

Exploring the Impact of Vaping Maureen Underwood)

Presenter 1:

Name: Maureen Underwood

Organization: SWSLHD Youth Health Services

Position: Aboriginal Health Worker

50-word Biography / summary of expertise:

As a First Nations Health Educator from Cape York, I blend hands-on cultural learning with modern teaching. Using creative, interactive methods beyond PowerPoint, I engage young people meaningfully. My work addresses rising vaping rates among First Nations youth, combining tradition and contemporary health education to foster lasting wellbeing and resilience.

Background/ Overview of Workshop:

The Sensory Vaping Workshop is designed to educate First Nations youth about the harmful effects of vaping on their developing bodies. Through interactive, sensory-based activities, the program fosters awareness, encourages healthier lifestyle choices, and aims to prevent long-term physical and cognitive damage caused by vaping.

Target Audience:

Please select from the following:

- Young people (12 – 25 years)

Learning Objectives:

Upon joining SWSLHD Youth Health in 2024, I identified a critical gap in educating young people about the adverse effects of vaping, particularly on developing lungs and brains. Traditional methods weren't engaging enough to clearly convey these serious health risks. Recognizing the need for innovation, I designed the Sensory Vaping Workshop—a hands-on, culturally grounded experience.

Participants explore vaping's impact using tactile materials that represent key body systems affected by vape chemicals. Play dough models lung tissue, demonstrating damage to airways and reduced lung capacity. Slime represents the brain, showing how vaping interferes with cognitive function, memory, and emotional regulation—especially as the brain develops until age 25. Magic sand illustrates harmful chemicals in vape smoke and their disruptive effects on bodily functions. Beads depict “popcorn lung,” a condition linked to vaping that causes breathing difficulties and long-term respiratory issues.

This culturally grounded, hands-on approach draws from traditional First Nations learning and contemporary health education to engage youth in meaningful conversations. The workshop promotes informed decision-making, resilience, and community wellbeing by combining science, creativity, and cultural relevance.

Duration of workshop:

- 60 minutes

Will this workshop be co-presented with young people?

- Yes

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Disclosure of Interest Statement (example):

The Australasian Society for HIV, Viral Hepatitis and Sexual Health Medicine recognises the considerable contribution that industry partners make to professional and research activities. We also recognise the need for transparency of disclosure of potential conflicts of interest by acknowledging these relationships in publications and presentations.

For an example of a disclosure of interest statement please see below:

The Melon Institute and Metabolism Corp are funded by the University of Oxbridge, UK. No pharmaceutical grants were received in the development of this study.

Note: If accepted into the program you will be requested to include a disclosure of interest slide into your presentation or include such statements in your poster.