W. Morrison & Associates Inc.

Canadian Cancer Society / Société canadienne du cancer

Tobacco Reduction Pilot Initiatives in the Educational Context:

Reflections on Lessons Learned

Submitted by

Canadian Cancer Society - New Brunswick Division
and
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Over the past three years several school-based initiatives have been undertaken to address concerns regarding tobacco use among students. Some of these initiatives have reflected partnerships between local schools and districts with regional Addiction Services and Public Health. Other tobacco-reduction activities have been implemented as a result of the efforts of particular key individuals including teachers, students and parents. The New Brunswick Anti-Tobacco Coalition that began in September 2001 identified the need to document the various activities occurring across a range of secondary schools in the province. In light of the identified interests and reports received from several schools, it was believed that the present time reflected a *fleeting opportunity* to highlight and share lessons learned from the development and implementation of school-based tobacco reduction activities.

In April 2002 a joint project was undertaken by the Canadian Cancer Society - New Brunswick Division and W. Morrison & Associates Inc. in partnership with Health Canada to document and examine the range of present tobacco reduction initiatives being piloted in secondary schools in the New Brunswick context.   The purpose of examining these efforts was to consider the current planning processes, implementation challenges and insights associated with piloting tobacco reduction activities in the school setting.   This data-gathering project encompassed a three-step process.   The initial phase entailed establishing the research design, reviewing various educational documents related to tobacco reduction, and formulating a list of potential participants who could be interviewed for this project. The second phase was initiated in mid-May and involved the development of a key informant interview questionnaire. Subsequently, interviews were completed with 33 key informants by mid-July. The final phase of this project involved the analysis of the interview protocols and completion of the final project draft. These aspects of the research were completed in August 2002.

This summary report provides an overview of the methodology and presents key results for each area of inquiry.   It is hoped that the insights highlighted in this report will be helpful, not only for increasing awareness of the current activities related to tobacco reduction, but also for strengthening the approaches and partnerships that contribute to the move towards sustainable smoke-free school environments.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the proposed project was to document the current activities and practices being undertaken during the 2001-2002 academic year in various secondary schools across the province.   In this research effort specific attention was given to gathering data related to preliminary planning processes, implementation activities and challenges, and the insights gained as a result of participation in these activities.   The following provides an overview of the methodology employed for the various data-gathering activities.

2.1 Project Participants

The initial key informant list was developed in consultation with the steering committee. The identified potential participants each had a key role or involvement in a school-based tobacco reduction initiative. Key informants were contacted for their possible participation in this project and the purpose of the proposed research effort was also explained to them.   From the 33 individuals who were contacted, all gave their consent for involvement in this project.   For participants, the anonymity of their individual responses was assured.

Key informants represented professionals from the educational system, addiction services, public health and various non-profit community agencies.   The backgrounds of those individuals interviewed were diverse and encompassed a wide range of training and professional experience related to the helping professions. Specifically, the background of key informants included the fields of nursing (12), education (11), social work (7), psychology (4), administration (2), and child and adolescent development (1).

2.2 Key Informant Interview Protocol

The initial review of relevant documents and research provided the basis for the development of key areas of inquiry for the interview protocol.   Questions for this interview format were open-ended to facilitate exploration of meaningful issues and experiences related to the development and implementation of tobacco reduction activities.   The final interview was comprised of fifty questions and was organized into four major sections:

- Planning Processes
- Implementation Activities and Challenges
- Present Practices and Evaluation
- Lessons Learned

Upon receiving consent a time was arranged with participants to complete the interview. Each individual interview session lasted from 40 to 80 minutes. Interviews were completed by phone or in person.

2.3 Analyses and Report Presentation

Following each interview, participant responses were typed to provide a written record. Upon completion of this data-gathering effort, content analysis was employed to identify key themes and categories within and across the various interview protocols. The final results are presented according to the initial areas of inquiry included in the interview protocol.

Within each report section key outcomes are presented using brief descriptive passages, theme statements and specific examples of tobacco reduction planning processes, activities and insights. In addition, the frequency of specific themes is also highlighted in parentheses following key statements.

3.0 PRELIMINARY PLANNING PROCESSES

The initial area of inquiry entailed a focus on the concerns, issues and present context that led to the preliminary activities associated with the various school pilot initiatives. In addition, interview questions invited participants to identify the specific planning activities that were undertaken at the outset of their initial efforts.

3.1 Concerns that Led to Preliminary Planning Activities

Key informants were initially asked to describe the specific issues and circumstances that led to heightened concern regarding tobacco use in the school context and that provided the basis for preliminary planning efforts. Several participants commented on the influence and impact of the smoking area on students' behaviours and attitudes. Other responses indicated increased staff and student recognition of smoking as a problematic issue. In some cases, this recognition resulted in requests and demands for action to be taken. Resources and personnel support were not formally in place in many instances to support these requests; however, the enthusiasm and energy of key individuals who shared their concerns and vision with others were important considerations in raising awareness and engaging the school community.

Impact of the Presence of a Smoking Area (7)
The presence of a smoking area facilitated experimentation with tobacco and other substances. Grade nine students, upon arriving at the school, perceived that it was permissible for them to initiate tobacco use. This potential influence was also believed to extend to other academic levels when middle or elementary grades were situated in the same school context. Participants also expressed concern that policies that permit smoking contrasted with messages that encouraged students to value their health. In addition, discipline problems tended to be linked with activity in the smoking areas of the school property.

