelligible]. I knew I could certainly get them.

**Interviewer:** Okay, anybody else?

**Answer:** Pretty much any time someone would ask me for my ID I would tell them I left it in my car.

**Interviewer:** And how about you?

**Answer:** Yeah, I’ve been stopped a couple times. I feel like they kind of know. Like you’ll make up some excuse about not having your ID. But everybody doesn’t have their ID, you know? They kind of know, but they don’t really care. They don’t get mad.

**Interviewer:** So you just basically leave?

**Answer:** Yeah

Yeah. Yeah.

They don’t really have a reaction.

As long as you don’t get mad and start arguing with them about it.

[another member enters]

**Interviewer:** So, we were just kind of discussing and there is a disclosure sheet there in front of you with information about the group, you don’t need to sign it or anything like that. Okay, so basically the focus group is about buying cigarettes and smoking as an underage, under 18, you were all in high school, so that’s kind of the topic of the group. Just so you know, and so was there anything that would’ve discouraged you from buying cigarettes at a corner store, if the clerk did stop and say “no, you shouldn’t be doing this or I’m going to tell your mother or I’m going to report you? Was there anything that you think would’ve impacted your decision to buy cigarettes?

**Answer:** If he said no, I’m sorry, and we go to another place

I go to a corner store, instead of a convenience store. Like in a corner store, nobody cares.

If they had gotten mad, I’m not sure that would have affected me. It’s not really their decision. Maybe it’s because they want to look out for you, but they’re not going to do anything like that.

The extent of the reaction is just not to sell me cigarettes.

**Interviewer:** Okay. And by the way, the camera makes this noise, I think it’s like staying awake. It’s not taking pictures, but the shutter, it makes a strange noise. And also, in the introduction I should explain to you we are skyping so that people can watch but we’re not video recording, we are audio recording just for our notes. Okay, so was there a time of the day that was better than other times to buy cigarettes?

**Answer:** I’ll say while during school time, if you were under 18 and be in school.

Also, when it’s not really busy. Not in the afternoon, anytime it’s not really busy for that store, wherever it is. Then they’re not selling you cigarettes when everyone is around.

**Interviewer:** Okay, so to buy cigarettes during school hours, does that mean you cut school to be able to go?

**Answer:** Yeah, we even come right back

**Interviewer:** Oh. Really?

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Okay. What, like the day of the week, is there are weekend’s good, are weekend’s bad?

**Answer:** Usually not good

**Interviewer:** Okay, and it sounds like I’m getting the impression that it was so easy that you didn’t really think about, like it didn’t matter very much whether it was a Saturday or Wednesday, 2 o’clock or 4 o’clock, is that right?

**Answer:** Whenever my last cigarette runs out

**Interviewer:** Okay, what about you, when you were under 18 in high school, what was your, how did you get cigarettes?

**Answer:** Usually form my friend. From like his parents, usually his grandparents, he was a heavy smoker, so he always like, there’s cigars, so he always had them lying around, se he’s just like. We’d stash some of those.

**Interviewer:** Okay, so speaking of cigars, the other little pile cards that you have in front of you has pictures on it and what we are looking for is the words that kids use to describe, the first one is cigarettes, so if you could. I know their cigarettes, but the question is, what do high school kids call them? If you could write down all the kind of slang terminology that you know that refers to cigarettes, and go through the whole pile, and if you have any questions, ask.

[Participants writing on cards]

Tell me what words you know, what do you call cigarettes?

**Answer:** Loose ones

Fugs

Sticks

Dart

Smokes

**Interviewer:** Okay, what about cigars?

**Answer:** The word cigar? Cigar.

**Interviewer:** What did you say?

**Answer:** Doink

**Interviewer:** Okay, since you mention cigars, did you know of any other words?

**Answer:** No, just cigars. I’ve never heard of that other word. We just called them cigars.

I don’t really think kids are smoking cigars. There’s not that many words for them.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, I think you are the first one I heard smoking cigars at that age, anybody else?

[participants raising hands]

**Interviewer:** Oh there’s another one. Oh lots of people

**Answer:** On occasion.

I had a humidor. I had tons of cigars.

**Interviewer:** Okay. And this is, I think a little cigar?

**Answer:** I’ve never seen that.

Cigarillos.

I thought it was wet cigarettes.

**Interviewer:** Okay, what’s a wet cigarette?

**Answer:** Cigarette that’s gotten wet [chuckles] [laughter]

**Interviewer:** Okay, what about cigarillos?

**Answer:** Rillos

Dutch. That’s if the brand is Dutch.

Blacks.

**Interviewer:** And these are bidis. Anybody familiar with Bidis?

**Answer:** I thought it was a blunt

Yeah, I thought it was a blunt.

I thought it was a leaf.

**Interviewer:** A leaf? So, what’s a leaf?

**Answer:** It’s, if you get a backwater game leaf you call them leaves because they’re different than a cigarillo.

I would call them fronto leaf.

**Interviewer:** And then, I think these are the cloves. So what about clove cigarettes?

**Answer:** I call them trash

**Interviewer:** Trash?

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Is that just because you thought it looked like trash?

**Answer:** Nah, because if you smoke’m they taste like trash.

**Interviewer:** Cause you don’t smoke them?

**Answer:** I call them lips. [unintelligible]

**Interviewer:** And what kinds are the packets two? And what do you call them? And did anybody else have a name?

**Answer:** Capone’s

**Interviewer:** Okay, what about kreteks?

**Answer:** No.

**Interviewer:** OK. What about chewing tobacco?

**Answer:** Dip

Dirt.

I call it chew

**Interviewer:** Okay, and has anybody ever had it? One, two, just two people. And what about loose tobacco?

**Answer:** That’s just tobacco

**Interviewer:** Just tobacco, okay. Has anybody ever bought loose tobacco underage? To roll your own cigarettes or smoke it in a pipe?

**Answer:** No.

I feel like they would have ID’d you on that.

Yeah

Like, who’s going to go ask to roll their own tobacco?

**Interviewer:** Okay, and then what about pipe?

**Answer:** Pipe.

**Interviewer:** Anything? Okay, and hookah?

**Answer:** Hookah

Squid, that’s what I call it.

**Interviewer:** And is that something other people call it, or is that something you just made up?

**Answer:** I’m sure I just made it up.

**Interviewer:** So, what brands, how important to you were the brands that you smoked when you were in high school?

**Answer:** Very important

**Interviewer:** Okay, and everybody is kind of nodding, why is that important?

**Answer:** Camel Crush is a substitute for menthol. Anything else I don’t want it.

**Interviewer:** Because?

**Answer:** Because its gross. Like I feel like it’s the strongest cigarette you can get. Anything else I don’t want it. It’s just not a cigarette to me. Like a Maverick is just nasty.

**Interviewer:** Okay, anybody else?

**Answer:** When I was in high school, black and mild’s were my favorite thing to smoke.

**Interviewer:** OK. What did you like about those?

**Answer:** It looked fancy with the plastic tip. It was just amazing to me.

Newports.

I was the opposite. I would not smoke Newports because they have fiberglass in them. I knew people who smoked them and had issues with bleeding and stuff like that. Somebody here smokes Newports.

Yeah, that I do. They’re awesome.

**Interviewer:** What was your favorite?

**Answer:** I like Marlboro Lights personally.

**Interviewer:** What was it about Marlboro Lights that you like?

**Answer:** Smoother taste really.

**Interviewer:** What about you?

**Answer:** I smoked Santana, and you can only get them on the Indian reservation. They are like $23 a carton. Gotta save money.

**Interviewer:** So, $23 a carton is cheap?

**Answer:** Yeah, when you compare to $55-60 a carton

**Interviewer:** And what about you, did you have a favorite?

**Answer:** Well I would smoke whatever my Mom would have. [unintelligible]

**Interviewer:** Okay, so your favorite is what you could get basically, what was available? Okay, and what did you like about the brand or what get you into a particular brand?

**Answer:** I liked black and milds. [unintelligible] I didn’t really smoke much cigarettes, just cigars.

Cigarillos. They look like cigarettes, but they’re brown.

I feel like cigarillos too, the flavor.

**Interviewer:** Are you looking for the focus group?

**Answer:** Yes [laughter]

**Interviewer:** Yeah, we’re pretty hard to find. Please have a seat, if you don’t mind just have a seat a little closer to the back there.

[new member coming in]

So, we are kind of half way through the focus group, but still we are glad to have you. So just to let you know quickly, we are skyping the group, we are not video recording, so that if someone want to watch from a distance, but we are audio recording so we can take notes and then we destroy the tape at the end. So, a little disclosure at your place, so that kind of explains the details of the group, you can take that home with you, read it later if you like, if you don’t want to, you don’t have to. So, the last thing we were talking about, so the group is really about when you were in high school and under 18 smoking cigarettes

**Answer:** They make me feel dirty glam. I was totally dirty but glamorous, I was smoking on my way, so I went to [unintelligible] center and go straight down town and either be going to therapy or an after-school group. And Carver kind of felt like college. I know it’s very, it’s a public school, but there’s a prime there and my classes were accelerated. And on Monday, I had some friends who I think if I didn’t smoke we’d be in the same social circle and that was just how I make friends, like “hey, you got an extra cig? And they would like the company and they will look forward to me coming there on Monday after school or a Tuesday. I feel like therapy is the best. Right there, and I just smoke a cig and go.

**Interviewer:** Okay. And you brought a very interesting topic, how many of you felt like smoking cigarettes made you part of a particular social circle?

**Answer:** Yes

It was an ice breaker, it was totally an ice breaker for me. So, it depends geographically, because like here in Baltimore, you say “yo. Can I get a fug” and you’ve made a new stranger friend. In New York, that’s unheard of, like (1) they don’t call them fugs up there and (2) you know how bad our economy is? How dare you bum, how dare you beg. It’s not cool.

My friend’s from Brooklyn and she asks to bum cigarettes from me. And then when I gave her one she’s like Oh my God you’re so nice. Like she couldn’t believe I gave her a cigarette.

And then you got to be 21, and I just felt like after Mike Brown, you leave loose cigarette people alone. But you have to be 21 to get cigarettes. I was in Manhattan so I could find them for like $12. If I went to the Bronx, maybe I could find them for $7.

**Interviewer:** So here in Maryland, do you think at that age if someone was 21, would be harder when you were 15,16, 17 to get cigarettes?

**Answer:** Yeah.

Yeah, depending on how you look.

**Interviewer:** But you’re kind of shaking your head because that’s the small stores, you don’t think..?

**Answer:** [unintelligible]

It depends. Actually, the people I was bumming cigarettes from, when I really started smoking cigarettes after school, they were, I was a senior, junior, senior, they were freshman, sophomores and I don't know how they really get their hands on the cigarettes then but they had cartons. They had access to, if they wanted to play “hey mister” hey mister might actually comply. Where now, people just look at you funny, like if you trying to get a cigarette without ID, it depends on where you go, because I’ve been to a Mom & Pop store and they don’t card me now, they know who I am but the first time I went in there, if I didn’t have an ID, I wouldn’t have gone through. And those same people are not teenagers anymore but their parents help them with that habit, because they have other habits. You know, my parents would never fuel my habits.

**Interviewer:** Okay. So, what are the reasons you started to smoke?

**Answer:** Mine was a dare. They said I dare you to go buy some cigarettes. So I did. And we smoked them.

Peer pressure

**Interviewer:** Peer pressure? Okay, so you kind of wanted to hang out with the kids who were smoking and then felt peer pressure?

**Answer:** Peer pressure to give up their cigarette.

I had a friend who did stuff like that.

I have a couple sentimental stories from smoking cigarettes. My first time trying to puff one, I caught my sister. She had a cold and I was like, you have a cold why are you trying to smoke a cigarette? She was like if you be quiet, I’ll give you a hit. I had already been around a lot of people that smoked cigarettes, smoked marihuana. So, I’ve watched plenty of people smoke before, so I didn’t think to inhale it, I didn’t think to french it, I didn’t think like to take it through my nose, I just [whooo.] that’s always been a sexy image to me. And then wasn’t into it, I think the first time I tried to puff a cigarette again with my sister in the bathroom, it’s like kind of a rebellious thing for me, that’s what cigarettes were for me like, you doctors don’t know what you talking about, I tried it and I just coughed and wheezed hacked. And then I tried to smoke a black and mild on my friend’s 18th birthday, so I was like it’s a milestone, you get to be adult and make bad choices and no one can say anything because you are an adult. And I had smoked other things before so cigarette was just like nothing. I grew up around old people that smoked, I was allowed to drive around with this adult that smoked, and this adult happened to be something around ninety something years old, smokes cigarettes, a pack or more a day, ate chicken boxes all day. And I would say grandad, how are you eighty something years old and you’ve been smoking cigarettes since you’ve been 14, he said “they build them like me anymore”. And so for me it was a defiance thing. And it had anti-depressant effects. I have bipolar disorder so once I had my first meltdown to constitute me. I have these symptoms that I thought were gone but they're back and its known cigarette give people like psychotic symptoms or OCD symptoms and it just seemed like as long as I have a cigarette, I was fine.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and so, how many of you like kind of the bad image that cigarettes have? You know the kind of bad boy, bad girl rebelliousness, was that attractive to you?

**Answer:** No, it made me feel more mature not like bad. Just more mature.

There was a time in high school where I watched a ton of French films, and they all smoke cigarettes and they all look so elegant. And it really romanticized cigarettes.

