

Answers to Questions

Last month Partnerships were asked to submit questions for the I-STEP Executive Council to answer. The council met in early January and gave these answers. Our next meeting is March 16, 2013 so feel free to ask more questions before then. Send your questions to your CHC.

1. We would like more feasible ideas for high school students for street market activities. We have looked in the guidebook but a lot of our groups only meet for about 20 minutes at a time and it's hard to get a lot done in that time. What are some quick, useful activities that you would recommend?

-snow writing, -posters and flyers, -buttons, -cup the fence, -write on concession candy bars, -flash mob?, -tag it, -butt cleaning (picking up cigarettes)

2. We seem to have a disconnect with the students now, where they don't think smoking is a problem and they don't think being in a group like this is "cool." What would you suggest we do as adults to help them see this is a "cool" group?

-movie nights?
-we are all struggling

(Garin's suggestions: we are trying to counter this with the use of social media in general and YouTube movies in particular. I would also suggest that you look to partner with other groups and 'do' tobacco prevention events with them)

3. The WFF is a good idea, but we have trouble getting our own students to like their own FB pages they created for a group. Is there a way to have more monthly interaction so we know what I-STEP will be working on to prepare our groups? And what do you suggest in regards to social media, when our groups already have FB pages that aren't being used and then we ask them to share this information and join another group?

-video conference?, -monthly emails (council -> partnerships), -blog , -YouTube

(Garin's Suggestions: social media has to be social. I don't know of anyone that has the time, or permission from supervisors, to do it "Right". A Facebook (FB) page dedicated to strictly tobacco prevention is even harder, especially if you want it to focus on your local community or county. A FB page administrator can't wait for content to come to them, they have to be out looking for it, commenting on other pages, sharing other pages, and generally developing an on-line presence. ((That's the part supervisors usually object to)). It's also true that youth

are leaving FB and moving to Twitter. I'm trying to learn Twitter but the same suggestions I gave for FB would apply, you need to be engaged in social media for it to be effective, especially at reaching youth.

The reason we think we can do it at the state level is because we have a whole state to draw material from. The Turnyourbackontobacco FB page has had several posts about different schools using the WFF materials.

We're all still building up a youth program again so like my FB page, I'll like yours, we'll share each other's posts and if you have any tips about Twitter, please let me know.)

- a. For instance, we know at the Summit we picked all these dates to do something (like Thru with Chew) but what are some things we can do with the groups? It was nice when we had JEL and you would send us like the tin cans or the post-it activity. Is that something that we can go back to doing more of having monthly ideas sent our way when they connect with an event that the whole state should or could be doing?

-Facebook page?, -twitter?, -instagram, -texting // see our Through with Chew activities

Garin's suggestions: it took some doing but I think we're building up steam on sending out ideas and materials in a timely manner. It's not perfect yet but we have a Through With Chew Week post up on the CP page and KBD will follow soon. We are ordering more shirts with the WFF logo and are trying our hand at a video contest. I've also been contacted by an increasing number of Partnerships about coming and filming their youth groups. The more and varied media we have created and posted, the more interest there will be in creating and posting more.

4. Is there a good FAQ or YouTube video of I-STEP that we can share? I'm sure a lot of our groups aren't even aware of what I-STEP is or what you do.

-working on making ideas

5. We really struggle with recruitment ideas. More than just posters and an informational meeting with pizza, any thoughts?

-street marketing

6. The majority of our groups consist of females, which is fine, but do you have any ideas of how to recruit more males?

-tie in how it effects sports

7. We also find that it's hard to build on groups because students are in everything it seems, we have tried different times of day and the week. What do you suggest for those busy students?

-Incorporate sports, -have an activity during lunch

8. Some of our Sponsors seem disconnected....how can we get our faculty sponsor to be more proactive in their group? We want to establish self-sustaining groups where we as partnerships shouldn't have to go to every meeting, but we don't always get the most interactive faculty involved. Thoughts on this?

-ask other adults (not always from the school)

Can our coalition work on more than tobacco prevention, and still be in I-STEP?

Yes,

Can our coalition keep our name and continue to focus on helping our community, but add tobacco prevention to our list and be a part of I-STEP, too?

Yes

We used to have a JEL chapter –three or four years ago. How can we get an I-STEP group started at our school?

It would be good to know why a group should be started and what the group would do. A lot of times it may make more sense to join with another group (Like SADD, Student Council, GSAs, 4H, FFA, etc...) and talk to them about adding some tobacco prevention activities to what they are already doing. Also check out the I-STEP Chapter Resource Guide for information about stating a Chapter and ideas of things to do.

I would like some input from I-STEP about what has worked for starting new chapters and finding Advisors. Barriers we have had are not having any existing connections at schools, kids having too many activities/sports already, and block scheduling causing problems with finding meeting times.

Find someone at the school who already has a group similar to I-STEP going. Often times this is a SADD group but could also be FFA, 4H, Habitat for Humanity, or GSAs (gay, straight alliance). Just about any group will work. Often times these groups are looking for ideas/projects to 'do'.

Once you identify a group like that see if you can attend a few of their meetings. Mostly listen while at those meetings. See if there are areas/projects/goals the group has that would blend with tobacco control activities.

With our new focus on YouTube videos it may be worth talking to the school's theatre/drama teacher. Young artists are often eager to make web videos regardless of the message.

The following questions didn't get asked to the council, they will be in March. The answers to these questions right now are Garin's.

1. What do you do?

The Exec Council is responsible for creating and approving the messages I-STEP communicates. They are also the lead presenters at our summits and conferences.

2. Do you only discuss tobacco issues, or do you include alcohol and illegal drugs?

I-STEP is a tobacco prevention group/movement/idea. That's because the money that funds us and the law that created us say that's what we will focus on. That's not to say you can't have an I-STEP event that has elements of tobacco prevention and some other prevention too. We also think that with empowering messages like "I'm Worth Fighting For", the connection with other prevention messages is easy to do. It's just as real to say, I'm Worth Fighting For so I choose to be tobacco-free as it would be to choose to be drug free or alcohol free or to eat healthy or any other adolescent health issue.

2. Do/ and how do you provide support for teams?

We hope to be able to do more of this in the future. Right now we are providing Ideas for groups to consider and supporting those ideas with digital and on-line support. This could be a poster that can be printed out and links to a YouTube video we've created to support the idea. For February's Through With Chew Week and March's Kick Butts Day we will provide this information/support. We would like to provide physical materials, shirts, gear, props, a couple of times a year. We're still learning and growing.