Recognition of Student and Staff Concerns (13)
Many schools carried out informal surveys and needs assessments. Student and teacher responses generally suggested particular concern with the negative health effects and addiction associated with smoking. Several survey outcomes also indicated that many student smokers want to stop tobacco use, but do not have the necessary supports in place.

A Request for Action (13)
Initial planning efforts were often undertaken as a result of individual requests from students, parents, school staff or administration. Some preliminary plans were developed in conjunction with partnerships that existed in the school context (e.g. public health, addiction services). Other initiatives were developed or received momentum from efforts undertaken by feeder schools at the middle school level.

3.2 Risk Factors Associated with Initial Tobacco Use Among Students

As participants described the reasons that led to the development of specific initiatives, they also highlighted various risk factors they believed to be associated with the onset of tobacco use among adolescent students. The most frequently noted factor entailed lack of positive connection with organized group activities in the school context. Other respondents noted the potential influence of policies that permit smoking, as well as adult role models beyond the school context who do not discourage tobacco use. In addition, other reported reasons included curiosity, attempts to assert independence and using tobacco as a means to manage stress.

Lack of Positive Connection to an Organized Group or Activity **(19)**
According to participants organized activity may offer a protective effect against tobacco use by providing a sense of belonging to a group. Connection with non-smoking peers is essential. If friends and peers gather where smoking occurs, smoking may become an easy way to be accepted by a group. Some respondents suggested that students who do not have high self-esteem may be easily influenced by others, and have little experience in refusing persuasion or in being assertive. Respondents noted that many students often report that they initiate tobacco use when they begin smoking in the designated smoking area. This initial experimentation may quickly progress to more regular use.

Adult Role Models **(9)**
Students may be exposed to adult role models who smoke including parents, older siblings, and other community members. This may also include media figures who are well known to students and who use tobacco, may provide minimal encouragement not to smoke.

Smoking Permitted in School and Community **(8)**
Tobacco may be easily accessible, and its use maybe an accepted part of the community culture. New students arrive at the school and observe that an area is provided for smoking.

Attempts to Assert Independence **(7)**
Various respondents indicated that smoking, in some instances, is an attempt to assert their autonomy in the presence of perceived expectations and rules in the school context. In this regard, conforming to a specific image is deemed more important than taking into account the health effects associated with smoking. Prevention messages may have been delivered in the school setting; however, the health risks related to tobacco use are regarded as distant in the future.

Curiosity **(6)**
According to some participants, many students are curious about the temporary effects of tobacco. Boredom and lack of alternative activities are reported reasons for some students' initial experimentation with tobacco.

Difficulty with Stress Management **(4)**
A few respondents also indicated that some students initiate tobacco use because they believe it will help them cope with stress or anxiety. Other participants reported that curiosity often leads to initial experimentation; however, prolonged use tends to be related to students' attempts to deal with stressful events or interactions.

In addressing such risk factors, respondents identified two key considerations they believed to be important to include as part of their initial planning activities. These included ensuring supportive and accessible cessation programs for student smokers (12 respondents), as well as providing alternative activities and environments that would be smoke-free and appealing to all students (11 respondents).

3.3 School Planning Committees

As previously noted the research participants had either direct involvement or had provided consultation to a specific school-based initiative. Participants represented 20 schools that were presently planning or piloting activities related to reduction of tobacco use among students. Of these schools, 16 had formed committees to assist in the planning of tobacco-reduction activities. Approximately half of these planning committees regarded tobacco reduction as part of an overall comprehensive school health approach. Respondents indicated that committees should be representative of individuals and groups within the school context and should encourage active participation of all members. As one participant shared: *committees require enthusiastic and active support, not just silent agreement.* Committee members that were frequently mentioned included:

- Teachers (10/16)
- School administration (9/16)
- Public Health nurses (9/16)
- Parents (9/16)
- Students (8/16)
- Addiction Services social workers (7/16)
- Guidance counsellors (6/16)

The support of school administration was noted as an important consideration in the establishment of the planning committee and in the formulation of preliminary goals. A few respondents indicated that not securing administrative support had resulted in the need to re-plan and adjust expectations following considerable work and effort by the committee. In addition to involvement of school-based committee members, several respondents also mentioned that consultation and direct involvement of individuals beyond the school context should be considered. Some of the potential participants could include representatives from:

- Health professions (doctors, nurses, pharmacists, dentists)
- Non-profit service organizations (e.g. New Brunswick Lung Association and the Canadian Cancer Society)
- Youth agencies and youth clubs
- RCMP
- Neighbourhood community groups
- Local business community
- Municipal or provincial government

Various respondents emphasized the importance of providing potential community participants with background information about the goals and implementation of proposed plans and actions for tobacco reduction. In conjunction with this information, clarifying how they could become involved or contribute to such planning was an important consideration. In this regard, initially understanding the activities and mandate of particular community agencies was helpful in identifying potential opportunities for subsequent participation.

3.4 Preliminary Planning Activities

From respondents' sharing, the initial planning activities often involved a three-fold process. These included identifying priority needs and actions, establishing a work plan and timeline and providing notification of proposed plans to the school, home and community.