Yeah, an old movie will still get me to want a cigarette. I watched “American Gangster” I wanted a cigarette.

Yeah, that happened to me with cigars. Cigars are very classy. So I would smoke cigars.

I actually felt like odd person because I didn’t really want to smoke, so after a while I started to smoke because everyone around me was smoking

I also had a weird sort of control, in that like my first cigarette did make me say “yeah, I gotta start buying packs” I was like there’s cigarette for everyone, and some people was like, they bought a pack, so they gonna finish that pack no matter how sucky the cigarette is because I spent money on the pack. Where for me, I think it was just like, I thought I could stop whenever I wanted to, I smoked 2 days of the week, I only smoke around this friend, I really didn’t have much of a social circle. And I think when I started working and I didn’t have bills to pay, it was kind of like a notch with my mom, like she had bills to pay, I didn’t have bills to pay and this is somewhat my only financial priority right now and I’m handling it well. I think at first, that’s what it’s like, when you can afford it. People take pride in not being able to do other things but they make sure they have a cigarette, like maintaining the habit was a source of pride for some people

**Interviewer:** Okay, and what do the rest of you think about the idea of being proud of yourself? You got your own cigarettes, you bought them with your own money, was that a source of pride for you too?

**Answer:** Not really. It was more of an addiction thing.

**Interviewer:** Okay. So, with friends, cigarettes kind of give you an entrée to some friends, but don’t other people kind of look down on you for it or think it smells bad?

**Answer:** Yeah. I got shut down by a lot of girls for that.

Yeah.

I got that a bit with guys. It’s totally a double standard. My dad literally said there’s something about a woman smoking cigarette is a turn off. For men, it’s one thing, it’s a turn on or something along those lines. But a woman shouldn’t smoke because they’re going to have babies.

I mean it does affect your reproductive health.

**Interviewer:** Okay, so did that impact you at all?

**Answer:** I mean, it made me want to smoke more.

**Interviewer:** And why is that?

**Answer:** Well…. My dad and I had a strange relationship, I would say.

**Interviewer:** So, a little rebellion?

**Answer:** Definitely rebellion, yeah.

Yeah, suck it!

**Interviewer:** Okay, how much did the difficulty of getting cigarettes impact how much you smoked? Was it hard to get cigarettes? So, you smoked less, to make them last longer?

**Answer:** It enabled me to think I was in control, I didn’t have time to be a chain smoker. I was in school from 7:30 to 2:30 and I don’t have things to do, so for me it’s like, cigarettes help me monitor time for me to tell myself I need to get a break from things. Or like my mom, she knew I was smoking, she was waiting to catch me smoking so she could kick my ass, so I’d wait for her to be gone, that was my ritual, no one was in the house and get to spark up in the house and have that whole ritual of getting the smoke out or saying F-you, so what if one of my neighbors see me outside smoking? My mom’s not home

**Interviewer:** Okay. Did you ever worry they will tell her?

**Answer:** Well my sister, when she stopped, she had stopped for good and she definitely looked down on it, she was like, this is gross. When I had you smoking, you smoked American spirits, you didn’t smoke Newports. So, you have to start smoking something classy and she was telling like I’m gonna snich, like I’m gonna tell mom. She’s the one that told me my mom was waiting to catch me to kick my ass. I would be coming from the basement pretending like I wasn’t smoking and my mom will just say like “I know you are smoking cigarettes”. And it would be a back and forth. I just went downstairs to get a donut. I know you were smoking. Like that.

It makes you smell bad. [unintelligible]

Cigarettes in the morning. Cigarettes with coffee, cigarettes after you eat. Three favorite times to smoke a cigarette.

**Interviewer:** Okay, so what was the riskiest part about smoking? Was there anything you were worried about or afraid of, whether it was your parents or it’s something else?

**Answer:** Probably parents. Or I guess if you do it at school, like getting in trouble at school, cause that also involves your parents. Like some people don’t care about getting in trouble at school, but it’s going to involve your parents in some way or another so.

Hooking school and smoking cigarettes kind of went hand in hand. So it was more about leaving school than actually smoking cigarettes.

My school, I went to a school with lots of students that have mental health, and I went to the nurse for a headache and she could smell cigarettes on my coat and I think that was a week that I haven’t had any cigarettes but my dad smokes cigarettes and he would give me a ride to school every morning, so I pointed at him. And she was like really cool about it. She was like, if you do smoke, I’m just gonna let you know this can cause headaches and cause this. So, it’s always safe to say you do any type of drugs in a school setting, you have to say you’re trying to quit. Only cool to do that. But if I feel like I wanted to tell someone I smoked, I’d be fine. I was never dumb enough to bring nothing like that to school. Like I said, I had mules, I had friends who looked forward to giving me a cigarette after school. So that was their thing to do. I was leaving school property, it’s not like I was going to smoke a cigarette and come back to school property. College was like different.

**Interviewer:** Okay. So, did you ever feel health effects from smoking when you were still under 18?

**Answer:** Yeah, cough a lot.

Yeah, coughing.

Definitely

**Interviewer:** Okay, anything else?

**Answer:** Just headaches. I feel like if I might get a cold. Like my colds last longer when I started smoking.

I would smoke black and milds, and I would get bad stomach aches.

I smoked a lot of cigars and they’re not filtered so, but you don’t breathe into your lungs so they’re not as bad for your lungs, but your mouth and your throat dries. It’s really bad for you. Your throat hurts and your stomach, like everything.

I had other health problems going on so if they were related to my cigarettes I would have noticed.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and what about the health effects that they thought you about in school, did they teach you how bad cigarettes are for you?

**Answer:** Yeah

Every health class I had, yeah. Dare. Daniel Dare the Dare lion. We all let that kid down. I was actually that kid that would tell grownups not to smoke. Like my grandad, but how are you eighty at the time smoking like a chimney and just fine? I was telling him not to smoke. My dad, he was around the clock. I was a smoker like him. I would smoke American Sprits, Camels, Newport was the preference, Menthols, nasty Mavericks, nasty Pal-Mals. My dad was a similar smoker, so it was like when he quit, I picked up the habit. Like I was an idiot. Like that’s what everyone always told me, like don’t put a cigarette in your mouth.

**Interviewer:** So, it seems like you are describing health effects that are a little bit different from the ones they warn you about in school? Do you think the warnings..?

**Answer:** They’re extreme. Well they warn you about the effects that will happen way way out. So [unintelligible]. That side of my family, they all died from smoking. Like they all died from lung cancer. It’s not just a thing that they say. A lot of people do die from smoking. And then there’s a lot of people, like there’s this World War II vet, he’s like ninety something, hundred something, and he says he smokes like eight cigars a day. And he breathes it into his lungs too. He said this is his habit and he’s never going to die. There are people like that too so it’s just like you are putting yourself at risk. It’s just a choice you can make.

[unintelligible]

I just do feel like this is some yuppie shit right here. I feel like a lot of good drugs we have in the society, before we decide to make them okay for everyone to use, we’re going to criminalize them and demonize them, we should really just look at drugs no matter what form or what they are and I just felt like I always, I don’t know, when I was smoking cigarettes, I thought about lots of the facts and I just feel like well, you gotta die from something. Like that’s what we say to ourselves. Or when I try to be a here or their smoker, I just be like you had to go hard or go home, I’ll just buy you a pack. I think the biggest health thing for me was my concentration, like my concentration was poor. But I feel like we’re just psyching it up. It just doesn’t seem sincere. I feel like if teaching people about cigarettes was so set up where we have plenty of research to explain why this is bad and it’s still a personal choice but here are just possible consequences of your personal choices. Don’t get me wrong, human beings make choices that they know might not have good outcome. And then, I looked at my elders and they weren’t smoking the same kind of tobacco. Where the small health benefits that are nicotine outweigh the causes to them. Where the tobacco today doesn’t work like that. Like I have a friend who’s Native American and they grow it. They know what’s going on with it. All the cigarettes that are on the counters here, you add shit to it. It’s not like you just roll type thing, there’s extra stuff added to it.

People feel a need to make drugs a good thing or a bad thing.

**Interviewer:** So what would you say are the down sides to smoking? Especially in high school

**Answer:** You spend a lot of money

There’s a lot of logistics involved with cigarettes.

They stink.

Your mouth just feels nasty wherever you go

**Interviewer:** Okay, what did you think it did to your relationship with people?

**Answer:** If it’s like a conversation starter, then I guess it brings people together. [unintelligible]

**Interviewer:** Okay. So, if you are doing a campaign for high school kids about smoking, what would you tell them about smoking?

**Answer:** The facts, you know

**Interviewer:** Which are? The health effects?

**Answer:** I feel like when DARE was a thing, they like exaggerated. Like you’d be a bad horrible person if you smoke cigarettes

They make it to the point where it’s almost like they lying, with all the stuffs they are telling you, it’s like I don’t even believe it

When you think about it, all the focus that is on high schoolers, when we make only a small percentage of the consumers that do smoke, I would really just take humor as the approach and just like do it at your own risk. My mom like always say like 5 minutes of pleasure is not worth the 5 years of consequences after from smoking cigarettes. Just being very honest about it.

DARE’s in like 5th grade so once you get to high school that was like seven years ago.

Like on a really bad day, you smoke a pack. Say you want to have a drink, then you smoke two packs. That means you just spent $15-16 on cigarettes that day. On a bad day, you’re going to spend a lot of money on cigarettes and then you’re going to need cigarettes for the next day. So let them know it’s not a cheap habit.

Once you get to a certain point, that’s why for me with cigars, I felt like I didn’t have to smoke them. I wanted to. And with cigarettes, especially, there not that much benefit to smoking them. I mean like, you get a certain enjoyment out of it, but at some point it becomes a habit.

Yeah, it becomes obsessive but the hit off cigars is nowhere near the hit off fug though. Like a cigar lasts longer because its thicker and one black and mild is like 5 cigarettes and you’d be thinking because the black and mild is only a dollar and a pack of fugs is like 7, and you thinking maybe you can make this 5 days of cigarette last for a few days. When really you have a habit. You don’t have a preference. Like you’re doing good if you’re the type of person if someone’s like, yo can I get a fug and you’re like nope I only smoke Newports. But I was the type of person I didn’t care what it was as long as it had a filter, I was all for it. So it’s like the effects. After a while I was starting to get really particular.

Yeah, I guess I just wasn’t that addicted. I never got.. like when I wanted to stop smoking stuff in general, I just stopped. When I felt like doing it, I felt like doing it. It wasn’t really like I had to do it. I never felt like that.

That’s how it was in the beginning, but after three years…

You see sometimes addictions are just like chemicals and a mental thing as well, sometimes it’s not really there mentally, but truly there physically. When I have intrusive thoughts, it’s just hushed my mind completely like I have these things when I like overanalyze things. Smoking while you overanalyze things doesn’t make you think you’re being anal, you think you’re being thorough. You have mapped everything out and it’s the physical sensation they get out of it. And some people like cigars because they like to clip it. It’s like the ritual of it.

**Interviewer:** Okay. And has anybody here quit smoking? Since high school? Oh gosh, three.

**Answer:** I quit and came back to it

I don’t smoke cigarettes anymore

Every once in a while I’ll have a cigarette.

I give myself like a perimeter if I was going to smoke a cigarette like I know psychologically, I like them best when I’m rock bottom. So, smoking them in a social situation is completely out unless initially my friends were around to help me cope but I’m around friends that smokes then I might give in but it has to be like rock bottom. They say like if you really quit, the first time you hit again, its awful, but the first time I hit a cigarette after quitting for 2 and half months, it was so good.

**Interviewer:** So, everybody who’s at least tried to quit in the past, what are your reasons for wanting to quit?

**Answer:** I think like the smell and vaping, I’m addicted to vaping

It was expensive [laughter]

Vaping. I got one of the little Blu ones and it lasted longer than a pack

**Interviewer:** As anyone else tried vaping as a way of quitting cigarettes?

**Answer:** Yeah

**Interviewer:** Okay, and was that your primary intension when you…?

**Answer:** Yeah, it was

I wanted to blow smoke out my face, so I did it

That’s pretty much what I like now, it’s just the sensation of vaping

That’s why I love hookah too.

It’s like the action of it, but not the smell. Vaping smells good.

**Interviewer:** Okay, that’s all the questions I have for you

## Columbia

**Interviewer:** So before I start asking questions, because we’re all here to talk about smoking, I thought we could introduce ourselves going around the group with your first name and where you got your first cigarette. And if it’s OK, can we start with you?

Answer: My name is XXX and I got my first cigarette in the boy’s bathroom at my school.

My name’s XXX and I think I got it at a concert probably.

My name’s XXX and I got my first cigarette when I was 14 from a stranger off the street.

My name’s XXX. I got my first cigarette from my best friend when I was like 12.

My name’s XXX. I got my first cigarette from my cousin. She was one year older than me at the time. I was 15.

My name’s XXX. I stole it from my dad. I was like 10.

My name’s XXX. I got mine from a friend in middle school.

My name’s XXX. I used to skate board with a lot of older guys and they would give me cigarettes.

My name’s XXX. I bought my first cigarette from someone in high school in the locker room.

Interviewer: OK, and you paid for it?

Answer: Yes.

Interviewer: My name’s XXX. I actually got served a Capone with his older brother.

My name’s XXX. I think around sophomore or junior year in high school, I used to skate around everywhere. And this is pretty grimy, but I think I just picked it up off the ground the sparked it up.

