

Alpha Chi Omega

Vaping is Smoking: Conversation Starter

Opening Chapter Discussion:

Vaping has quickly become a common trend among college students. Most recently JUUL has dominated the e-cigarette market making it the most commonly used vaping device. According to the Center on Addiction, JUUL products account for over 70% of e-cigarette sales. Marketing comparisons between big tobacco companies and JUUL indicate that the flavored pods produced by JUUL have contributed to the significant use of JUULs by young people, particularly starting with high school students. This is similar to previous flavored tobacco products that have been banned through the years due to its appeal to young people and misconceptions about safety due to seemingly harmless flavors mimicking flavors such as fruits or desserts. Research done and reported by thetruth.com indicates that people who vape are four times more likely to start smoking cigarettes due to the high dose of nicotine contained in each JUUL pod. This information brings us to the conclusion demonstrated on the poster that while e-cigarettes may not be as harmful as cigarettes, safer does not mean safe.

What classifies as an e-cigarette?

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, e-cigarettes consist of four components which include:

1. A cartridge which holds a liquid solution containing of nicotine, flavorings, and other chemicals
2. A heating element
3. A power source
4. A mouthpieces that the person uses to inhale

Why is vaping like smoking?

The Center on Addiction states that the term e-cigarette is used because it does not produce tobacco smoke. Using an e-cigarette to vape is however the production of aerosol which simulates tobacco smoke and is the consumption of nicotine, just like smoking a cigarette.

Nicotine effects the brain.

Like other drugs, nicotine is absorbed in the bloodstream and then impacts the central nervous system, blood pressure, breathing and heart rate. The central nervous system controls most functions of the body and the two parts of the central nervous system are the spinal cord and the brain. As indicated on the accompanying poster, nicotine is highly addictive and continued use, which impacts the central nervous system and subsequently the brain, can lead to mood disorders and permanent lowering of impulse control.

Discussion Questions:

- Why do you think people choose to use e-cigarettes/JUULs?
- What were your previous beliefs about vaping?
- Did you know JUUL pods and other e-cigarette products contain high levels of nicotine? How does knowing this impact your perception of vaping?

Closing Chapter Discussion:

The Harm Reduction Alliance of Alpha Chi Omega, Pi Kappa Phi, Sigma Nu and Zeta Tau Alpha create educational posters to bring awareness and education to topics impacting the health and safety of collegiate fraternity and sorority members. Alpha Chi Omega specifically added to chapter bylaws at the beginning of the 2018-2019 academic year that e-cigarettes are part of the tobacco and smoking policy as this has become an increased issue chapters are addressing with members. This addition to the bylaws prohibits the use of e-cigarettes inside chapter facilities. As vaping continues in popularity it is increasingly more important for members to know the reality of e-cigarette products. The goal of discussing vaping is to educate members on the potential health impacts of choosing to vape.

Additionally, if a member is addicted to nicotine and would like to stop the use of e-cigarettes please visit resources such as your campus health and wellness office or resources such as thetruth.com to learn more about vaping and tobacco cessation and tips for quitting smoking.

Additional Substance Resources

Alpha Chi Omega website → Resource Center → VP risk management → Workshops & Presentations → GenerationRX Facilitation Guide & Presentation

References: Center on Addiction, National Institute on Drug Abuse, TheTruth.com