Overall, respondents emphasized the importance of understanding the needs, behaviours and attitudes within the current school environment prior to committing to specific plans or actions. In some instances, this involved gathering data related to both student and teacher perceptions regarding healthy behaviours and tobacco use. A variety of approaches were employed to obtain feedback from the school community. Some of these are as follows:

- Administered survey or need assessments questionnaire to teachers and/or students (12)
- Carried out informal discussion and brainstorming sessions with committee members (8)
- Formed a subcommittee to gather data and report back to planning committee (2)
- Held various focus group sessions with students (2 respondents)
- Used pre-existing data sources or information to prioritize and facilitate tobacco reduction planning (2 respondents)

All of the planning committees undertook some initial data gathering or sharing prior to deciding on specific plans or actions. Respondents spoke about the benefits of using multiple means for gathering data to support initial planning efforts. Understanding the individual profile of the school, as well as gaining insight into provincial and national trends were areas of identified interest by several participants. A few participants also indicated that the gathering of baseline data could also be potentially useful in conjunction with follow-up evaluation for measuring the effectiveness of implemented tobacco reduction activities.

Following debriefing of gathered data and research findings, committees subsequently identified priority needs and initiated discussion of potential actions. In some instances, consultation with partnership agencies and other identified health experts was included as part of the process for defining key areas of concern and important planning considerations. *Timelines and work plans* were established to execute initial planning efforts. For the majority of committees, preliminary planning efforts were considered in the context of an individual school year. Based on reports from participants, at least six of the identified committees developed goals, timelines and activities that spanned up to three years. In general, documented plans were not detailed but conveyed global objectives with flexible implementation schedules. These plans included such activities as phasing out smoking areas, introducing specific policies over time, and designing and implementing smoking prevention and cessation strategies.

In conjunction with the adoption of specific plans and actions, a few committees also undertook intentional steps to promote and secure support from students, teachers, parents and members of the wider community. This was accomplished through a variety of communication strategies including talk-mail, memos to parents, conversations with tobacco retailers, and presentations to the school staff and students.

3.5 Challenges and Responses

Key informants were also asked to describe challenges they faced during their preliminary planning activities. They were also asked to explain how these challenges were addressed or worked through.

Securing Commitment from all School Staff and Administration (6)
Various participants indicated that some committees experienced difficulty in obtaining support from all teachers and administration personnel prior to the undertaking of particular plans. In this regard the successful implementation of specific plans was potentially impeded because cooperation was not initially secured with specific staff members.

Addressing the Challenge
Some respondents emphasized the importance of including school staff through the preliminary planning activities. This could be done through regular communication of the committee's activities and by eliciting ongoing feedback from staff pertaining to their perception of key health concerns and needed actions. In addition, a few respondents indicated that presenting tobacco reduction to school staff as part of an overall wellness or comprehensive health strategy was a positive means by which to increase support for tobacco reduction activities.

Time and Situational Constraints (5)
In many committees additional time and effort were required at the outset of the school year to complete preliminary planning activities. At times, daily work demands and responsibilities interfered with regular attendance at committee meetings.

Addressing the Challenge
Various committees made decisions to undertake initial planning activities in the spring for the following academic year. In addition, respondents noted the importance of shared responsibilities, setting clear goals and maintaining a consistent focus during planning meetings. Others mentioned that the support received through partnerships with addiction services and public health was helpful in addressing both time and situational constraints.

3.6 Lessons Learned During Preliminary Planning Activities

Participants were also invited to consider specific insights or lessons they had learned as a result of their involvement in preliminary planning activities. Responses for this area of inquiry identified the importance of positive working relationships with emphasis on existing partnerships and recognition of needs and potential capacity.

Recognize Immediate Student and Staff Concerns
As previously noted, many schools carried out informal surveys and needs assessments. Consequently, many school committee members had the opportunity to consider and discuss specific realities associated with smoking within their local school context. The level of concern that was generated by such deliberations led not only to increased recognition of student and staff concerns but also a renewed commitment among some committee members to work towards plans that would result in reduction in smoking behaviours among students.

Foster Cooperative Efforts
Sharing the vision and work responsibilities among school personnel, students and partners was essential for undertaking and completing the preliminary data-gathering and planning activities. Some participants felt more confident and comfortable in leading and presenting specific plans to the school community when these actions were undertaken as a team effort.

Communicate Positive Messages
The words used to describe tobacco reduction activities should be positive and emphasize problem-solving and the building of solutions. For example, "*create* a smoke-free environment" might replace such expressions as "ban" or "impose". Positive messages facilitated constructive and open dialogue when challenges were encountered. Initiatives also benefited from enthusiastic support that affirmed the competency of committee members and the potential of the school as a place for positive change.

4.0 IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

This section describes the various tobacco-reduction initiatives that were developed and implemented in the schools identified by participants. In most instances, school-based tobacco reduction initiatives involved a range of implemented plans and activities. Such activities encompassed shifts in policy and school procedures, development of educational and prevention strategies and, implementation of cessation and follow-up programs. Other efforts that were identified addressed capacity building across several school communities with the intent of strengthening partnerships and encouraging sustainability. The various tobacco-reduction activities are organized under four key headings that describe the major type of strategy addressed within these initiatives. These include

- Increasing awareness of the impact of tobacco
- Ensuring a smoke-free environment
- Providing opportunities for reduction of tobacco use
- Building capacity among youth

Challenges associated with implementation are also discussed in conjunction with suggestions for addressing key areas of concern. At the close of this section the perceived impact of these efforts and the lessons learned as a result of implementation of the various tobacco reduction activities are considered.