My name’s XXX. I think I got my first cigarette from my dad. I think I stole it from him my junior year.

Interviewer: Ok, so the first thing we’re going to do. There’s some cards in front of you. And the first pile is this list of ways that you get cigarettes, especially when you’re underage. So we’re going to sort these into three piles. The first pile is things that you did. The second pile is things that you would do, but didn’t necessarily do, but no reason you wouldn’t do it. And the third pile is things that you would never do. So it’s did, would do, never do. As an underage person.

[participants sorting cards] [chatter]

So before we start going through the cards. Just tell me the most common way that you had to get cigarettes when you were under age. What was the most frequent way of getting cigarettes?

**Answer:** From a friend, like an older friend.

Bum it off a skater for sure, other skaters at a skate park.

**Interviewer:** OK. From other skaters at a skate park.

**Answer:** My aunt.

**Interviewer:** Your aunt. Family member.

**Answer:** people I knew in my neighborhood.

**Interviewer:** People in the neighborhood.

**Answer:** Mall, Shortstop News in the mall. They never carded me, ever. And the tobacco shop upstairs. They card, but if you're confident enough, they'll sell it to you without asking.

[chatter] [laughter]

[inaudible]

I would just tell them -- I don't have my ID but I work in the mall. You check it out from my boss, I work downstairs. So that was -- they want the sales.

**Interviewer:** OK. So a tobacco store, or a store like a smoke shop in the mall.

**Answer:** It's not necessarily a smoke shop. It's a magazine shop type thing.

[inaudible]

**Interviewer:** Anything else? What other ways?

**Answer:** Steal them.

**Interviewer:** Steal them.

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** That's... Sure. From... So there's even kind of a couple categories in that. There's stealing them just from your parent's pack, or somebody you know. There's stealing them from the store, like shoplifting.

**Answer:** That's a little harder.

**Interviewer:** A little harder.

**Answer:** I stole them from my aunt, but I also remember... I also got cigarettes from my boyfriend's mom. I smokes with her for two years. And I remember this one time -- it was really late at night and me and my friend were walking around a store parking lot, and I had two dollars in change and enough cash to get me a pack of cigarettes, and I had to ask someone to buy them for me, who was actually one of the store employees. Like, me and her saw each other a lot, so I asked her to buy them for me and she did.

I used to pick them off the ground.

**Interviewer:** OK. But that's another way -- I mean, if you're underage especially.

**Answer:** A lot of people waste them. So...

There's a lot of [inaudible] pretty full, or someone accidentally dropped it. But if it was stepped on or almost finished sometimes I wouldn't. That's not . . . trust me, that was way back in early high school.

**Interviewer:** OK. Thanks. Good.

How many people have bought cigarettes yourself at a gas station?

Literally everybody in the room. OK.

Is there a particular gas station that you know, or knew of when you were under age, that would sell to people, that was easy to go to?

**Answer:** Yeah.

There always is.

There was a couple.

A good few over here. If you look old enough, they'll go for it.

Part of it is the personality of . . .

I've even bought in front of cops before. So... Nobody cares.

**Interviewer:** OK. And then what were you saying?

**Answer:** There's two stores in the mall that don't charge, and pretty much all the gas stations around there, like two Exxons, they don't card, ever. Especially when you were out late at night, they just don't care.

**Interviewer:** And then you said something too, that I missed.

**Answer:** There's a gas station near my house. In that area there's a lot of people you know, because you go to high school with them. So I knew the girl that worked at one of the gas stations, and her father actually knew my father. So I was always a little scared to do it. But she never said something.

Usually you can tell if you go to certain gas stations, and as bad as it sounds, a lot of the times, there's a . . . that come from a kind of culture where it's OK for kids to smoke cigarettes and whatnot. So you kind of pick and choose.

**Interviewer:** OK. So how do you pick a gas station? Or pick a convenience store? Whatever... Do you just know from your friends? How do you know which ones are...

**Answer:** Trial and error.

Yeah.

Sometimes the person working there. Like if there's a Hispanic in there, I can easily . . . talk in Spanish. [inaudible]

Walk in...

I know the one place at the mall. If it was the dude working, you get tobacco. But if it was the chick, she was going to card. So you got to kind of wait until they change shifts, and then you could go.

**Interviewer:** So how many of you knew the clerks? Which clerk was the best?

Couple people are nodding. Couple are shaking your head.

**Answer:** [inaudible] . . . will always card you.

Yeah.

So true.

**Interviewer:** OK. So older white males to be avoided.

**Answer:** [laughs]

**Interviewer:** Anything else I should know?

**Answer:** My friends usually told me, like -- this guy doesn't card me ever. So then I would go. But then he'd card me, and then... But I could always find somewhere else, because it's... Out of all the many gas stations over here, there's not a single one that wont not card you.

**Interviewer:** So what happens if you get carded and you're underage?

**Answer:** [chatter]

Say you left it in the car.

Then you never go back in.

Say "that's fine." And just leave. That's like a walk of shame.

If they're not going to sell to me I just walk out.

Sometimes if you say you left your ID, but you smile, they'll let it slide and sell it to you.

Sometimes you can act like -- I come here every day -- and get mad at them and then [inaudible]

[laughs]

Slide an extra dollar.

[laughter]

**Interviewer:** Do you really? Is that...

**Answer:** Well that's what I did when I was younger. I would buy the whole pack, but I'd give an extra dollar so they would just keep it.

**Interviewer:** OK.

What about Target or Walmart?

**Answer:** No.

They'd always card.

Yeah. Always.

Even now I get carded at Walmart, if I ever a pack from there.

**Interviewer:** Gas station versus convenience store? Versus tobacco shop, magazine store? Is there a better kind of store to go to?

**Answer:** Gas station.

Mostly gas station.

**Interviewer:** Gas station is best.

**Answer:** They pretty much have everything.

Yeah, they have everything.

The smaller the better usually.

I'd say... I used to grow up around New York a lot, and there's bodegas outside all the time, like little corner stores. Not even like convenience stores or anything big like that. Just little bodegas -- that's what we called them.

Everything shops.

-- and they literally never card, like even for alcohol. Never.

**Interviewer:** OK. What about getting a friend or family member to buy cigarettes for you? Has anybody done that?

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** OK.

Is there any risk to that? Any difficulty?

**Answer:** No.

There were some really cool parents.

**Interviewer:** OK.

Borrowing from a sibling? Likewise? Low risk?

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** OK. And borrowing from a friend.

What about approaching a stranger and asking them to buy?

**Answer:** They got to look cool.

Yeah.

**Interviewer:** OK. And what is that?

**Answer:** Say, suit and tie. In a rush, like going to their day job or something. It's almost kind of like [inaudible] or something.

Someone closer [inaudible]

Kind of like if you see somebody...

Preferably if they're already smoking a cigarette.

Yeah.

[chatter]

Around where we live it's typically a bad idea because that's taking a chance with your money.

Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Oh, so there's a risk they'll take the money and leave.

**Answer:** 100%.

100%.

**Interviewer:** Oh, wow. OK. Have you ever had that happen where somebody's ripped you off?

**Answer:** You just don't do it. It's all about how you read people. It wasn't that hard for me. I wasn't that desperate to get them.

**Interviewer:** OK. That's interesting. That's a risk I hadn't thought about. That they could just walk off.

**Answer:** Yeah, that's how a lot of people are.

**Interviewer:** OK. What about picking the stranger? Other than looking cool, are men better than women? Women better than man?

**Answer:** It all depends on how you can see their personality they're acting around the public. Like if someones on the phone, they're talking, but they sound like they're really into the phone conversation. They get off the phone, you try to ask them, they may be really strict about it and they'd be like -- no, you shouldn't be asking -- and all this.

I definitely found it easier communicating with men better than women. I think I've only done it with one or two women. Just ask them -- can I bum a cigarette or can you buy a pack for me? -- I've only done it with like two women, but I've always usually found a guy to do it for me.

**Interviewer:** And what about fake IDs? Are fake IDs popular?

**Answer:** No I don't have one.

[inaudible]

You could get a fake ID pretty easily in high school. It's not hard, but it's typically for alcohol. But I guess you could use it for tobacco.

Technically . . . [inaudible]

Yeah.

They scan it [inaudible]

Yeah.

Scan-able fake IDs.

[inaudible] from Pennsylvania yet. But [inaudible]

They don't work on police scanners, but in shop scanners and whatnot it works.

It will just say you're 21.

[inaudible] check and stuff, too.

**Interviewer:** OK. How did you learn the strategies of how to get cigarettes?

**Answer:** Friends.

[chatter]

**Interviewer:** Did they change at all as you got older? Or as you continued to smoke?

**Answer:** You definitely had to get more sneakier with it.

**Interviewer:** How come? Why do you say that?

**Answer:** Just... There's...

Through trial and error, you definitely learn that how you carry yourself is a big part.

Eventually you don't even think about yourself being underaged. You're just going to get tobacco. It's not a stress at all.

And sometimes there are people probably watching or they will probably say something about it.

And if you get away with it, they'll recognize you when you come in again. They won't card you ever time to get away with it.

Once you get away with it once, they'll pretty much [inaudible]

Yeah, then they'll sell it to you.

I usually avoid the ones that card me and always go to the ones that usually don't. And other strategic tips from friends, like don't go to one if there's a cop and don't go to one if there's a lot of people. Try to go when there's almost no people in the store. Or when a guy's working alone and he's bored. Stuff like that.

**Interviewer:** Do others have a different experience when it's empty versus full stores? Is it better to go to a crowded store or an empty store?

**Answer:** I never saw a difference.

The walk of shame is worse when there's more people.

[laughter]

**Interviewer:** OK, good point.

**Answer:** There's a few -- like 7-Eleven, or a few other places like that where if it's like rush hour and everyone's moving through trying to get gas and everything, there's a few of them that might not card you and just give you it so you just move along, but they want the money. They're selling a product. There's a few of them that may do that, other ones that may card you.

You go really late at night -- a lot of times they wont, just because they think you're out so late you must be adult.

**Interviewer:** Have you ever been stopped by a clerk who didn't want to sell you cigarettes who went beyond "can I see your ID?" Threatened or said...

**Answer:** No.

They don't care that much.

I have.

They're doing their job.

**Interviewer:** You have?

**Answer:** Because... Well this is a one-time experience. I went to this gas station a year and a half after I graduated high school, so obviously I was of age. But when I went in, the dude was like -- you don't look 18 -- I was like, OK. And my ID is a little worn out, so I gave it to him, he was like -- why does it look fake? -- and I was like, what do you mean, you can scan it? And he tried scanning it, and he couldn't scan it because the barcode was off. So he kept trying to not let me. Like, these other people are behind me, he's like -- whatever, I'll sell it to you now. But I was like, so mind boggling, because how does that make sense? I'm old enough.

**Interviewer:** Anybody else? Have you ever been recognized? Like -- I'm going to tell your parents. I know you go to that school.

**Answer:** One of my nightmares.

Some of my teachers see me smoking...

**Interviewer:** But wait -- Autumn, so you're saying yes, but it didn't really phase you.

**Answer:** Like, I'm going to tell your dad. I don't care; go ahead. He's not going to do anything. My parents are the ones that used to buy me cigarettes when I was little too.

Someone from my church saw me smoking a cigarette on the way to baseball practice when I was younger. They immediately next day in church, they pulled me aside, and tried to ask me if I was addicted to drugs and stuff. I was -- I'm just having a cigarette. I was having my own place and time. And then my parents found out. By that time, they wouldn't let me go into a store alone. So when it was... When school gets out, I had to run down to the store and go do it. But yeah, getting recognized, and people knowing you who -- maybe you hold a different standard for that of the person. Or maybe you don't smoke around them. And maybe you tell them... Maybe you lie to them, said -- I don't smoke, I don't smoke. But then they see you and it's like -- oh, that's heartbreaking.

**Interviewer:** OK.

So what's the worst? Is that the worst consequence? Being an underage smoker, what's the worst consequence that you face of being caught?

**Answer:** Judgment from your peers more than adults.

That's a good one.

**Interviewer:** OK, and what form does that take?

**Answer:** People just... Like, you're an idiot. But...

You're selling yourself out.

Yeah. But they just wouldn't understand it.

Or when your mom finds your pack and breaks all your cigarettes. That happened on more than one occasion. More than five.

**Interviewer:** OK. So that sounds like the main consequence is the loss of the cigarettes. As opposed to disappointing your mom or making her mad, or getting grounded.

**Answer:** Yeah, because that was my money, and I had to get that myself.

My parents would take them and hide them, knowing damn well I know where they're hiding them. So, oh you went to bed? I'll be on the porch.

My dad would take mine and smoke them. So...

That's a little worse. The smoking them in front of you.

**Interviewer:** What forces do you think kept you from getting more cigarettes or smoking more than you did? You know, there are things that kind of... The good parts of smoking that you enjoy that make you want to smoke more. What are the things that make you want to smoke less?

**Answer:** I'd say the smell.

Yeah.

**Interviewer:** The smell. And is that... Why? Why don't... I mean, what...

**Answer:** You don't want your parents to know.

**Interviewer:** So it's parents. Again. And what about peers?

**Answer:** Yeah, I think it's more appealing when you smell pleasing, not like something like... Someone's going to be sniffing around -- oh, someone smoked -- and you don't want to be like -- oh, I did. Or something like that. It's just to myself. I want to keep that to myself. So the smell is what I avoid.

