



# UNFILTERED FACTS

# VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK







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## About This Toolkit

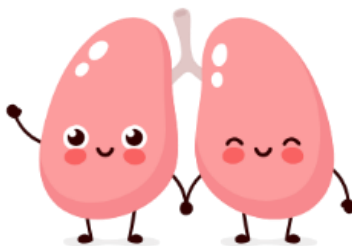
This toolkit has been designed to introduce you to the real, **uncensored** and **unfiltered** facts about the tobacco and vaping industry. You will learn how to use your voice to make a difference in the city of Hamilton and beyond. As you move through this toolkit, you will explore the impacts youth have made through Unfiltered Facts, learn about the hard-fought battles between Tobacco Control and the Tobacco Industry, gain fundamental knowledge on how tobacco and vaping affect health and how the industry is targeting youth. Finally, you will be guided on how to **take action** through school, community or online activities that will make a meaningful impact within the community by denormalizing tobacco/vaping product use.

**Note:** In this document, any reference to tobacco refers to **commercial tobacco** products and not traditional or sacred tobacco. We acknowledge that Indigenous peoples have used traditional or sacred tobacco for thousands of years in ceremonies, prayers, and healing rituals before the existence of commercial tobacco. **Commercial tobacco differs from traditional or sacred tobacco**, both in how it is grown and how it is used.

This document is best viewed on a personal desktop computer or a laptop with Macros enabled.

Hey! I am Alvi and this is my twin Alvo.

We are your lung buddies, and we will be tagging along as your guides throughout this toolkit. Let's get ready to learn, explore and uncover the truth together!





# UNFILTERED FACTS

## Unfiltered Facts

### Background

**Unfiltered Facts (UFF)** is Hamilton's youth health advocacy group with a rich history. UFF uses creative engagement strategies to provide youth with the **unfiltered** and **uncensored facts** about health issues that affect them.

### Our Mission

To provide youth with **unfiltered** and **uncensored facts** about the tobacco and vapour product industry and advocate for policies that affect them.

### Our Goals

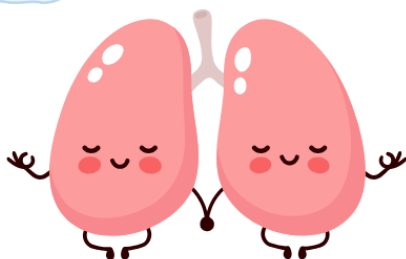
- Educate and inform youth about the deceptive marketing practices used by the industry to target them.
- Empower youth to be above the influence of the tobacco and vapour product industry.
- Provide ways for everyone to get involved, build skills, and take action on issues that are important to them.

### UFF History

## Unfiltered Facts: The Origin Story



Our reaction when youth take action and shake things up. We know the **difference you** can make.







## Tobacco Control

### Tobacco Control History

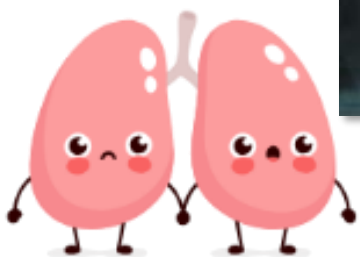


### What is Tobacco?

**Tobacco** are plants (*Nicotiana tabacum* and *Nicotiana rustica*) that contain a naturally occurring addictive chemical called **nicotine**.<sup>1</sup> **Nicotine** has strong effects on the **brain and body**.<sup>1</sup>

- **Traditional tobacco:** Plants that are cultivated and used for sacred ceremonies and healing practices by Indigenous peoples in North America.<sup>1</sup> It is generally not smoked.<sup>1</sup>
- **Commercial tobacco:** Tobacco with added harmful chemicals.<sup>1</sup> It was created by the industry to take advantage of the addictive nature of the plant to get people hooked and become regular users.<sup>1</sup> The industry produces many commercial tobacco products such as cigarettes, cigars, snuff, chewing tobacco, and hookah. <sup>1</sup>

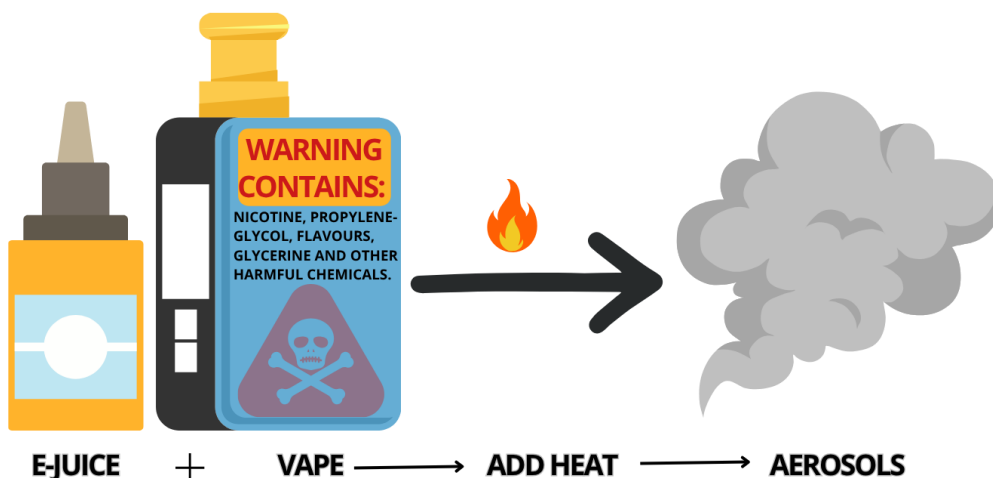
Oh look, that's  
**Tar**. It never  
leaves us alone!