4.1 School Strategies

4.1.1 Strategy #1: Increasing Awareness of the Impact of Tobacco

In several schools students and teachers received information on the composition of tobacco, its negative health effects, and the nature of its addiction. Messages were perceived as having a greater impact if they emphasized consequences of tobacco use that are currently relevant to students (e.g., sports and dating) rather than only consequences that will occur eventually.

- Examination of messages in advertizements for tobacco use
- Suggestions, resources and referrals for information and counselling
- Short, high impact presentations such as plays or skits
- Hands-on activities that show the effects of tobacco, for example, illustration of second-hand smoke, display a set of lungs with tumours
- Health fairs, Lungmobile
- Quizzes and games
- Issue a challenge to various students to be tobacco-free on May 31 (World Tobacco-Free Day) for that day
- Posters, pamphlets, information sessions and videos on tobacco use
- Class presentations by guidance counsellors or students
- Kiosks with information on tobacco
- Announcements over the P.A. system
- Information on the school website, with links to cessation programs

4.1.2 Strategy #2: Ensuring a Smoke-free Environment

Efforts to create smoke-free environments tended to span over more than one academic year. For example, the announcement of the upcoming policy change might be initially shared with the school community in the spring of the academic year. Over the summer physical changes would be made to the smoking area and new areas for smoke free student activities and social interactions would be designed. Consequently, introduction of new meeting places and the implementation of the smoke-free policy would begin in the fall of next school year. Several participants asserted the importance of not only addressing policy changes, but rather using changes in policy to complement and support other efforts intended to encourage healthy choices and reduction of tobacco use among students.

Planning
- Invite participation of school staff, students, parents, resource officers and community members
- Plan to change the appearance and function of the smoking area.
- Consider adjusting or eliminating the break times that provide opportunities to smoke
- Accommodate extra duty time required to supervise the revamped area.
- Develop consequences for violations of smoke-free policy that increase awareness or that promote positive health alternatives.

Announcements of Smoke-Free Environment
- Ensure words convey a positive message
- Deliver messages by talk mail
- Visit feeder schools and share with them about the smoke-free policy
- Post signs
- Display maps of non-smoking boundaries
- Send reminders to students in late August
- Deliver letters to local businesses informing them of the smoke-free policy and requesting their support
- Explain consequences of violation of smoke-free policies

Implementation
- Change smoking areas to a pleasant, welcoming smoke-free environment
- Discuss any concerns with smokers, police, local business and parents
- Hold activities in the redesigned area, e.g., BBQ
- Ensure the activities engage smokers and non-smokers

4.1.3 Strategy #3: Providing Opportunities for Reduction of Tobacco Use

Tobacco Reduction programs were offered in 12 of the 20 high schools represented by respondents. Programs were led by either peer educators (5) or by professional staff (8) within the school context. In various schools consultation regarding implemented cessation activities was provided by Addiction Services and Public Health staff. Some of the intervention approaches in use mentioned by participants included Ridgewood's *Peers BEST* and *Kick the Nic* programs. Other respondents identified particular francophone and bilingual programs such as *Une étape à la fois* (One Step at a Time, Canadian Cancer Society), *La gang allumée, Vivre sans fumée,* and v*ers une vie sans fumée.*

The majority of implemented programs supported a harm reduction philosophy. In this regard, students' reduction of tobacco use was viewed as an indicator of success for both the individual and the program. Specific programming components included both cognitive and behavioural approaches for reduction of tobacco use. Delivery of these strategies was generally characterized by supportive and client-centred interactions. Within these programs, peer and adult facilitators offered support and encouragement to students, whereas *lecturing* and *preaching*-type responses were not used. Respondents indicated that many of the skills acquired by students in these programs would assist them in their reduction of tobacco use in their present situation or at some time in the future. Some of the common program components highlighted by participants with respect to piloted tobacco-reduction activities are as follows:

Recruitment of Participants:
- Self-referral or student requests for a program
- Personal invitation from staff or school partners
- Peers ask their friends to join an activity with them
- Announcements, advertizements, promotions

Recruitment of Peer Tobacco Educators
- Invitation to entire student body
- Former smokers as peer leaders
- Recruited from existing peer educators

Reflection Activities
- Use pledges or contracts to ensure commitment
- Explore reasons, pros and cons of smoking and of quitting.
- Discuss negative effects, especially in regard to sports and dating
- Note quantity and frequency of tobacco use, sources of cigarettes, whether parents and siblings smoke, identify sources of encouragement for cessation

Action Activities
- Identify difficult situations, strategies to cope with withdrawal, and alternative actions to take instead of smoking
- Practice coping skills and relaxation exercises
- Establish a buddy to have as a support system
- Identify a practice quit day, complete this day and debrief the experience, identify challenges and alternative activities
- Establish a real quit day. Plan to keep busy with activities.
- Celebrate successes

Follow-up
- Follow-up students throughout the year
- Conduct a post-program survey

4.1.4 Strategy #4: Building Capacity Among Youth

Participants also identified various activities that were perceived as helpful for building capacity among student leaders in the design and delivery of tobacco reduction efforts. Three specific initiatives were highlighted, representing a school-based program, a regional effort and a provincial event.