Also the cost of it. Tobacco products in general. If you're smoking every day, it racks up a bill. You have to pay that, and then also in high school you don't really have a job. So you have to kind of join with other people and put all your money together, and buy whatever you're going to buy. And so if somebody's not putting up money, like, yeah, that could make you not want to buy. So...

Personally... Personally, my . . . you're going and doing things that require like, cardiovascular endurance. Those are the things I wanted to keep, so I tried not to do it too much.

**Interviewer:** OK. Is there anybody else who did any sports? A couple people have mentioned just -- I'm not sure "skating" is the right word for it. What was... Like, skateboarding?

**Answer:** Skateboarding. Yeah.

I mean, it's definitely a work out. It takes strength and endurance 100%.

**Interviewer:** And did the rest of you notice that smoking was affecting your ability to do stuff?

**Answer:** Oh yeah.

Not when I was young.

[chatter]

Now I'm winded, actually, like [inaudible] I know it's like a temporary thing. If I just stop for a little bit it will be fine.

Yeah.

-- but it's like right before, like you go play something and you smoke, like, just feel really crap afterward.

**Interviewer:** OK. So do you time it? Like if you know you're going to play something later, you don't smoke before? Or is it just something you notice and just think of?

**Answer:** Yeah.

It'll be tighter.

[inaudible]

**Interviewer:** But do you monitor? Do you try not to, before something?

**Answer:** Yeah.

Depends what it is.

I noticed when I did it, when I smoked occasionally, there wouldn't be too much of problem. But when I was smoking more heavily, I would notice that there was -- through different activities -- I would get like, tighter breath and I could hear a difference in my breathing, so I was like -- I'm cutting off. Based off of that. So I'd try to stop from there.

When I picked up smoking, when I was just about to get out of middle school, me and my sister would be waking up in the morning, because she would want to go running, and then I would have to go running with her, because my mom is like -- oh you need to get exercise, build muscle -- but I was smoking at the time so I would be running way behind her and then she would get home like ten minutes or so before me. So I would try to smoke before going into school, after a run, and usually that was even harder, because I only have another ten minutes at home. So I'd have shower, get back out and go. So I'd have to smoke on the way to school. And that's even worse, because my parents would drive me to school. So I would have to either A) take a shower, or I'd only have to do it on days where I had gym first period. So I was able to just walk to school. [inaudible] . . . usually be the only time I could smoke in the morning time, and still be able to keep up with my sister when she wants to go running.

**Interviewer:** Purchasing cigarettes. Alone? Or as a part of a group? Which is better?

**Answer:** Part of a group.

Alone.

Part of a group.

Alone.

Yeah.

If you're confident, alone. But usually if you go in, they ask for your ID -- there could be somebody behind you who's 18 and they'd be like -- no, he's cool. Maybe they ID him, but they could believe him.

Yeah, it depends.

Yeah, especially if you go in a group with somebody who is already 18. Like I was just in the gas station the other day and somebody got whatever it was, a pack of cigs and they got carded, and then right after, I got the same thing and didn't get carded. They thought I was with that group. I actually wasn't.

**Interviewer:** Our next exercise is about slang words, and words that people use to describe things. So in the packet, you'll see pictures of things. Could you write down all the words that you know? Like the first one is cigarettes, and all the words that you know to signify cigarettes.

[quiet talking and chatter]

**Interviewer:** So tell me some slang words for cigarettes.

**Answer:** Fugs. Stogies. Loose ones. Loosies. Nic stick. Bogies.

[chatter][inaudible]

Jack. Cig. Fag stick. Cancer sticks.

**Interviewer:** And what, most commonly, in high school, what would you call cigarettes?

**Answer:** Cigarettes. Stogie. Jack. A smoke.

**Interviewer:** What about cigars? Did anybody ever smoke a cigar when you were underage?

**Answer:** [crosstalk]

I didn't like it. It was too much.

**Interviewer:** And what was the occasion to try it out?

**Answer:** Bonfire.

A date.

[inaudible]

**Interviewer:** OK. So it was somebody else who had it who said...

**Answer:** Well, my aunt's friend was visiting. And she left one. After she left she left one in my drawer by accident. It was one of those Grey Furloughs. And I took it to a guy's house and we smoked it. I think he thought there was weed in it. [laughs] He' like -- are you OK? Because like half of it disappeared. He's like -- are you feeling OK? I was like -- yes. Tobacco.

**Interviewer:** OK. What about... Is it... Little cigars? So nobody...

**Answer:** It looks like an e-cig to me.

Is that supposed to be kind of like a [unintelligible]

Cloves wrapped around a tobacco leaf.

Technically little cigars are called cigarillos, formally.

**Interviewer:** OK. Because I thought these were the cigarillos.

[inaudible] [crosstalk]

The top one's a black one.

The orange one definitely looks like a cigarette though.

**Interviewer:** OK. It kind of does.

So how about the cigarillos?

**Answer:** I don't really smoke [inaudible]

We smoked them, yeah, but they weren't full of tobacco.

[laughter]

**Interviewer:** OK. Fair enough.

**Answer:** We call those -- rollies, rello...

**Interviewer:** OK. And blacks.

**Answer:** Black mild. Black. Dutchees sometimes. Depends on if you're using Dutch cigars called Dutchee.

**Interviewer:** OK. Are these popular?

**Answer:** Yeah. Very.

**Interviewer:** What do you think it is about them that high school kids like?

**Answer:** Blacks, that top one, are only 89 cents.

**Interviewer:** Oh, they're cheap.

**Answer:** They're very cheap.

Oh yeah.

You don't have to buy a whole pack of cigarettes.

And they're flavored.

Definitely the wooden tip made it a bit more attractive.

It was also the fact that it was like, more like smoking like ten cigarettes, if you had it for like ten minutes.

Yeah, it'll last very long.

And they will put flavors and whatnot.

Usually pass it around in rotation for your friends too, so it's more of a social thing instead of just sitting there and smoking a cigarette.

Also, sometimes it's wider than a cigarette, so it's easier to empty out and put marijuana in it.

**Interviewer:** Right. OK.

**Answer:** Which is called [inaudible]

**Interviewer:** OK. So put marijuana in it, it becomes a spliff.

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** OK.

And then these are the Beedies. Nobody knows Beedies? They're not the same...

**Answer:** No...

Oh wait. They're like a game leaf. [inaudible]

Yeah, I'd say that's more... That's the closest thing that would be a backwoods nowadays.

But they don't look like...

I love backwood.

[inaudible][chatter]

Those are... Those are very mild.

Those look like a rolled [inaudible]

Backwoods are definitely darker leaf, so they're more harsh. That's very mild leaf.

Looks like the one people would roll themselves. You know? You buy the tobacco, then they roll it in papers.

It's more similar to a joint paper, is what I thought it was.

It looks like tobacco weed filler.

**Interviewer:** And what about clove cigarettes?

**Answer:** I mean, got to buy Jarum or Crettic. Crettic is like a western European name for it.

**Interviewer:** OK. And are they popular?

**Answer:** No.

Only if you have a friend who's really into smoking cigarettes. That's the only time I've had one.

It's more of an acquired taste.

Aren't blacks... There's this brand called Blacks, I think --

That's Jarem Blacks. Jarem's the brand that makes those.

-- yeah. If you try those, they have a sweet taste. It's weird.

**Interviewer:** OK. What about menthol cigarettes?

**Answer:** Those are really nice.

All the time.

They're nice, but they're really bad for you.

Yeah, they're really bad for you.

**Interviewer:** They're really bad for you? OK.

And so when you were in high school, is that what you felt like too? Was -- oh those are really bad for you.

**Answer:** I mean, there was a Camel Crush, and that [inaudible]

[inaudible] choose if you want [inaudible]

It's a lot more attractive to use Camel Crush, because then you have to pop the little ball inside and that's honestly nice to do.

**Interviewer:** OK. It's just fun. And... OK.

So is menthol popular in high school?

**Answer:** Yeah.

I could smoke [inaudible] I guess.

**Interviewer:** OK. Mostly for Newports?

**Answer:** Yeah.

If they don't know. Like, I guess the health effects of it, they'll definitely choose that a lot more.

**Interviewer:** OK. But it's not like an introduction? I always thought menthol was like, minty. And that it...

**Answer:** It is.

It is minty, yeah.

It's more refreshing.

**Interviewer:** OK. But not necessarily like a -- I don't want to say "good way" but...

**Answer:** You don't really want it all the time.

It's like with smack, you know.

[laughs]

**Interviewer:** OK.

I believe this is chewing tobacco? Chewing tobacco.

**Answer:** Dip.

**Interviewer:** Dip. Right.

**Answer:** That's disgusting.

**Interviewer:** So... Popular in high school?

**Answer:** No, no.

Sometimes.

I mean I say no...

Sometimes with a lot of people.

Depends on the demographic.

It's like one group that like dips.

Yeah.

**Interviewer:** OK, but hang on a second.

**Answer:** My cousin actually, he's in high school right now.

**Interviewer:** You guys, we got to do this one at a time, because if there's general talking it really doesn't work. Sorry, go ahead.

**Answer:** Yeah I guess right now, like my cousin's from South Carolina. He's 14 and he does all kinds of sports, but he buys chewing tobacco, like the dip. To them, that's the thing right now. I tell him, like, yo, you're teeth are gonna rot pretty soon, it's really nasty.

I played baseball in high school and that was like a big thing because all the Major League players do it.

It's a big thing in baseball culture.

Yeah, it's a huge thing.

And all the coaches do it. My team wasn't big on it, but I knew other teams that all that did it while they were playing.

**Interviewer:** Wow, the coaches do it?

**Answer:** My coaches personally, yeah.

**Interviewer:** And so if they see you chewing it out on the field, will they... is it a problem?

**Answer:** Can't really tell because players chew sunflower seeds, so you couldn't differentiate them.

Usually just have that as a cover -- just have a bag of sunflower seeds in your bag.

Sometimes . . . couple seeds in your mouth.

**Interviewer:** And then don't you have to spit too?

**Answer:** Yeah you do.

You can be discreet about it.

Yeah you don't have to spit when someone's looking.

I try do it when I was up to bat . . . [inaudible] I actually slide intentionally just to spit. My mom hated me because it was just like every night after a game -- why do you keep sliding, you don't need to slide? I'm like, I want to it's fun.

**Interviewer:** And what about girls, do girls do this?

**Answer:** Not that I know of.

Er, some do.

[laughter]

**Answer:** I tried it once, it was disgusting. It was like... Yeah it was gross.

My grandmother still does it and she's done it since she was like 30. I hate going to her house, because I know she's going to be sitting out on the porch and when I pull up she'll be like pghhrr pghhhr [makes noises].

[laughter]

I don't want to see... I want to be like -- Hi Grandma, how you're doing? Nope...disgusting.

**Interviewer:** OK. What about loose tobacco? Just to roll your own.

**Answer:** Yeah. Like the American Spirit pouches.

Yeah. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** OK, so loose tobacco not very popular?

**Answer:** Popular among some...

When you first starting out it's not really popular, but if you really get into it and you really just want to do your own thing then probably.

Back when I was younger and I couldn't attain tobacco, I got like a pack of that for free and I would sometimes put that in a one hitter or roll it up in papers . . . [unintelligible] Nowadays I'm getting into pipe smoking so I'm going to get that for my pipe.

**Interviewer:** OK, because that was going to be my next question about the pipe and whether it was better to smoke the loose tobacco in a pipe or to roll it in a cigarette?

**Answer:** Depends on who you are.

Loose tobacco if it's flavored in a pipe. But if it's not flavored then roll it, from my experience.

And that's if you really want like the pure taste of it, because there's no filter or anything.

Sometimes... really moist and it won't burn well enough, it depends on a lot of things.

**Interviewer:** In high school are there connoisseurs, who are known to be very particular or who do... You know what I mean? Is there special...

**Answer:** No.

**Interviewer:** -- Or it's just you're a smoker or you're not a smoker?

**Answer:** Yeah back in that you get it where you can. So it's not like...plus you don't want other people knowing, because saving face and what not. So it's not something that everybody knows and then some people are connoisseurs, it's not that big of a culture yet.

**Interviewer:** OK and what about hookah?

**Answer:** Yeah that's popular.

It's more like a social thing.

**Interviewer:** OK, it's more social.

**Answer:** You kind of go to the bar and it's a Hookah bar and sit around and casually smoke it.

**Interviewer:** Can you get in underage though at a Hookah bar?

**Answer:** No.

I think as long as you have someone that's like 18. At some places if whoever finds a table is 18 I think you can have other people on it, they don't check.

Yeah definitely one person has to be 18.

And then in my culture, Hookah's like a big thing. We call it Shisha, so my Dad... We have one in the house. We'll take it out when we're barbecuing and stuff.

**Interviewer:** OK and are the kids usually invited to take...

**Answer:** Yeah. When I was really young, we were in the living room and he had all his friends over. Like all my uncles were sitting in the living room and he let me try in front of all of them, because he knew I was going to cough and they all laughed at me when I coughed. I was probably between six and ten.

**Interviewer:** OK. OK. So what are the reasons that you started smoking in the first place?

**Answer:** Bullying, just being cast out. So give me like a sense of just cool down, not have to really worry about it, just throw it in to the back of my mind and just leave it there.

**Interviewer:** So kind of a stress relief?

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Meditative kind of?

**Answer:** It was definitely a stress reliever for a lot of, many cases for different people. But I think it differs for everyone the reasons. A lot of times it's because of stress, but sometimes it's just because -- oh, it's because my friends do it and it's the fad and I don't want to feel left out when they're all smoking and I look like the loser in the group.

