
truth® debunks myth that vaping nicotine relieves stress

Breath of Stress Air underscores connection between vaping nicotine and mental health and encourages young people to trade stress air for fresh air by quitting vaping

WASHINGTON, D.C. (March 11, 2022) – truth®, the proven-effective and nationally recognized youth smoking, vaping and nicotine prevention campaign from Truth Initiative, is expanding its groundbreaking [It's Messing with Our Heads: Depression Stick campaign](#) that first exposed the connection between vaping nicotine and youth mental health. The new [Breath of Stress Air](#) effort busts the fantasy that vaping nicotine is a stress reliever and calls the tobacco industry out for promoting e-cigarettes and vaping as a way to deal with stress, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, when in fact [vaping nicotine can increase stress levels](#) and amplify feelings of anxiety and depression.

The *Breath of Stress Air* effort comes on the heels of Surgeon General Vivek Murthy issuing an advisory on the state of mental health among young people as an “urgent public health crisis,” and coincides with the on-going youth e-cigarette epidemic. According to the latest December 2021 [Monitoring the Future Survey](#) (MTF) report, nearly 20% of high school seniors used e-cigarettes in the past 30 days.

Through a multi-platform campaign, [Breath of Stress Air](#) employs typical wellness content, tropes and visuals and then flips the script to debunk the myths so that young people can see vaping nicotine for what it can be: an amplifier - not an alleviator - of stress.

Breath of Stress Air premieres during March Madness on March 13th and will reach young people who need support and share resources to quit vaping nicotine and prevent others from ever starting in the first place. In addition, **truth** will partner with TikTok influencers and offer social extensions like a Snapchat lens to turn stress into de-stress and denormalize vaping among young people.

“The tobacco industry has a long history of attempting to distort public perception about its products and has even used a global pandemic to promote the false claim that vaping nicotine can relieve stress. We are putting the power back in the hands of young people by spotlighting the truth and raising awareness that vaping nicotine not only impacts physical health, it also can increase stress levels and worsen anxiety symptoms,” said Robin Koval, CEO and President of Truth Initiative. “We know that when young people have the facts, they make the right



decisions. That’s why our goal for the *Breath of Stress Air* effort is to educate young people about the mental health impact of vaping nicotine, denormalize its use, and normalize quitting by offering resources like This is Quitting, the free quit vaping text message program from **truth** designed specifically for youth and young adults that is already helping nearly half a million young people quit nicotine for good.”

Truth Initiative collaborated with creative partner, **Mojo Supermarket**, to develop the campaign.

“As many e-cigarette companies continue to infiltrate the mental health space by positioning their product as a stress reliever, we knew that we needed an equally calculated strategy to debunk that myth so that young people could see vaping nicotine for what it can be: a stress multiplier. With *Breath of Stress Air*, the goal was to tap into the wellness content Gen Z is actively seeking out every day, and subvert it to reveal the truth – that if you’re feeling stressed and anxious, your nicotine vape could be making it worse,” said Jono Paull, Group Creative Director of Mojo Supermarket.

Helping Young People Quit

A Truth Initiative [survey](#) found that 93% of e-cigarette users reported that vaping negatively affected their lives because it made them feel more stressed, depressed, or anxious, while 90% of those who quit said they felt less stressed, anxious, or depressed. In an effort to bring this core finding to light, **truth** is uplifting the stories of real young people as part of its “Quitters” series. Each story shares the impact of nicotine addiction on real young people and their mental health, as well as details their journey to quit. One such story comes from [Parker, a 20-year-old college student](#). Parker started using e-cigarettes in high school and recently quit with the help of This is Quitting from **truth**. He shares: “I recognized that for me, vaping doesn’t prevent anxiety—it is the cause of it. And since quitting, I am a more healthy person both mentally and physically. I think it’s really important to share my experience since I know how much it can help.”

Connecting young people with resources is a key component of the campaign. This is Quitting from **truth** is a first-of-its-kind text message quit vaping program that is helping more than 420,000 young people on their journey to quit. The program is free and anonymous. Young people can enroll by texting “**DITCHVAPE**” to **88709** to get help. A [randomized clinical trial](#) found that young



adults aged 18-24 who used This is Quitting had nearly 40% higher odds of quitting compared to a control.

Take A Breath And Take Action

Breathing exercises can help with nicotine cravings that cause stress and anxiety. For this reason, **truth** has also launched a partnership with Breathwrk through [This is Quitting](#). Program users can access six months of free membership to Breathwrk Pro including access to custom breaths to help on their quit journey by texting “BREATHE” to 88709. “Breathing exercises have been proven to help manage feelings of anxiety, stress, and cravings,” said Davi Brown, Head of Education at Breathwrk. “We are proud to partner with **truth** and This is Quitting to bring young people science-backed, free breathing techniques to aid those looking to quit e-cigarettes.”

Young people nationwide are mobilizing online and in person by taking a breath as a means to demand action from decision makers to declare vaping a mental health issue. The campaign will culminate in a Moment of Action on April 27th. Anyone can join the movement by visiting: thetruth.com/mentalhealth2022.

Truth Initiative is partnering with the National Council for Mental Wellbeing and Crisis Text Line to provide resources directly to young people. Additional resources for young people struggling with mental health or those who want to quit vaping are available at thetruth.com. More information about the campaign can be found at BreathofStressAir.com. Additional information about the connection between vaping nicotine, stress and mental health is available at: truthinitiative.org.

About Truth Initiative®

Truth Initiative is a national public health organization dedicated to achieving a culture where all young people reject smoking, vaping and nicotine and a future where tobacco and nicotine addiction are a thing of the past. In 2020, we celebrated 20 years of saving lives and preventing millions of youth from smoking. Our impact has helped drive the teen smoking rate down from 23% in 2000 to under 3% in 2021. The truth about tobacco and the tobacco industry are at the heart of our proven-effective and nationally recognized **truth**® public education campaign. As youth e-cigarette use threatens to addict a new generation to nicotine, we are leading the fight against tobacco and nicotine addiction in all forms. Our rigorous scientific research and policy studies,



community and youth engagement programs supporting populations at high risk of using tobacco, and innovation in tobacco dependence treatment are also helping to end one of the most critical public health battles of our time. Based in Washington D.C., our organization, formerly known as the American Legacy Foundation, was established and funded through the 1998 Master Settlement Agreement between attorneys general from 46 states, five U.S. territories and the tobacco industry. To learn more, visit truthinitiative.org.

About truth®

truth is the longest-running and most successful national tobacco prevention campaign for youth and young adults. The campaign delivers the facts about tobacco use and the marketing tactics of the tobacco industry so that young people can make informed choices and influence others to do the same. We are credited with preventing millions of young people from becoming smokers and are equally committed to achieving the same results in ending the youth e-cigarette epidemic, including by helping young people quit with our first-of-its-kind quit vaping program for teens and young adults This is Quitting. **truth** is part of Truth Initiative®, a national public health organization dedicated to achieving a culture where young people reject smoking, vaping, and nicotine. Learn more about **truth** and the organization behind it at thetruth.com and truthinitiative.org.

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