A School-based Program: Teens Against Tobacco Use (TATU)
Teens are trained as peer tobacco educators. From this program peer educators are recruited from student non-smokers, experimenters and former smokers. They lead activities that relate to tobacco reduction, including cessation and prevention programs in the school setting.

A Regional Effort: Circle-Square Ranch
This annual program is offered to students from a number of regional schools who are interested in becoming, or who already are peer tobacco educators. Teachers and student services personnel accompany peer leaders for this two-day training conference. Activities are hands-on and require active participation of all participants. Conference activities include:

- learning about tobacco education, promotion, and cessation
- sharing activities
- exploring new ideas
- planning for the fall
- examining the role of leadership that they play
- examining how to talk to parents who are smokers

Youth Forum on Tobacco
A Youth forum was held in May 2002 that brought together 26 youths and 26 adults in an effort to build capacity within New Brunswick secondary schools. Initial steps were taken towards the development of a youth network that would work in conjunction with the New Brunswick Anti-Tobacco Coalition under the guidance of the Youth Council of New Brunswick. It is hoped that this forum will become an annual event and provide future opportunities for youth to share their insights regarding the reduction of tobacco use in the home, school and community contexts.

4.1.5 Strategy #5: Providing Follow-up and Support for Former Smokers

There were few examples of organized efforts to follow-up with students who had reduced or stopped smoking; however, several participants emphasized the importance of providing continued support for such students. Various suggestions were made regarding possible follow-up with former student smokers. These included providing accessible smoke-free meeting places and individual support to students following participation in a tobacco reduction activity.

Accessible Smoke-Free Meeting Places
In contrast to the presence of a smoking area, alternate and smoke-free environments should be accessible to former student smokers. These areas should be comfortable for them and provide a place in which to relax or to participate in activities they enjoy with others.

Individual Support and Follow-up
Following completion of a smoking reduction program or activity continued individual support could be maintained through peer-leaders or a buddy system. Supportive individuals could include student services personnel, addiction counsellors or public health nurses, former student smokers or peer leaders. At times these individuals will play an important role in not only supporting the smoke free efforts of students, but in providing encouragement for reconnection with specific support programs when necessary.

4.2 Challenges Associated With Implementation

Respondents were also invited to describe the specific challenges they experienced in the implementation of school-based initiatives. As with the preliminary planning efforts, securing support for implemented tobacco activities and working within the situational and time constraints of the school day were areas of identified challenge. Other reported challenges included the continued provision of smoking areas, identified safety concerns and resource considerations and the need to have translated copies of desired tobacco reduction programs.

Continued Provision of Smoking Areas (2)
Several participants indicated that the provision of a smoking area conveys the message that it is permissible to smoke and facilitates experimentation and regular use. Students who are attempting to reduce their tobacco use need an alternative place to go for breaks and during unstructured times.

Addressing the Challenge
Develop plans to adopt smoke-free policies and create smoke-free environments that are appealing places for students to meet and socialize.

Identified Safety Concerns (2)
When smoke-free policies are in place, parents and school staff may also express concern regarding the safety of students who leave the school property to smoke.

Addressing the Challenge
Encourage open dialogue among individuals from the school and community. Provide a rationale for smoke free places and work collaboratively to build solutions for addressing safety concerns. Consult with other schools that have successfully worked through similar areas of concern.

Translation of Desired Program Material (2)
Various participants also indicated the need to obtain copies of essential program material in French.

Addressing the challenge
Consult with partnership agencies and other schools regarding accessible material offered in French. Share resources and advocate for translation of useful or relevant document.

Resource Considerations (7)
Financial and personnel resources may be necessary to renovate smoking areas or to design attractive smoke-free areas for students. Other associated costs may include the purchase of key program components to be used with students (e.g. coping kits).

Addressing the challenge
Explore potential sources of funding and support through deliberations with the school-based committee. In light of the various partnerships represented on this working team, the opportunity exists for committee members to build joint-solutions and to share key resources.

4.3 Perceived Impact of the initiative

Overall, the majority of participants reported that the implementation of the planned smoking reduction activities during the past academic year had been well received by students and school staff. In particular, these initiatives served to renew interest in tobacco-related issues in the school context. In some instances, evidence of tobacco reduction among students was also observed. Others indicated that the initiatives helped to strengthen important working relationships with partnership agencies.

Reduction in Student Smoking Behaviour (11)
One school that had adopted a smoke-free environment reported that there was a reduction in the number of grade nine students who initiated smoking. Most students involved in cessation programs reduced their consumption but there were few reports of complete cessation. Several respondents indicated that for some students the opportunity to reconnect with a support program was an important an consideration in their eventual reduction and cessation of tobacco use.

Increased Interest in Tobacco Reduction Issues (10)
Initiatives resulted in increased dialogue on the effects of tobacco. There was a positive anticipation expressed regarding planned activities and events. Non-smokers reported their satisfaction with the initiatives. Smokers gave mixed feedback on initiatives, with some expressing support and others remaining uninvolved with specific tobacco reduction activities.

Strengthened School-Based Partnerships (6)
Students and school personnel became more aware of the potential roles that partnerships could play in addressing concerns regarding tobacco use. Strong representation on planning committees led to increased support and commitment. The Youth Forum promotional initiative strengthened the idea of a provincial presence, and encouraged people to seek future opportunities to meet and exchange ideas.