For me it's kinda, it was like a social thing. You go out to a party and one person has one, you end up hitting it and then all of a sudden you have your own cigarette. And everybody has their own and you're talking, always on the porch, so it's more like an outdoor setting. I don't know, it's like relaxing, I guess.

[inaudible] . . . accessory.

Yeah, gets you out of all the crazy social party and then you're out smoking cigs, chilling. And it's kind of like complimentary to where you are I guess.

I was just always curious about it since I was a kid, because my Dad used to smoke. Even as a kid I knew I was going to just try it. But he's quit since then, so I couldn't get them from him. But yeah, my group of friends they all smoke, so it's just kind of worked out that way.

**Interviewer:** And how many of you have parents, a parent who smokes or smoked before?

OK. Just like half-ish. And what about you Corwin, what were your reasons for smoking?

**Answer:** I started smoking because I knew that it would get me higher.

[laughter]

So when I started coming down I'd just light a cigarette and I'd be good again.

**Interviewer:** OK and at what point after you started smoking, at what point did you start getting your own cigarettes?

**Answer:** When I was about 14, the corner store by my house started selling them to me, because they knew my mom. So if I didn't get them, she'd get them for me.

**Interviewer:** Anybody else? At what point did you start getting your own cigarettes? Was that like when you were smoking more, how did that work?

**Answer:** By the time I was 16 I think I might have just looked old enough that a lot of people would just think -- oh he's... So I mean it was just fine after that.

Same.

I think 16 was the . . .

**Interviewer:** Do you think you smoked more when you were able to buy them yourself?

**Answer:** Yes.

Yes. Sure.

**Interviewer:** OK. And how many of you still smoke? Do you all still smoke, has anybody quit?

**Answer:** I quit for like 3 months, but...

I keep quitting off and on, but I keep going back at it.

**Interviewer:** What are your reasons for wanting to quit?

**Answer:** It affects me in ways that sucks. So in high school I used to have migraines every single day and I thought it was from sleeping in or too much sun or something, but turned out my cigarettes were actually had a part in playing the role in my headaches. And I realized that after I took a break, the lack of nicotine was helping my head, not many headaches and all that. Also I used to be a singer, back in high school and then I started smoking and then my throat just got worse and worse and now I have a constant cough, so yay.

A smoker's cough is deadly.

**Interviewer:** Has everybody tried at least once to quit or no?

**Answer:** Yeah.

Yeah.

Yeah I quit back in March.

**Interviewer:** A couple people... I get the impression there's at least a few of you who've never tried to quit, don't want to quit, that's not really an issue. Is that right or am I misunderstanding?

**Answer:** No you're right.

Yeah.

**Interviewer:** What were your reasons to try?

**Answer:** I mean like I was an athlete growing up, playing soccer for a while. I was very very close to becoming professional soccer player for my country, Honduras, but I started smoking at like 15 going on 16. And then at a young age you really don't feel it because you're always active. Then I took a break because I injured myself and then came back and I hadn't smoked during that break. I came back... I used to be really really good at running and just slowed down and I couldn't last 90 minutes on a field and a lot of coaches would not... Not that they wouldn't notice you, it's just that you wouldn't be at the top five or anything like that. So that made me want to stop and I stopped for a little bit, but then I realized that I wouldn't make it so far anymore because I was getting too old for it, so I continued smoking.

For me I'd initially started because of depression and anxiety. And then my stopping came around when I noticed minute differences were affecting my health that were negative. I just decided to quit being a little bitch about my mental health and just take care of it like an adult, just go about it with a mature mindset.

**Interviewer:** OK. Since you became an adult has the way you acquired cigarettes changed?

**Answer:** I mean I can get them myself more easily, so yes.

**Interviewer:** OK. Do you still tend to go to the little stores. Do you go to box stores, now that you can, or not really?

**Answer:** Any place that sells them.

Wherever I'm at.

Wherever's convenient.

Closest, cheapest.

Yeah. So when you get older I think when you're in high school and you're struggling to get them yourself, I guess the key is to find places that aren't going to card you, but then after you're 18 it's like -- I don't really care, I just need to find the cheapest place to get them. So it's like money is our second problem, but the first problem is getting someone to sell to us.

Even if Walmart sold them for cheaper I don't think you're going go, walk into a Walmart, instead of just the Gas Station. It's right there, it's like two minutes. Walmart would take like 15 minutes. It's more convenient. . . other places.

**Interviewer:** So how much do you think the difficulty of getting cigarettes impacted how you smoked when you were underage? It didn't sound like it was really very difficult. So is that kind a not at all?

**Answer:** It made it slightly scary to buy them, not scary but just...

A little nervous.

A little nervous to buy them, but it didn't really make it that much more difficult.

**Interviewer:** Do you think it made you smoke less trying to kind of hide it? Or...

**Answer:** Yeah.

Yeah.

I had to spread out my schedule, make sure I didn't do it before school or before I saw my parents. If I was doing it late at night I had to make sure I'm really quiet doing it out my window, or sneak out to the back yard and do it.

Doing it before a shift or something like that if you were still under age. Maybe you have an ID, you're 18, but your job doesn't like smoking or smelling like that.

**Interviewer:** And has anybody had a job where everybody goes out during breaks and smokes? Does that make you smoke more?

**Answer:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Besides the health risks... So we talked about not being able to participate in sports as well when you're a smoker. What other downsides are there to smoking?

**Answer:** The smell.

**Interviewer:** The smell.

**Answer:** You're constantly hearing about people who've been smoking for x amount of time and what they look like and what state they're in and it's always like in the back of your head. But you really want a cigarette, you just shoving it further back there.

Yeah, it's definitely those health videos that make us recall high school. Like here's what's going to happen if you keep smoking for 20, 30 years, you're going to have a hole in your neck.

Or you're just going to die, because of cigarettes, which is . . . Makes you not want to smoke really, that's not how addiction really works.

**Interviewer:** So do you think of those ads ever when you're lighting a cigarette or does that make you want to smoke less?

**Answer:** Usually when thinking about it, is usually around the time when you don't really need a cigarette. But when it comes that time when maybe you're stressed or you're with friends and you really got to be in that moment and have a cigarette, it's just pushed right out of the way. It's like a moving car, you can't stop it. But then when it comes back, it's like damn, I should have stopped because I don't want to end up like this person or that person. In the end it's just who we are. It's just what experiences you've been through and what you're going through right at that moment that you have to have those cigarettes for you.

I think I'm speaking for myself as well as him when I say that you'll think about that, but then after that thought you'll still smoke anyway, but you'll compensate with extra, more exercise or harder exercise afterward.

**Interviewer:** So try to be healthier in other ways to kind of make up for it?

**Answer:** Balance it up.

**Interviewer:** And where did you learn about the health risks of smoking?

**Answer:** School.

School and TV, YouTube.

Actually close family member got lung cancer.

Yeah family member that died in my family from that so...

**Interviewer:** And if you were going to make a commercial to try and keep young people from starting to smoke what... Like would you emphasize the heath risks, the chance of parents catching you, peers, what would you think would be the best thing to say?

**Answer:** Health risks.

Health risks and it will burn a hole in your pocket, especially after you get your ID, because you're going to want to start buying them, because you have the ID now. I would say you should just wait and let yourself think about the chance for it maybe when you get your ID -- if you want to do it then or if you don't want to do it at all, because, cigarettes can really put a dent in your money.

I think I would present myself honestly, as someone they can respect, you know someone they might look up to and then give them an honest story of why I started and why I think it's stupid. And just kind of let them know what you know and let them decide based on those facts.

I'd say I'd show them to be considerate of those who don't obtain those health risks like lung cancer through cigarettes, but it's like a natural cause, it's being like an asshole for you to get lung cancer that way when kids are getting it like in ways that they can't help it. You're like making it worse for yourself and not being considerate of the ones who don't get it that way.

Right, it's like an FU to them.

Because you could always have... Like my own twin brother, he's gone lung surgery twice already and he doesn't smoke. But I do smoke, so it makes me feel like an asshole for doing that.

**Interviewer:** OK. OK. Those are really all the questions that I have for you. So we'll go around. If we could just get you to initial and we'll give you the $75 gift card for coming. Thank you so much for coming, you've been a great group.

## Gaithersburg

**Interviewer:** Before we do start, I thought it’ll be helpful if we knew each other names. So, my name’s Amy, I think I introduced myself at the beginning, but if we could go round the table and just say you first name and since we’re talking about tobacco during this group – Where you got your first cigarette? And can we start with you?

**Answer:** Hi, my name’s XXX and I got my first cigarette from my dad.

My name’s XXX and I got my first cigarette from my siblings.

My name’s XXX and I got my first cigarette from my cousin.

**Interviewer:** OK. Another family member

**Answer:** My name’s XXX and I got my first cigarette from my friend.

My name is XXX, I got my first cigarette from friend.

My name is XXX and I got my first cigarette from cousin.

**Interviewer:** OK. So friends and families, sounds like large part. So the first exercise that we’re going to do is; there are little cards in front of you and one of them is a, the one with the words on it, that start out… bought myself at the gas station, it doesn’t seem to make a lot of sense or hint, but wait a minute. So, what we’re going to do is sort these cards into 3 piles. So, the first pile is for the things that you’ve done in the past and in particular we want to think about high school, and when you were in high school. So, if you… if it something you did when you were in high school – it goes into first pile. And it goes done, would’ve done, never do. So, things that you have done go on the left, in the middle are things that you would do but haven’t really done but there’s no reason you wouldn’t, so you would, you just… There was no reason to. And then the 3rd one is something you would never do, at all. So, it’s done, would do, and never do.

**Answer:** So, cigarettes right? What cigarette?

**Interviewer:** Cigarettes. Right. We’re just talking about cigarettes or tobacco products. It might be Cigar or Rillo, or something like that.

**Answer:** The one that I only use is cigarette.

While we’re in the high school, right?

**Interviewer:** Right, while you were in high school.

**Answer:** This one has nothing to do with us, we never do. So it’s never done,

Can I ask a question?

**Interviewer:** Sure.

**Answer:** So, by approaching a stranger and asking them to buy any cigarettes …

Could it be just asking them for cigarettes? Or…

**Interviewer:** No. It’s more going in the store for you and buy them.

**Answer:** Alright.

I have a question. For this one, it says got a friend or family member to buy the cigarettes? But, I won’t buy it from a friend, but I would have do it from family member. So…

**Interviewer:** OK. Yes, that’s a good point. OK. And we’re going to discuss them too. So, I will ask you more questions, but that’s a really good point. And this is Leslie by the way, I never introduce her, I’m sorry. OK. Now, let’s discuss a little bit. So, bought them myself at the gas station. Has anybody has bought the cigarettes at a gas station or any other place when you were under 18? And was that a little scary? Was it hard? How did that…

**Answer:** Walked in…

**Interviewer:** Before what?

**Answer:** I just walked in and I just bought the cigarette.

Yeah.

**Interviewer:** And did like friends tell you that this is a good gas station to go to, or good place where you can. So, did you feel like you could go to any establishment, pretty much?

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** OK. Do you think that was because you look older or…?

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** OK, OK. And how about you? Didn’t you raise your hand too? I’m sorry…

**Answer:** Oh. That was me?

**Interviewer:** Yeah. So, you’ve done the same thing? Just walked in?

**Answer:** Well, yes. But, I was a little cautious. I was like… I was under 18… So, I was… I thought it would be… I was… I was… a little scared, maybe if people would ask for my ID. But, that one time I bought the cigarettes, he happened to not, like he didn’t asked me, I think he was new. He would just… Because there was a line...

**Interviewer:** OK. And that wasn’t like pre-planned or anything like that?

**Answer:** No, I was not planning it. I just went for it. So, yeah.

**Interviewer:** OK. Now, the next one “bought it myself at the convenient store”. Is… Has anybody else who hasn’t talked about if you ever bought them under 18, at the convenience store?

[Participants raising hands]

OK, at Target or Wal-Mart?

**Answer:** No.

Do they sell cigarettes at the…?

**Interviewer:** I think so. OK. Now, we’ve got the one. Let’s talk about the friends first. How many have gotten a friend to buy you cigarettes when you were under 18?

[Participants raising hands]

OK. So, that’s pretty common. And is that a friend who’s like barely over 18, kind of in your same age group or much older friend who just smokes and… I mean who with… without like the name of the person?

Who just about the same age… like 17 or 19, like that type of thing?

OK. Did they just… was it just like one time deal that they did for you, or was it like something they did for lots of people all the time?

**Answer:** It’s would be something more that they would do for me, if I would have asked.

**Interviewer:** OK. Anybody else?

**Answer:** Would be somebody older.

**Interviewer:** Somebody older? Ok. That you knew as a smoker?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** And do they kind of like feel sorry for you that you’re under 18 and you can’t buy your own cigarettes. So they were just helping you out? Is that kind of a…

**Answer:** It was more like they already thought I did it already, so, they were just like… maybe liked to share.

**Interviewer:** Ah-ha. OK, kind of the idea of sharing. OK

**Answer:** Strangers buy cigarettes for …

**Interviewer:** Ah-ha. OK. And; and is that on our list?

**Answer:** I know, they just gave me things, gave more money. So, I made more money.

**Interviewer:** Ah-ha. So, when you approached a stranger to buy them; do they expected you to get them little more money than it cost? So that’s their motivation? If it’s a friend or family member, they were helping you out; kind of as a favor; but if it were a stranger, they expected a little money in return? Is there like an established amount? Like how much extra? Is it like 10% tip kind of or…?

