

More activities

Activity

The time machine

Acting impulsively and making short-sighted decisions is part of the learning process for youth as they prepare for adulthood. But youth who are consistently unable to think about and plan ahead for the future tend to experience more negative outcomes, including delinquency and substance abuse.

Encouraging youth to picture and describe their desired future can help them learn to consider longer-term consequences when making important decisions, such as the decision to be nicotine free.

Writing a letter to their future selves is a way for them to acknowledge the difficulty of this choice, to congratulate themselves for making it and to remind themselves the reasons they chose not to vape or smoke.

Have the students seal their letters in an envelope with their name and date on the outside. Let them know that only they can open the envelope. Gather the envelopes and return them to the students at the end of the year (or at another time that you feel will be valuable for them).

Instructions for students

There are many reasons to choose to be nicotine free. For some young people, it's not worth the harm to their lungs, brain and other parts of their body. For others it might be the affect it has on mental health, or it could be the cost. Some youth worry about how smoking or vaping would affect them as an athlete or maybe they've seen the negative affects that smoking or vaping has had on a family member.

Consider what's important to you in your life and how these people or activities would be harmed by your choice to vape or smoke. What would you want to say to your future self if they're tempted to try vaping or smoking?

Write a letter to remind yourself what's important to you and why you've made this choice. Include both the reasons behind your choice and also why this matters to you. For example "Because vaping is expensive" could be one of your reasons, but why does this matter? Is there a hobby or activity that's important to you that you'd rather spend your money on?

And remember: this is not always an easy choice to make. Make sure to congratulate yourselves for saying 'no' and remaining committed to a vape-free and smoke-free future.