4.4 Measuring Effectiveness

Fourteen schools completed some kind of baseline measure. Nine others had completed an informal evaluation of specific activities. All respondents indicated that evaluation was an important aspect of tracking progress and sharing successes. Participants indicated that feedback was often requested regarding the potential impact of implemented activities. Ideally, effective evaluation procedures would be easily implemented and render data that would be useful for future planning efforts. The majority of respondents viewed evaluation as areas for continued development and an activity that would conceivably require consultation and support in formalizing specific plans to track potential change and progress. Participants also identified various indicators and variables that would be useful to consider in the development of evaluation measures and approaches for gathering data. These are as follows:

Smoking Attitudes and Behaviours
- Smoking or consumption rate
- Maintenance of reduction of use
- Motivation to quit
- Attitudes of smokers, experimenters and non-smokers
- Reasons for stopping and initiating smoking behaviours

Responses to Policy Changes
- Number leaving grounds to go to a smoking area
- Number of violations of smoke-free policy
- Awareness in the school and community regarding smoking-related issues
- Changes in school and municipal policy regarding smoking and smoke-free environments

Responses to Tobacco-Reduction Activities
- Attendance and satisfaction
- Knowledge and awareness of tobacco issues
- Perceived benefit of specific approaches
- Baseline student profile and follow-up (attitudes and behaviours)
- Requests for information or non-smoking materials
- Requests from staff to have a smoking cessation program
- Parent and community perceptions regarding implemented activities
- Testimonies from students about their progress and accomplishments

Additional Indicators
- Involvement in alternative activities to smoking
- Level of self-esteem and assertiveness

4.5 Lessons learned from Implemented Tobacco Reduction Activities

Lessons learned focused on the importance of involving students in the planning, development, and implementation of initiatives and activities. Participants also reported the need to have enthusiastic support from within the school to facilitate the participation of both students and school staff in planned activities. Recognition of positive progress toward personal goals and tobacco reduction were important aspect of encouraging ongoing student participation.

Create a Supportive Presence for Students During Break Times
During unstructured times peer leaders and other support individuals should take opportunity to meet and speak on a personal basis with students who are attempting to reduce their tobacco use. In particular, such supportive interactions would be an important aspect of follow-up after completion of a tobacco reduction program.

Involve Former Student Smokers as Peer Leaders
Messages about tobacco have more credibility if they come from former smokers. Intentional efforts should be undertaken to invite the participation of former smokers as key leaders or facilitators in smoking reduction activities. Other respondents indicated that students, who are in the process of reducing their tobacco use, should also be included as participants in these activities. Such involvement was viewed as beneficial because it not only supported students' attempts to continue their reduction efforts, but also assisted in increasing the understanding of others regarding the difficulties encountered in smoking cessation.

Encourage Flexible and Creative Activity Options
Planned activities were designed to be fun and interesting for students. For several schools the inclusion of relaxation exercises was a popular activity among students who were attempting to reduce their tobacco use. Several school committees also worked with the administration to identify appropriate time periods for holding tobacco reduction activities and events. Specific attention was given to selecting times that did not interfere with key instructional periods or that required students to sacrifice all of their break periods. Flexibility and collaboration among school personnel and committee members were identified as important planning considerations in structuring and scheduling such activities.

4.6 Present Practices and Next Steps

The majority of participants recognized that efforts undertaken by their respective school committee were only a starting point. In many instances, preliminary planning focused on delivery of a few program components implemented within a single academic year. In some cases, specific tobacco reduction activities were undertaken with policy support; whereas other schools identified plans to facilitate the phasing-in of a specific smoke-free policy. For all participants, organized opportunities to meet and exchange ideas with other students and school personnel were valued and regarded as useful for generating new insights for tobacco reduction. Similarly, the involvement of students, including both smokers and non-smokers, was viewed as critical for ensuring the successful implementation of effective tobacco reduction activities.

Many participants, in discussing future plans, described the benefits of developing a multifaceted approach that would address prevention, cessation and protection considerations of tobacco reduction. In addition, other respondents stressed the importance of working in the context of a wider school wellness and health framework. Specific examples were given on how tobacco reduction activities could be planned and organized according to instruction, environment, support and services. An example of this framework is presented in the appendix at the close of this report.

In terms of measuring effectiveness, program evaluation was an area identified for continued development. Many schools completed either formal or informal data gathering efforts at the outset of their program implementations; however, few schools considered or carried out specific follow-up research efforts. Overall, participants recognized the important role that evaluation could play in their planning efforts and in identifying best practice considerations regarding tobacco reduction.

With respect to future planning, several participants emphasized the importance of maintaining the support and momentum that had been created as a result of their preliminary activities. Such actions as ensuring regular meeting times, inviting direct involvement of youth in the planning process, as well as sharing successes with the school and wider community, were viewed as key considerations for supporting sustainable efforts in the school context.

5.0 KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR DEVELOPING SCHOOL-BASED PLANS FOR TOBACCO REDUCTION

At the close of the interview participants were invited to consider the specific advice or consultation they would provide to other school committees regarding actions to address tobacco use in the school context. This final area of inquiry facilitated respondents' sharing of key insights and lessons they had learned as a result of their participation in their respective tobacco reduction activities. The following presents an overview of the insights provided by respondents, as well as other key themes that emerged in their description of the preliminary planning and implementation phases of their school-based initiatives. The results of this aspect of the research are presented as key considerations for developing school-based plans for tobacco reduction. These considerations are presented under four major headings: Understanding Smoking Attitudes and Behaviours, Partnership and Planning Considerations, Tobacco Reduction Strategies and Approaches, and Student leadership and Influence.