**Answer:** I think that depends on the person; how much it? Sometimes, they might asked you – I want these kind of money, some amount of money.

**Interviewer:** So they…

**Answer:** Negotiating…

Yes.

**Interviewer:** So; and then, does this take place in the parking lot, in front of the store?

**Answer:** They could ask there, or asked it before.

Like a child approaches someone and then it just happened, they would walk to the side…

**Interviewer:** So you walked up to somebody and what would; like what would you say?

**Answer:** Hey how are you doing? Can you get this one?

**Interviewer:** Can you get this for me?

**Answer:** Yes. Exactly.

**Interviewer:** OK. Ah-ha. And would they say, “Yeah, for five bucks” or…

**Answer:** Yeah. Something like that.

**Interviewer:** OK. I think I got it. How about borrow from siblings? Borrowed is kind of funny word for cigarettes because this is…

**Answer:** You’re right. They might not return it.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. OK. Has anybody had a sibling say, “Oh. no. Smoking is bad for you; I would never give that to you because I don’t… “

**Answer:** Yeah, that’s why I stopped asking.

**Interviewer:** Borrowed from a friend; that seems pretty simple. OK. Approached a stranger; we kind of talked about it. What about taking it from parents or somebody else? Is anybody just snag couple of cigarettes out of the…?

**Answer:** Yeah.

Yeah.

**Interviewer:** OK. And do you, do they know about that? Would your parents know?

**Answer:** Depends how it’s… For the most part I’d say they know.

**Interviewer:** And don’t they say anything?

**Answer:** They don’t.

My brother never said anything to me, but I knew he’s like, “He’s taking it.” He just don’t want to bring out them; because there would be hard feeling obviously.

**Interviewer:** What about using a fake ID? How about that? And this is; you know, just in the past, in the abstract, you know – it's fine. So, how do you; I mean that’s a little more complicated, I would think to get that.

**Answer:** Actually, it was easy. My brother; we all kind of all look alike. Yeah. driving license, It was like, my brother coming, and, “Can I just get a copy?” And I just made a copy of his driving license. I used to do that.

**Interviewer:** Ah-ha. OK.

**Answer:** Just kind of like using his.

**Interviewer:** It is interesting to hear about looking alike to being able to swap driving license. Has anybody else ever been able to swap IDs with the brothers or sisters?

**Answer:** I would have but not for cigarettes.

**Interviewer:** OK. And do you just never think to do that for cigarettes or if you just never need to?

**Answer:** Oh. I never need to.

**Interviewer:** OK. What about shoplifting? Just picking them up in the store?

**Answer:** They’re usually barred and behind it …

**Interviewer:** Oh. That’s right. Ah-ha. That’s true. Yeah. That’s a good point. I didn’t even think about that; they did kind of keep them locked up pretty tight, nowadays. OK. So, thank you. That was really interesting. So, let’s see. I have couple more questions about picking a retailer; where you buy cigarette when you were underage again, when you were in high school, under 18, looking to buy cigarettes; how do you pick a place where you going to buy them? Like is there; small places are better than big places? Big places are better than small places?

**Answer:** Yeah. like the gas station.

**Interviewer:** OK. What’s the difference?

**Answer:** If you go for other outlet, they might ask you for IDs.

**Interviewer:** They are more strict?

**Answer:** Yeah. They are more strict, like for tobacco and stuff like that.

The smaller gas stations are easier, because they…

They want more money.

Yeah.

They’re not really under like a high… super…

They like a straight up.

Yeah. What’d they called… supervisor… supervisor surround them. So, I think the smaller gas stations are better.

**Interviewer:** The location also plays the factor?

**Answer:** Yeah.

Because; the difference of the people that come to reach every location can be different. So, they might have the age of like older people are bring in, and they be like may I see your ID, where are you going, they would ask you stuff and make you say something. Or some other gas stations have like an 18 years old, they wouldn’t do.

**Interviewer:** So, older clerks are not; it’s better to get somebody close to 18, 19, 20.

**Answer:** I would say.

**Interviewer:** OK. What is it; I am sorry; what is it about the location?

**Answer:** It’s, I mean what kind of life in the neighborhood; how…how strict are things around them? Like, there’s maybe… they would’ve… I don’t know… like some serious… like a… so yeah, that might played a part. So, I think if it’s a place where kids around, then there’s maybe a high population in that neighborhood, a lot of people, that might be easier… access for cigarettes. Easily. Because; we have random people would buy it for you. If the places are more reserved and quiet, that would be more, for me more serious than street. I think.

I would say like… like I said earlier, that you can have friends that can tell you which gas station or store like this place is lenient, this place is more strict like; you kind of choose where to go… places that...

**Interviewer:** Ah-ha. OK. And what about for girls? I’m sorry to pick on you, being the only girl here. But, do you think if any of your experiences different like is it easier for you, do you think? Because you’re a girl?

**Answer:** Hmmmm.

**Interviewer:** OK. Even like with the younger clerk might you know, be kind of flirtatious or something… is there ever kind of…

**Answer:** It’s going to be much harder.

**Interviewer:** OK. Does anybody has any experiences with girlfriends, sisters… you know… is it different for girls getting cigarettes? Like, what about asking a girl to get cigarettes for you? Would …

**Answer:** They would like, usually get caught because; they look younger.

They usually get caught, even if they are older age.

**Interviewer:** OK. Here I thought that it might be an advantage.

**Answer:** Not for cigarettes, I guess.

But, I think that people are more generous of it.

**Interviewer:** More generous?

**Answer:** People are more generous. Because; every time I asked a female, they would, always good with strangers, they would give it, they usually have like …

**Interviewer:** Oh, really? But, that is a friend or stranger? either way?

**Answer:** Either way, Yes.

**Interviewer:** OK. What about when you’re approaching a stranger to ask them to buy, I was kind of, just like picturing a man in my mind, but would you ever ask a woman or a girl? Can you?

**Answer:** For a cigarette?

**Interviewer:** To buy you cigarettes? Or… Yeah. to buy them.

**Answer:** Ah, I don’t think so.

**Interviewer:** Why is that?

**Answer:** I just thought, I don’t know, I just think it’s you know, a bit of awkward.

Randomly, going up to a girl and ask her to buy a cigarette, I mean you can, but I just couldn’t, wouldn’t do that.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. Ah-ha. OK. And would you ever ask stranger when you were under 18, in a high school student, would you ever ask a stranger to buy them for you?

**Answer:** Sorry, is that for me?

**Interviewer:** No. actually it’s her. I am sorry, what’s your name?

**Answer:** Natalie.

**Interviewer:** Natalie. OK.

**Answer:** Well, I wouldn’t do that.

**Interviewer:** OK. Interesting. OK, so we kind of did that; was there one place to buy cigarettes where you knew you could buy them that you would go back too over and over again? And do you ever tell friends? Did you ever tell friends, so like was there your whole kind of circle knew that that’s where to get them? Have you ever been stopped by a clerk? When you were trying to buy cigarettes? Who said, oh no, you are under 18. How did that happened?

**Answer:** It was a store like a usual place like you said, everybody knew, but when I got there, but yes I looked pretty… I looked even younger, she stopped me. I was trying to ask her, I kept asking. But, she knew I was lying.

**Interviewer:** Wow. OK. anybody else? Has been stopped by a clerk?

**Answer:** Yeah. But I usually would be like, I left it in the car or I left it at the house. Then, I just plead more, and they just gave it to me.

**Interviewer:** Wow. Very clever. OK. Anybody else? Never been stopped or told no by a clerk?

**Answer:** I have been told no. But it wasn’t like she’s keep me there. Like do anything, she was just be like, you are too young, I’m not giving it to you..

**Interviewer:** OK. Is it pretty common, or more like rare to get stopped?

**Answer:** I’d say, it’s common….

**Interviewer:** Common?

**Answer:** Common.

Sometimes, most of the time they asked you but they just get light sometimes. You know what I mean. In fact when I was 18, most of the time they’d say no.

**Interviewer:** Ah-ha. OK. So, you just kind of have to keep at it?

**Answer:** Yeah, yeah. So I just tried at different places.

**Interviewer:** So, when they do say no. it’s no big deal right? You just kind of OK, and you walk out of the store, it’s not like…

**Answer:** Yeah.

That’s why you have your siblings and your family. That’s about it.

**Interviewer:** OK. Is it embarrassing, at all, to be told you’re too young to buy cigarettes?

**Answer:** No, not that though.

**Interviewer:** No?

**Answer:** I mean they follow the rule, you can’t buy.

Yeah. You can’t buy it. You’ve got to wait till you 21.

**Interviewer:** OK. What kind of things would have discouraged you from buying cigarettes underage?

**Answer:** Someone that had; having foot traffic.

**Interviewer:** OK, having foot traffic? Anything else, I mean just like in general. Like the store that you would go to all the time – where you knew you could buy cigarette easily. Is there anything that would’ve made you stop going there; or get nervous about it?

**Answer:** Yeah, know that cigarette is going lead to death.

I might have slow down with it. It’s not too late.

**Interviewer:** OK. So the things that kind of, we have pushes and pulls; the pull to smoke cigarettes is one thing, but the push away; the things that make you smoke last or want to quit smoking – are those more health related when you’re under 18? Is it concern for your health? Or is it, it is too hard to get, it’s too expensive? What are the things that make you don’t want to smoke?

**Answer:** Personally, it wasn’t, that wasn’t more of the health issues. I mean, I always aware of it, but I don’t really… I was like… Ahh, I haven’t smoke for like it can kill myself. So, that kind of things that in your head but the one thing that discouraged, that used to discourage me was my parents. So, I didn’t want to… always smelt, you know, you have that kind of smell… So, I don’t want them, I didn’t want them to know. And I was hiding it for so long. So, I didn’t want to get caught blowing my cover. So, I was just like…Yeah. I always wanted to like love Smokey stuff.

I don’t know if one of them care.

I’m proud of you.

So, yeah. That’s discouraged me most of the time. So, when I just sat and thinking about it, I just do not want to get exposed.

So, and I… I have strict parents, so that… that’s played part too. Yeah. That’s a no-no in my family.

**Interviewer:** OK. Does anybody else have parents that, like would frown on, you know, been disappointed or upset if they knew you were smoking cigarettes?

**Answer:** Unfortunately.

**Interviewer:** And did that kind of stopped you or slowed you down at all? Or was that…

**Answer:** Not me. In their eyes.

**Interviewer:** OK. Do… How many of your parents smoke? Or stop?

**Answer:** My mama used to, now she stopped.

My dad used to, he stopped.

My dad he was real…

**Interviewer:** And did he quit too?

**Answer:** Yeah, he quit too.

**Interviewer:** OK. So, what day in a week was easiest to buy cigarette? Is it better on weekends?

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Is that because; there were more foot traffic? More people around? busier?

**Answer:** Javo.

**Interviewer:** What was that?

**Answer:** I said Javo.

What he said - it’s kind of a street word.

**Interviewer:** OK. What was the street word?

**Answer:** Javo.

**Interviewer:** Javo?

**Answer:** Yeah

**Interviewer:** OK. What about the time in day? Is it morning, afternoon, evening?

**Answer:** Afternoon.

Day would be better, because school’s like… everyone at school know. They would all think you did it.

**Interviewer:** OK. Oh yeah, right. That kind of makes sense. So, during school hours; maybe halfway through afternoon, before school let’s out?

**Answer:** Hmmm…

OK. Well mine was after school. Like, yeah, after school.

One thing that discouraged me from smoking one time was this specific pack that I had, that had like a picture of lung, really black lung.

Yeah. And the description as well.

**Interviewer:** OK. And did anybody else notice the warning or the things on packs? and yeah?

**Answer:** I watched a documentary about it. So, that kind of put me off. But, that didn’t stop me until later on.

**Interviewer:** OK. OK. And oh. Were you alone usually when you bought cigs underage? Or part of a group? Like, what if there’s a two or three of you? Is it better or worse?

**Answer:** Worse. It always one other individual, maybe or by yourselves. Always solo was better.

**Interviewer:** OK. OK. So, speaking of slang words; the next exercises that we have are these cards; there’s other set of cards, and what we want to know from these are what… what are the slang words that you called things by. So, these the first one, I think are cigarettes. What are the slangs word that you know? And if you could just write down all the ones that you could think of, and we’re kind of going to go through and see how many people have in common and how many of jar apart? Oh, actually, just go ahead and go through all of them and mark down all the slangs word that you know. If you have any question about the picture, actually is – you’re free to ask.

[Chatter as participants sort cards]

Interviewer: OK. So let’s kind of go through what the main words, that we come up with. And if you could speak very loud, I think, they kind of hearing, they’re having trouble hearing us. So, if you could speak loud, that would be great. So, cigarettes what do you…? What are the words for cigarettes?

**Answer:** Jagga.

Jazz.

Shingles

Cigs.

Light.

**Interviewer:** OK. Is there certain cigarettes, or any cigarettes can be light?

**Answer:** No, any cigarettes.

Sometimes, I called them port. Like when you buy Newport, I would just like called them port.

**Interviewer:** OK. And then, so, this is a cigar, right? OK. So, any words for cigar?

**Answer:** A burn

A roller.

Or cigar.

Alright. no need, or baby sky.

