



RECOVERY & PREVENTION  
RESOURCES  
of Delaware and Morrow Counties

# Youth Tobacco Use Prevention

Morrow County Prevention Programs  
2006 Summary Report

## Youth Tobacco Use Prevention: Keep A Clear Mind and TAR WARS

Evidence-based youth tobacco prevention is a key component of comprehensive tobacco prevention and control. Since experimentation with tobacco begins by late elementary school, the Morrow County Tobacco Project provides two programs reaching 5th grade students— *Keep A Clear Mind* and *Tar Wars*.

*Keep A Clear Mind* is a Model Program recognized by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention. It is a take-home substance abuse education program based on a social skills training model targeting 5<sup>th</sup> grade students and their parents. It consists of four weekly sets of activities which children and parents complete together. It also includes four parent newsletters and incentives for program participation. The weekly activities consist of written and discussion materials which address the harm asso-

ciated with use of alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana. Each weekly lesson also includes information and practice in using refusal and resistance skills. Staff selected this program based on the importance of impacting parental beliefs and supporting parent-child dialogue in the prevention of tobacco use by youth. This program also effectively involves parents with their children as they begin to make critical decisions about the use of tobacco and other substances.

*Tar Wars* is a tobacco-free education program recommended by the American Academy of Family Physicians and is designed to modify attitudes and knowledge about tobacco. Dr. Brian Bachelder presented the program and helped to coordinate the poster contest. Implementation of *Tar Wars* utilizes the

credibility and stature that physicians have in the county with children and their families. This collaboration also strengthens collaboration with the medical community around issues of tobacco prevention and control.

By combining these two prevention programs, *Keep a Clear Mind* and *Tar Wars*, 5th grade students in Morrow County receive consistent strong messages from all key adults about the harmful effects of tobacco and skills to resist tobacco use.

In the 2005- 2006 school year, approximately 430 fifth grade students from eight schools received the *Keep A Clear Mind* program to complete with their parents and/ or *Tar Wars*.

### Over 84% of participants reported never trying a cigarette or smokeless tobacco

The *Keep a Clear Mind* (KACM) and *Tar Wars* programs stress the importance of saying no to tobacco. The programs teach about the harm associated with using tobacco and skills to say no when given the opportunity to use.

At the end of the program, 89% of 5th grade students reported never smoking a cigarette, even one or two puffs. 94% of participants reported never smoking an entire cigarette. At the end of the program, 94% of 5th grade students reported never using smokeless tobacco like chew or dip.

Of the students who completed a pre and post test assessment, only 3.7% reported trying smokeless tobacco and 4.5% reported trying cigarettes during the program year.

Of the 6% students who reported smoking an entire cigarette the age of initiation was:  
8 years or younger: 3.7%  
9-10 years: 1.5%  
11- 12 years: 0.5%

Of the 6% students who reported using smokeless tobacco the age of initiation was:  
8 years or younger: 3.2%  
9-10 years: 2.6%  
11- 12 years: 0.2%

#### Program Report:

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#### PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- 94% of participants reported never smoking an entire cigarette and 94% reported never using smokeless tobacco like chew or dip.
- 88% of participants reported that if their best friend offered them a cigarette they would definitely not smoke it and 93% reported that if their best friend offered them smokeless tobacco they would definitely not use it.
- 91% of participants thought that young people who smoke cigarettes “definitely do not” look cool and 92% thought that young people who use smokeless tobacco “definitely do not” look cool.
- Of the parents who completed all the lessons: 22% talked with their children about substance use at least 5 times in the previous month and 91% talked with their children about resisting peer pressure to use.



## Keep A Clear Mind helps parents and children talk about substance use

Research is clear that when parents provide clear and consistent no-use messages to their children, these young people are less likely to use alcohol, tobacco or other drugs. In fact, clear parental expectations is more important than any other protective factors that a child or teen can have in predicting substance use. The *Keep a Clear Mind* program facilitates parent-child dialogue about the use of alcohol, tobacco and marijuana. Together, parents and their children learn about the dangers of these substances and practice ways

to say no. As part of the lessons, parents learn about their important role and have the opportunity to communicate with their child the expectation that their child will not use these substances.

As a result of the family-based *Keep a Clear Mind (KACM)* program, parents indicated the following results:

- 75% of the parents reported completing all of the KACM lessons with their children.
- Of the parents who completed all the lessons: 22% talked with their children about substance use at least 5 times in the previous month and 91% talked with their children about resisting peer pressure to use within the last month.
- Of the parents who did not complete all the lessons, only 14% talked as often with their children about substance abuse. 84% reported talking about peer pressure with their children within the last month.

## Participants report a firm intention never to use tobacco reflecting increased perception of harm

Participants in the KACM and Tar Wars program were asked to report if they thought that they would be using tobacco in the next five years.

- At the end of the program, 78% of participants reported that they would “definitely not” be smoking cigarettes five years from now.
- 89% of program participants reported that they would “definitely not” be using smokeless tobacco five years from now.
- 7% of participants strengthened their intent not to smoke cigarettes by the end of the program and 6% increased their intent not to use smokeless tobacco by the

end of the program.

- 88% of participants reported that if their best friend offered them a cigarette they would definitely not smoke it and 93% reported that if their best friend offered them smokeless tobacco they would definitely not use it.

Youth are less likely to use when they perceive tobacco use as harmful and not acceptable by their peers.

- At the end of the program, program participants thought that young people “definitely do not” look cool if they smoke cigarettes (91%) or if they use smokeless tobacco (92%).

- At the end of the program, program participants thought that young people “definitely do not” have more friends if they smoke cigarettes (57%) or if they use smokeless tobacco (65%).
- By the end of the program, participants increased their knowledge about tobacco products significantly, including changing the participants’ perception of harm.

The average score on the knowledge portion of the evaluation increased from 8.58 to 9.04 by the end of the year. 46% of program participants increase their knowledge by the end of the program.

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## Program participants had decreased exposure to secondhand smoke

By the end of the program, 22% of program participants had decreased exposure to secondhand smoke in their homes and 16.6% had decreased exposure in cars. 7% experienced decreased exposure to secondhand smoke in both their homes and in cars.

56% of participants reported being exposed to indoor secondhand smoke in the previous seven days. 51% reported being exposed to secondhand smoke in a car in the previous seven days.

At the end of the program, 79% of program participants said that smoke from other people’s cigarettes is definitely harmful to them. 13.5% of program participants increased their perception of harm about secondhand smoke by the end of the program.

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