5.1 Understanding Smoking Attitudes and Behaviours

Base-Line Data Gathering Outcomes Often Provide Useful Data for Preliminary Planning Efforts
The completion of surveys and needs assessments were identified as helpful for understanding smoking attitudes and behaviours in the school context. Such data provided a basis for discussing areas of concern and potential actions that could be undertaken in the school setting. In addition, preliminary data-gathering could be used as a baseline from which to track progress and measure effectiveness of implemented activities.

Use Multiple Sources of Data to Provide Insight into Behaviours and Attitudes Regarding Tobacco in the School Context
Respondents spoke about the benefits of using multiple means for gathering data to support initial planning efforts. Example research approaches included surveys, needs assessments, focus groups, brainstorming sessions and pre-existing data sources. Consultation with local universities or researchers may be helpful in developing appropriate evaluation approaches early in the planning process.

5.2 Partnership and Planning Considerations

Committees Require Enthusiastic and Active Support, not Just Silent Agreement.
Participants reported that committees should be representative of individuals and groups within the school context and should encourage active participation of all members.

Share Responsibilities, Set Clear Goals and Maintain a Consistent Focus During Planning Meetings
In light of the work demands and responsibilities of committee members, a regular meeting time and a definite structure were beneficial in addressing time and situational constraints. Similarly, breaking tasks into manageable units and bringing closure to specific goals provide committee members with a sense of accomplishment and motivation to initiate new steps.

Secure Support and Commitment from School Administration and Leadership at the Outset of the Planning Process
Some participants indicated that school committees encountered difficulty in carrying out some of their preliminary plans because administrative support had not been consulted during the planning process. In contrast, feedback and support from school leadership was viewed as helpful in formulating appropriate and effective approaches for implementation of tobacco-reduction activities.

Clarify how Partners may Contribute to Specific Planning and Implementation Efforts
Various respondents emphasized the importance of providing partnership organizations and representatives with background information about the goals and implementation of proposed plans and actions for tobacco reduction. In conjunction with this information, clarifying how they could become involved or contribute to such planning was an important consideration.

School-Based Plans for Tobacco Reduction Should Elicit Support from Parents and the Wider Community
Participants indicated that tobacco may be easily accessed by students and be an accepted part of the community culture. Promoting school-based plans within the community and seeking support from parents, local businesses and agencies may serve to extend the potential influence of the proposed plan both in and beyond the school environment. Ongoing communication with community members may be undertaken through such means as talk mail, memos to parents, conversations with tobacco retailers, and presentations by students and school personnel.

Address Community Concerns Regarding Tobacco-Reduction Activities and Changes in Smoking Policy
Encourage open dialogue among individuals from the school and community. Provide a rationale for smoke-free places and work collaboratively to build solutions for addressing identified concerns.

Communicate Understanding Regarding the Difficulty of Reducing Tobacco Use
In planning tobacco reduction activities, participants emphasized the importance of recognizing that addiction is strong and that reduction of use is difficult. Student smokers often have strong social ties to their smoking peers and this may make it even more challenging to reduce their tobacco use.

Communicate Positive Messages
Communicate messages with language that emphasizes the positive aspects of being smoke-free. The words used to describe tobacco reduction activities should be positive and emphasize problem-solving and the generating of solutions. For example, "*create* a smoke-free environment" might replace such expressions as "ban" or "impose". Positive messages facilitated constructive and open dialogue when challenges were encountered. Initiatives also benefited from enthusiastic support that affirmed the competency of committee members and the potential of the school as a place for positive change.

5.3 Tobacco Reduction Strategies and Approaches

Smoke-Free Policies Should be Addressed Within a Multifaceted School-Based Plan.
The removal of smoking areas and the establishment of smoke-free expectations represent shifts in policy and in the enforcement of rules. It is imperative that such efforts be accompanied by actions and support mechanisms that assist students in making healthy choices and that result in reduction of tobacco use. Overall, respondents recognized that the development of smoke-free policies and tobacco reduction activities were both essential considerations in moving towards a smoke-free school environment.

Provide Structured Activities that Appeal to Both Smoking and Non-Smoking Students
Many participants emphasized the importance of providing alternative activities to smoking in which all students, both smokers and non-smokers could become involved. The criteria for involvement in such activities would require flexible and inclusive programming. In addition, structured activity options would need to be appealing and of interest to students. In general, participants viewed positive involvement in organized group activities as an important consideration and a protective factor for assisting students to remain tobacco-free.

Redesign Smoking Areas to be Accessible Smoke-Free Meeting Places
In contrast to the presence of a smoking area, alternate and smoke-free environments should be accessible to former student smokers. These areas should be comfortable for them and provide a place in which to relax or to participate in activities they enjoy with others.

Express Consequences of Smoking in Terms that are Relevant to Students
Consequences of tobacco use must be expressed in a context that is relevant to the experience of students(e.g. sports ,dating), as well as in terms of the health effects that will occur in the future.

Tobacco-Reduction Initiatives may Include a Wide Range of Skill-Building Activities such as Stress Management, Making Healthy Choices and Setting Personal Goals.
Respondents indicated, as with other addictions that some students continued to smoke as a means of dealing with the present stress or areas of personal concern. In various initiatives, student smokers provided positive feedback regarding the skills they had acquired that had increased their coping and problem-solving abilities.