OK. I don’t really think that that was a cigar either. I didn’t know…

It is not a black, it just a cigar.

OK.

**Interviewer:** So, is it very common to even smoke a cigar in high school?

**Answer:** I don’t know.

**Interviewer:** Maybe that’s why it is not that many?

**Answer:** On my birthday, yeah.

**Interviewer:** OK. Special occasions?

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Cigarillo any words for cigarillos?

**Answer:** Was it like, electronic?

A demo…

**Interviewer:** Ahh, no. This is actually a cigarillo.

**Answer:** This is a bit.

Rillo.

These are…little cigars.

Little cigars…

**Interviewer:** Ah… OK. I heard Rillos and what…?

**Answer:** Black and mild.

**Interviewer:** Black and mild? Is that a brand’s name.

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, OK. Black and mild anything else?

**Answer:** Hmm, black and mild.

**Interviewer:** I got it. OK? and then, these…the bidis.

**Answer:** I don’t know at all.

I have no idea.

**Interviewer:** OK. Have you ever heard of bidis?

**Answer:** No.

**Interviewer:** OK. and then, this one… Cloves. Cloves cigarettes?

**Answer:** Can you spell out the font?

**Interviewer:** C-L-O-V-E-S

**Answer:** It was like the pot?

**Interviewer:** Kreteks. Oh. Above. Kreteks. Have you ever heard of Kreteks?

**Answer:** No.

**Interviewer:** OK. And then I think this is the chewing tobacco. Chewing tobacco.

**Answer:** Is that chew?

**Interviewer:** Chew, OK? And then, this one is just loose tobacco? It’s tobacco. Does it has any kind of slang?

**Answer:** Rolled up.

**Interviewer:** Rolled up?

**Answer:** Yeah, it’s like roller guts, like entire of mouth of you burning up.

**Interviewer:** OK. So, roller guts?

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** OK. OK. and then what about the pipe?

**Answer:** Pipe? A bowl.

Pipe. It is just a pipe.

**Interviewer:** Just a pipe? OK. and then, a hookah?

**Answer:** We called it Shisha.

**Interviewer:** A Shisha?

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Shisha OK. Does anybody else have words for? OK. And then, so of these, what would you say, you used the most of when you were underage?

**Answer:** From all of these?

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**Answer:** Cigarillo

I think I just used cigarillo, roller and hookah a lot.

Yeah. That’s it.

**Interviewer:** OK. So, the cigarillo, roller and hookah really a lot, does everybody do a lot of hookah?

**Answer:** Yeah.

No.

**Interviewer:** OK. So, there’s… I’m hearing like 1, 2, 3… Can you just nod, so, one, two, three yeses on that side and hookah?

**Answer:** Just a little.

**Interviewer:** 3 plus a little. 3 and a half.

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** OK. And then, and has everybody used cigarillos in the past? I guess you said smoke cigar rolls.

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** OK. OK. What about brands? Especially when you were underage. Are there certain brands that, like do you have a brand that you smoke or did you just smoke whatever you could get?

**Answer:** Do you mean like cigarette?

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Answer:** Marlboro (Marlboro 27).

Marlboro 27

**Interviewer:** Anybody else?

**Answer:** I started from Equals. And then Marlboro. Then Camel Crush. That was it.

**Interviewer:** OK. How do you choose a brand – as a high school student, underage?

**Answer:** Generally, from seeing friends smokes.

**Interviewer:** Ah-ha. When your friends smoking? What about the person who gets them for you. Do they want to get you their brand or they just get a pack and give you a couple out of the pack?

**Answer:** They get a pack and shared it.

Sometimes, we talked about it, they like what’s better and showed us.

Like if they have the Newport, they let it out.

So, we just rolled with the conversation. And we just picked from there. I mean, I had Newport a lot. So I just decided to try it.

**Interviewer:** OK. And a, how many of you smoked menthol? And was it like all menthol or just occasionally?

**Answer:** Could be most of the time.

Camel at times.

**Interviewer:** OK. Really? OK. That was 3, 3 of you said yes to that. OK.

**Answer:** For me, it was a, so I was like, I smoked camel crush for a while. So I kind of like it to be menthol.

**Interviewer:** OK. Awesome. OK. So, what are the reasons that you started smoking?

**Answer:** There were a lot of people doing it.

It just stress.

It’s not like because people were doing it, that’s what you want to do it too. It’s not good.

My dad used to take me to smoke.

Well. I started because all my friends, I was like I wanted one, but they started doing it. And I’d be like, I came down with it. They all started it, and it became a thing.

There’s something to do. That something to do when you’re at halt, you’re working for days, and like 5 minutes later, cigarette break. So, I am the only who sitting there by myself. So, I decided to try smoke for that.

That’s a reason why people start. It’s like a social fare, to get along with other, it’s a stress reliever because; we were stressed out.

**Interviewer:** OK. and what about you Natalie? What did you…? How do you start smoking? Why? What was?

**Answer:** My dad was always stressed out and all.

**Interviewer:** So, you’re dad … Did you said your dad smoked?

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** OK. And was that why he smoked? Because he’s stressed?

**Answer:** I honestly don’t know why.

**Interviewer:** OK. OK. At what point do you start getting your own cigarette?

**Answer:** Is this in high school?

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**Answer:** I didn’t really get them on my own.

**Interviewer:** OK. What about anybody else? Did they, was there kind of like line that you crossed; you smoking more and you need to get it on your own? Did you always get it on your own? How did that work?

**Answer:** To me, when I was sixteen, I tried my luck, if I don’t get it, I just went home. So, I keep trying till finally get one. By 17, I didn’t worry about that, because I experienced pretty much. If you’re confident, you get it.

For me it was more like, by the time I started smoking, they are always surround me. Like people that I lived with. Liked the always had it. As a smoker, I don’t really have to go out here to buy it. They were my friends. So, they were willing like, give me to try out. So, I did buy my own packet and stuff but mostly they are always around me. So, I don’t worry about it.

**Interviewer:** And did the way you get cigarettes change as you got older? Like you mention a little around 16?

**Answer:** Yeah, by 17, I don’t have to worry because I just walked in and asked them small combusting because; I’ve done this all the time.

**Interviewer:** But the first couple of time, it sounds like it’s kind of hard?

**Answer:** At 16, I kind of like a hard time too. I got caught so many times.

**Interviewer:** OK. But you keep at it?

**Answer:** Yeah. I mean what the worse that can happen? Like getting turned down. They were always said no. So, I just walked out, pretty much.

**Interviewer:** So, do you think that made it easier in a way – like you’d practiced getting turned down in a way?

**Answer:** Pretty much, yeah.

**Interviewer:** OK. And then, what about when you hit 18. Were you looking forward to being able to buy cigarette on your own, or were you thinking…

**Answer:** Oh, no. They already get it on their own.

I was looking forward to 21.

**Interviewer:** OK. 21 for the alcohol?

**Answer:** Yeah.

That was it.

**Interviewer:** So, if you still smoked, has it changed it all how you get cigarettes now?

**Answer:** Well I just went like, it’s not good for you. But, yeah, what do you mean by if it’s changed?

**Interviewer:** Like if you, to have it different ways of getting them now or you know if that’s…

**Answer:** Oh, I just walked in and buy it.

**Interviewer:** Yeah?

**Answer:** Yes, it just the same thing.

Sometimes I still get carded at, but doesn’t get much…

**Interviewer:** And if like teenager, high school student came up to you and said, “Hey man. Can you buy me cigarettes?” Would you do it?

**Answer:** I don’t know.

I would be like “No.”

**Interviewer:** OK. Why not?

**Answer:** Why do they need to smoke cigarette? What do they have to stress about?

Because; they got to worry about more like it killing themselves already.

No positive effects.

I think I will give them lectures because; I stopped a while back. I actually look forward to get those kids, and preach on them.

**Interviewer:** OK. What is the riskiest part of getting cigarettes as a minor? Being under 18? What was risky? Was there something risky about that?

**Answer:** To be told no. that probably frustrating more.

**Interviewer:** Ah-ha? Just been told no?

**Answer:** Yeah.

But there maybe a cop outside but, that probably low of a risk but probably don’t want to do it by then.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. There’s a cop car sitting in front of the store or something? And how much difficult it was to get cigarettes impacted how much you smoke? Do you think you smoke less because it was harder to get them underage? Or did that have any impact? How that did that impact to how much you smoke?

**Answer:** I think, personally I think, it’s my personal opinion, but I think, they can get at the age of 18, personally, I don’t really feel like its strict enough, that kids still get cigarettes. There should be more supervision to buy cigs and alcohol, and all that stuff. I don’t, because kids are still at risk of smoking because they’re exposed to this kind of environment around them.

**Interviewer:** OK. And anybody else did you try to make them last longer, because you knew you going to have to go take a risk and trying to get more when you were out or…

**Answer:** Yeah, that’s why I didn’t give it away, so I would just turn away and I really want it to last longer.

As soon as I have a pack and, I kind of rushed it to a long good…

**Interviewer:** OK. Being underage too, do you usually get a pack? Or did you just buy singles?

**Answer:** Singles.

There was a department downstairs in the store, they used to sell the Singles and they would give you like 3 or 4 for a dollar or less than a dollar. So, they made it easier.

**Interviewer:** OK. So, unless you really want it at a time? They do 3 at a time?

**Answer:** Yeah 3, or 2, but I don’t have the … They don’t usually do it, but they do it for us because; we were there for a while. It was a clash. That is why, I come back to the point, it’s not strict enough.

**Interviewer:** So, OK. Are there any downside to smoking cause somebody mentioned not to let your parents smell it on you. Or having them be accept for smoking. What other kind of risk are there to smoking? Other than the obvious health risk.

**Answer:** It is possible like being use as example. For like, a mother has a kid and she can use you as example, like don’t be like him.

Mostly my fear was getting caught by my parents. My siblings can adopt, that is the risk.

**Interviewer:** Did you ever worried that the clerk in that little store will tell your parents that you came and bought 3 cigarettes?

**Answer:** That’s the biggest worry. Because I knew my father knows many people around. So, I always on my feet, cautious about who sees me smoking Like; I was always hiding for smoking and sleep at my friend’s house and somewhere no one can see me. So, most of people don’t know I smoke that’s how uptight I was by that.

**Interviewer:** OK. And when do you learn about the health risk of smoking?

**Answer:** Mostly at school.

Commercials.

Actual package itself because have it right there.

My parents as well. Because; they always tell you story every day. They probably made it up. But still, scary. Saw someone dies doing this and that. And the smoking… things like that; we’re not kind of say it. But, you slowly anxious about… take precaution… to become more…

**Interviewer:** And how much impact on you knowing that it was bad for you? Was that part of the equation of doing that…?

**Answer:** It was not that big somebody has to stop.

**Interviewer:** And how many of you still use tobacco, whether in any form, cigarettes, chew anything at all.

**Answer:** I still smoke, but just once a while.

**Interviewer:** OK. Once a while, twice in a while. So, just 2 of you out of everybody? Only two smokers?

**Answer:** I would be on occasion when somebody asked.

**Interviewer:** At your peak, how much did you smoke? Like in a day? Let’s say, how many cigarettes do you smoke in a day?

**Answer:** Maybe like…

For me the most would be a pack and a half. The most.

Yeah. Like a pack a day.

**Interviewer:** OK. When you were underage?

**Answer:** Underage, I would say a pack will go through for 3 days. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** OK. OK. And then, you the ones who quit? Why do you quit? What’s your reason?

**Answer:** I just work out a lot, so I just, it didn’t feel good, because I smoked a lot. I just stopped.

**Interviewer:** OK. So, kind of for health reason but not because you read it on the pack because; you kind of you’re your own body.

**Answer:** Yeah, I was like not breathing well. It’s harder everything. So, I stopped.

**Interviewer:** OK. How about you? Why did you quit?

**Answer:** Just the same things like you don’t really… I would say not pay attention to the warning. You doesn’t really resonate with you as much. Something like it happened to you. I can feel like I was out of breathe. So, when I started stopped smoking because that’s like leading me to out of breathe.

I started play softball for a pro team. So, then I always felt like my stamina was out. And then, I tried stopped smoking. It really quite shows that. It hit me, because; I tried to play for college softball. Then, I just stopped. It is a slow process, but it’s not that bad.

**Interviewer:** OK. How about you Natalie? Why did you quit?

**Answer:** My dad actually passed away from heavy smoking cigarette.

**Interviewer:** Oh, I am sorry to hear that and how about you?

**Answer:** I don’t need MBA to tell, what lung cancer can does. It’s got to be it.

**Interviewer:** Has anybody has been part of the couple, whom one smoke and the other didn’t? Was there a problem?

**Answer:** Yes, there were a problem, she was religious. So, it was like a big issue. Like, she doesn’t want to smell it aloud. There was an issue but that, was like she wouldn’t want to . I didn’t stop at that point because I was stubborn but that wasn’t big issues. That wasn’t an issue.

**Interviewer:** Oh, wow. Yeah, OK? Is anybody else ever have like romantic issues related to smoking?

**Answer:** Somebody would have.

**Interviewer:** For somebody who don’t smoke, will go totally against it?

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** OK. OK then with all the questions I have for you, so we have $75 gift cards for you. We just need you to kind of initial to sign in, and probably we just go around the 2 of us, to help with the card and initials.

# Appendix B: Moderator’s Guide

**Moderator’s Guide**

**Introduction**

Hello, my name is Amy Flowers and I really appreciate your taking the time to come out for this group tonight. We are going to be talking about your views about tobacco products back when you were in high school.