Delivery of Tobacco-Reduction Activities Should be Characterized by Supportive and Student-Centred Interactions.
Participants asserted that tobacco reduction activities should be carried out in a manner that conveys respect for smokers and non-smokers. Students need to receive acknowledgement of their accomplishments in becoming tobacco-free.

Provide Follow-up for Students Who Have Reduced their Tobacco Use
There were few reported examples of organized efforts to provide follow-up with students who had reduced or stopped smoking; however, several participants emphasized the importance of providing continued support for such students. Following completion of a smoking reduction program or activity, continued individual support could be maintained through peer-leaders or a buddy system.

Integrate Tobacco Reduction Activities in the Context of the Wider School Health Framework
Several respondents stressed the importance of working in the context of a wider school wellness and health framework. Specific examples were given on how tobacco reduction activities could be planned and organized according to instruction, environment, support and services. An example of this framework is presented in the appendix at the close of this report.

5.4 Student Leadership and Influence

Ensure Students are Represented in the Planning, Implementation and Evaluation of Tobacco Reduction Activities
Respondents emphasized the importance of including students as active committee members. Student feedback was viewed as critical in designing tobacco-reduction activities that would be relevant to the school context and that would be readily accepted by other peers.

Involve Former Student Smokers as Peer Leaders
Messages about tobacco have more credibility if they come from former smokers. Intentional efforts should be undertaken to invite the participation of former smokers as key leaders or facilitators in smoking reduction activities.

Build Capacity by Providing Opportunities for Peer Leaders to Meet and Share Experiences
During the past academic year various forums were held in which student leaders had the opportunity to meet and exchange lessons learned regarding their respective tobacco reductions activities. These were completed both on a regional and provincial level. Feedback from these events has been very positive and plans are underway in several regions to plan similar events.

6.0 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The outcomes of this project provide some insight into the experiences of various individuals who worked in conjunction with the planning and implementation of tobacco reduction activities in the school setting. The data gathered includes feedback based on participant involvement within a range of strategies that reflect unique school applications with varying program components and evaluation methods. The identified lessons learned highlighted in this final section of the report are intended to provide a basis from which school personnel, students, parents and community service providers may review their present efforts and reflect on possible directions for the future.

In terms of specific limitations, it is recognized that given the diversity of experience, participant's stories may not always be applicable or pertinent to all school-based tobacco-reduction efforts. In addition, this project was not designed to evaluate specific prevention or cessation programs and does not identify preferred or ideal approaches for addressing tobacco reduction; however, the process of encouraging individuals to share their experiences facilitates dialogue regarding best practice issues and possible directions for further research and enhanced practice.

A meaningful aspect of the data gathering involved the sharing of stories, concerns and a commitment to make a difference in the lives of students in the school setting. It is hoped that the dialogue that has been initiated among various school personnel and service providers will continue and that the outcomes of this project, as well as others undertaken in the future will support this ongoing effort.

APPENDIX A

Comprehensive school health approaches

Comprehensive school health is an integrated approach to health promotion that
- involves a broad spectrum of programs, activities, and services
- takes place in schools and in their surrounding communities
- helps reach students and promote health within and beyond the classroom
  (Health Canada, 2002)

Instruction
Teachers, students, administrators, parents and health professionals all contribute to increasing students' awareness of the physiological and psychological impact of using tobacco products. Instruction provides opportunities for students to acquire knowledge, attitudes and skills to live a healthy life. The framework uses active health promotion through comprehensive curriculum, varied materials, lifestyle-focussed physical education, guest speakers, health fairs, and varied learning strategies.

Services and Support
Services and support include people and programs that support student health by strengthening the students' support networks and encouraging the active involvement of key individuals who will positively impact the learning process. Peers, families, school staff and others in the community convey support by modelling healthy behaviours.

Healthy Physical Environment
A clean and safe physical environment helps prevent injuries and disease, and facilitates pro-health behaviour. The encouragement to smoke can be reduced in various locations, with the help of parents, administrators and community leaders. Creating friendly places with smoke-free policies support these efforts.

Example school-community participation through comprehensive school health: *An approach for tobacco reduction*

Key:
A =   Administrators
C =   Community Groups & Services
H =   Health Professionals
M =   Media
P =   Parents
S =   Students
SD =   School District Staff
T =   Teachers

	Instruction	Services & Support	Environment
Classroom	(T) Include materials and activities from an approved program	(T) Start a peer helper program for smoking reduction	
Home	(A,P) Involve parents in take-home activities		(P,H,M) Encourage parents to quit smoking
School	(S) Design and display anti-smoking ads in the school	(A,H) Conduct a tobacco health needs assessment in the community (P,S) Support school policies and peer helper programs	(A) Create friendly places in the school for students to gather (A) Adopt a smoke-free policy for the school
Community	(T,H) Design and support health fairs (H) Support peer programs	(C, S, P) Monitor tobacco sales to minors in local stores (P, T, SD) Organize an information meeting for parents	(C,H) Advocate for smoke-free public spaces
School District	(SD) Approve and support a mandatory health curriculum. (SD) Support learning-related activities		(SD) Adopt a smoke-free policy for district facilities

(from DASH, 2001)

APPENDIX C

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