Let me tell you a little about the discussion group and how it works…

First off, I want to tell you I’m not here to sell you anything, this is a research project that is being conducted on behalf of the State of Maryland’s Center for Tobacco Prevention and Control to learn about how young people get tobacco products while they are in high school.

The group is being video-taped. After the group, we’ll transcribe what was said, the staff at the Center will review the group, and eventually the tape will be destroyed.

Your name will not be used in any report, and you won’t be personally identified in any way. Only what was said will go into the report, not who said it. You won’t see yourself on TV, or read about the group discussion in the newspaper.

Focus groups are most interesting when a conversation starts and people interact with each other. You don’t have to just talk to me, you can also talk to each other. To make it work as a research exercise though, and not just a conversation, there are a few things we all need to keep in mind.

* Please talk one at a time, and in a voice at least as loud as mine is now.
* Please be respectful of everyone in the group.
* This group is completely voluntary and you are free to leave at any time if you are uncomfortable in the group or the content of the discussion.
* Please do not discuss statements made during the group outside the focus group.
* Avoid side conversations with your neighbors. Sometimes those whispered comments are the juiciest best information of all. Please make sure you make your comments to the whole group.
* If a couple of people talk at once it can be hard to hear later on the tape, so I might ask someone to repeat or go back if that happens.
* I need to hear from everyone in the room at some point, so if possible let’s try to get in about equal air time to everyone.
* At any time during the group, feel free to excuse yourself to use the restroom or get more food or beverages. The restrooms are located …..

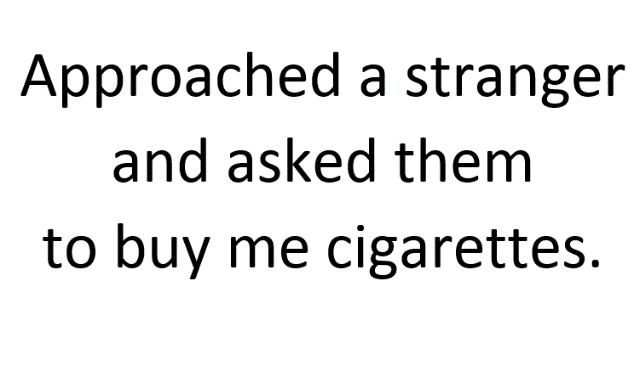
In order to get to know each other a bit before we jump right in to the subject at hand, I’d like to get you all to introduce yourselves**. Because we’re here to talk about tobacco, let’s introduce ourselves with our first name and where you got your first cigarette.**

**Strategies for Obtaining Tobacco**

**Card Sort:** The first thing we are going to do is sort the cards in front of you into three piles. When you look at the first card, ask yourself if it is something that you have done, would have done, or would never do. Make three piles out of the cards. If the card is something that you have done, put it in the first pile on your left. If it’s something that you would have done, put it in the second pile in the middle. If it’s something you would never do, put it on the right. So once again, it’s did do, would have done, never would.

(Moderator hands out sticky notes do mark each pile of cards, gathers the cards.)

Now let’s discuss each of the cards. (Moderator shows each card in sequence for discussion. Participants reveal their choices and rationale.)



| Card Content | Probes and Discussion Points |
| --- | --- |
| Got a friend or family member to buy me cigarettes. | * What was your relationship to them? * How old were they at the time? * Where would you meet (e.g. in front of store)? |
| Approached a stranger and asked them to buy me cigarettes | * How did you select them? * What did you say? * How old were they? |
| Used a fake ID | * How did you obtain a fake ID? * From a peer or an older person? |
| Bought myself at a convenience store |  |
| Bought myself at a gas station |  |
| Bought myself at Target or Walmart |  |
| Borrowed from a friend | * How old was this friend? * If underage, how did they obtain cigarettes or cigars? |
| Borrowed from a sibling | * How old was your sibling? * If underage, how did they obtain cigarettes or cigars? |
| Took from my parent or other adult | * Was your parent or other adult aware you were taking their cigarettes or cigars? * Did you ever get caught? * What were the consequences? |
| Shoplifted | * Where? * How? * Did you ever get caught? * What were the consequences? |

**Retailer Selection**

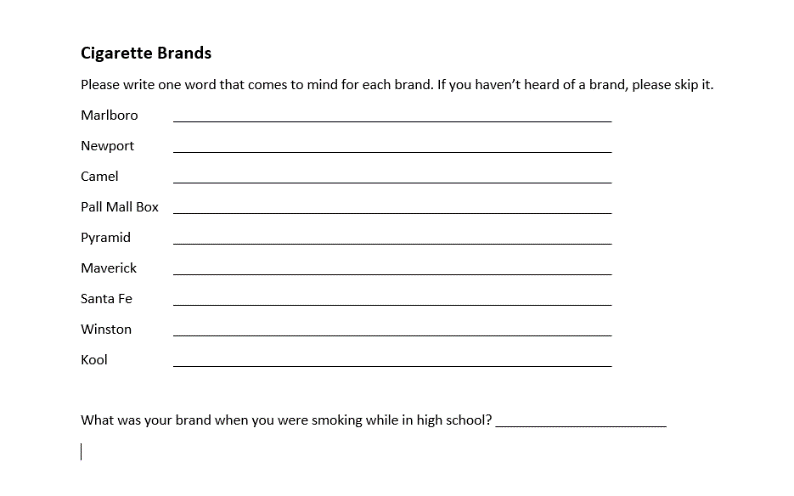
1. How do you pick a retailer?
2. What kinds of places were best to buy cigarettes or cigars when you were underage?
   1. Gas station?
   2. Convenience store?
   3. Large retailer like Walmart or Target?
   4. Grocery store?
3. What is the difference between buying at a tobacco store versus a general retailer like a gas station or Walmart?
4. Did you go to the same place over and over?
5. How close to home was your normal place of purchase?
   1. How close to school?
   2. To work?
6. Was there anything about the clerk that made it easier or harder to buy cigarettes?
7. Age of the clerk?
8. Gender?
9. Ethnicity/Race?
10. Friend, or someone you knew?
11. Weak, or someone who could be bullied?
12. What would have discouraged you from buying them?

**Timing of Purchases**

1. What day of the week was easiest to buy cigarettes or cigars?
2. What time of day was easiest?
3. Were you usually alone or part of a group?

**Types of Tobacco Products**

**Free-Associations:** Next I’d like you to write down the first words that come to mind when you see the product or phrase on each of these cards. (Pass out brand-association cards with pictures of various tobacco products. Moderator collects the cards before discussion.)



|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Brands   1. Marlboro 2. Newport 3. Camel 4. Pall Mall Box 5. Pyramid 6. Maverick 7. Santa Fe 8. Winston 9. Kool | Products   1. Cigars 2. Cigarillos 3. Little Cigars 4. Cloves 5. Chewing tobacco 6. Snuff 7. Chew 8. Dip 9. Hookah 10. Kreteks 11. Pipe 12. Menthol |

Now let's talk about your thoughts on these products.

1. What attracted you to the brands you smoked?
2. What brands were most popular?
3. What was it about them that made them popular?
4. Were menthol cigarettes or other flavors more popular than others?

**Reasons for Smoking**

1. What are the reasons you started to smoke?
2. Among those of you who still smoke, have your reasons for smoking changed?

**Perceived Harm**

1. What are the downsides of smoking?
2. Where did you learn about the health risks associated with smoking?
3. How much did knowing about the health risks impact your smoking?
4. Do you have any health concerns that you feel are related to smoking?

Thank you so much for participating today. Leslie will be coming around with a sign out sheet and your $75 incentive.

# Appendix C: Slang Terms

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Cigarettes |  |  | Cigar |  |  | Cigarillo | |  | Little Cigar | |
| Cigs | 26 |  | Cigar | 30 |  | Black and Mild | 14 |  | No Response | 14 |
| Cigarettes | 18 |  | Stogie | 4 |  | Rello | 14 |  | Cigarillo | 5 |
| Fug | 14 |  | No Response | 2 |  | Black | 13 |  | E-Cig | 5 |
| Jack | 11 |  | Cuban | 2 |  | Cigarillo | 10 |  | Cig | 4 |
| Smokes | 11 |  | Cuban Cigar | 2 |  | Blunt | 4 |  | Cigarette | 3 |
| Bogey | 7 |  | Fatty | 2 |  | Rollup | 3 |  | Rello | 3 |
| Fag | 6 |  | Rello | 2 |  | Backwood | 2 |  | Cigar | 1 |
| Stogie | 5 |  | Big Doink | 1 |  | Dutch | 2 |  | Ciggy | 1 |
| Loose One | 4 |  | Big Stick | 1 |  | No Response | 2 |  | Clove | 1 |
| Sticks | 4 |  | Blunt | 1 |  | Rillo | 2 |  | Electronic Cig | 1 |
| Cancer Stick | 3 |  | Boeg | 1 |  | Bum | 1 |  | Fug | 1 |
| Ciggie | 3 |  | Churchhill | 1 |  | Cig | 1 |  | Lil Cigar | 1 |
| Darts | 3 |  | Cuban Rock | 1 |  | Dutchies | 1 |  | Little Cig | 1 |
| Lights | 2 |  | Fug | 1 |  | Mild | 1 |  | Little Cigar | 1 |
| Loosie | 2 |  | Heavy Light | 1 |  | Phillies | 1 |  | Mini Cig | 1 |
| Shisha | 2 |  | L | 1 |  | Rollems | 1 |  | One Hitter | 1 |
| Single | 2 |  | Rillo | 1 |  | Self Rolled | 1 |  | Rollup | 1 |
| Bacci | 1 |  | Roach | 1 |  | Smokes | 1 |  | Rolly | 1 |
| Bigarettes | 1 |  | Rollup | 1 |  | Stems | 1 |  | Smoke | 1 |
| Blaze | 1 |  | Torpedo | 1 |  | Sticks | 1 |  | Stagey | 1 |
| Buzz | 1 |  |  |  |  | Swishers | 1 |  |  |  |
| Cowboy Killer | 1 |  |  |  |  | Wood Tips | 1 |  |  |  |
| Lalas | 1 |  |  |  |  | Wrap | 1 |  |  |  |
| Little Doink | 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Lucy | 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Nic Stick | 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Popper | 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Port | 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Square | 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Cloves |  |  | Chewing Tobacco | | | Pipe |  |
| Cloves | 14 |  | Dip | 20 |  | Pipe | 37 |
| No Response | 11 |  | Chew | 15 |  | Bowl | 6 |
| Clove Cigarette | 2 |  | No Response | 6 |  | Piece | 2 |
| Kretek | 2 |  | Chewing Tobacco | 5 |  | No Response | 1 |
| Cloves | 1 |  | Bacco | 2 |  | Cigar Pipe | 1 |
| Black | 1 |  | Chaw | 2 |  | Grandpa's Pipe | 1 |
| Black and Mild | 1 |  | Dirt | 2 |  | One Hitter | 1 |
| Blunt | 1 |  | Grind | 2 |  | Tobacco Pipe | 1 |
| Candy | 1 |  | Spit | 2 |  |  |  |
| Cig | 1 |  | No Response | 1 |  |  |  |
| Cigars | 1 |  | Bite | 1 |  |  |  |
| Cigs | 1 |  | Chewy | 1 |  |  |  |
| Clove | 1 |  | Fertilizer | 1 |  |  |  |
| Clove Cigs | 1 |  | Hammer | 1 |  |  |  |
| Cloved Cigarette | 1 |  | Lip Packer | 1 |  |  |  |
| Djarum | 1 |  | Lips | 1 |  |  |  |
| Hippie Ciggies | 1 |  | Muddy | 1 |  |  |  |
| Spliff | 1 |  | Snuff | 1 |  |  |  |
| Trash | 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Wrap | 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Loose Tobacco | | | Hookah | |  | Bidis |  |
| Tobacco | 20 |  | Hookah | 35 |  | No Response | 16 |
| No Response | 5 |  | Sheesha | 3 |  | Backwoods | 3 |
| Guts | 4 |  | Bong | 2 |  | Bidis | 3 |
| Loose Tobacco | 2 |  | Limp Squid | 2 |  | Blunt | 3 |
| Pipe Tobacco | 2 |  | Vape | 2 |  | Cigarillo | 2 |
| No Response | 1 |  | Huak | 1 |  | Joint | 2 |
| Fill | 1 |  | Pen | 1 |  | Leaf | 2 |
| Fummel | 1 |  | Smoke Pipe | 1 |  | Rello | 2 |
| Hash | 1 |  | Water Pipe | 1 |  | Wood | 2 |
| Leaf | 1 |  |  |  |  | Wraps | 2 |
| Loose | 1 |  |  |  |  | Beaties | 1 |
| Mook | 1 |  |  |  |  | Cinnamon Sticks | 1 |
| Pulp | 1 |  |  |  |  | Dutch Masters | 1 |
| Rello Guts | 1 |  |  |  |  | Feebees | 1 |
| Rollies | 1 |  |  |  |  | J | 1 |
| Rollup Guts | 1 |  |  |  |  | Natural | 1 |
| Taba | 1 |  |  |  |  | Rillos | 1 |
| Wood Pulp | 1 |  |  |  |  | Roll | 1 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | Rollup | 1 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | Rolly | 1 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | Swishers | 1 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | White Boy | 1 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | Whole Leaf | 1 |