## What is Vaping?

**Vaping** is when you breathe in and out an aerosol (mixture of small particles in a gas) made by a vapour product.<sup>2</sup> Unlike smoking, there is no burning involved with vaping.<sup>2</sup>



**Vape aerosols are NOT harmless water vapour.** They contain harmful chemicals that are inhaled into your lungs.

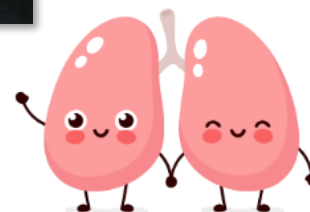
Vaping devices are battery powered and may have removable parts.<sup>2</sup> There are two main types of vaping devices that come in different shapes and sizes: (1) open vaping devices – you refill the device yourself by adding the liquid into a tank or pod and (2) closed vaping devices – these are single use disposable devices or devices that have replaceable or refillable pods.<sup>2</sup>



Check out how vaping affects your health.

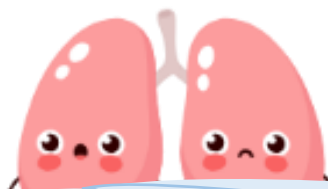
[Click Here](#) and [Here](#)

**TIP:** hold CTRL key and then click.





## Contributing Factors

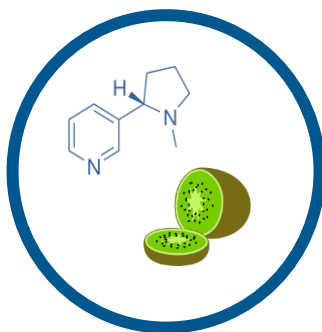


Whoa!! We heard there are **secret messages** hidden here.  
**HINT:** hover over the text below to uncover the truth.

INDUSTRY  
INNOVATION



NICOTINE  
CONCENTRATION  
AND FLAVOURS



MENTAL  
HEALTH



DUAL  
USE



CO-USE



SOCIAL  
INFLUENCE



ACCESS



SOCIAL MEDIA







## Key Messages

### Health Effects

1. **Vaping is harmful.** While vapes might appear safe or safer than cigarettes, they are still harmful as they contain chemicals linked to cancers, lung disease and brain damage.<sup>3,4</sup>
2. **Vapes contain nicotine.**<sup>2</sup> Nicotine is a super addictive chemical that leads to dependence.<sup>2,3</sup> Nicotine also affects brain development, impairing memory, mood, learning and self-control.<sup>2-4</sup>
3. **Addiction can start fast and early.** It does not take long to get hooked on vapes and develop physical dependence.<sup>3</sup> Once hooked, it is hard to stop and quitting can come with withdrawal symptoms like anxiety, mood swings and cravings.<sup>2-4</sup> This makes it even more difficult to stop.
4. **Vaping can lead to cigarette smoking.**<sup>3</sup> Youth who vape are more likely to start smoking cigarettes later in life.<sup>3</sup>
5. **Vaping affects mental health.**<sup>2-4</sup> Vaping is linked to mental health symptoms like depression, anxiety and stress.<sup>2-4</sup>
6. **The long-term health effects of vaping are unknown.**<sup>2-4</sup> More research is needed to understand the effects on the body.<sup>2-4</sup>

### Industry Tactics

1. **They create confusion.** The tobacco industry funds research to confuse people about the risks of smoking and vaping.<sup>5</sup> In other words, the tobacco industry wants youth to believe that vaping is harmless.
2. **Flavours are a trap.** Different flavours in vapes are used to make vapes seem harmless and fun.<sup>6</sup> About 80% of youth reported they continue vaping because of the flavours, this is one of the industry's favourite tactics.<sup>6</sup>
3. **Social media influencers are the tobacco industry's new marketing tool.**<sup>7</sup> From celebrities to social media stars, the tobacco industry is using these influencers to reach and influence youth and get them hooked on their products.<sup>7</sup> They know youth are on social media apps and they are using that to their advantage.

### Laws

1. **You must be 19 or older to purchase tobacco or vape products.**<sup>8</sup> In Ontario, it's illegal to sell or supply anyone under the age of 19 with tobacco or vape products.<sup>8</sup>
2. **No ads and no displays.** Retailers who allow youth age 19 or younger into the store cannot display or promote tobacco or vape products.<sup>8</sup> They must keep tobacco and vape products hidden.<sup>8</sup> Advertising of vape or tobacco products is not allowed.<sup>8</sup>
3. **No smoking or vaping on school grounds or in parks.**<sup>9</sup> It is illegal and can result in fines.<sup>9</sup>



FAKE NEWS, I am totally harmless cough\*cough\*. Who needs those two lungs anyways?





## Youth Vape Use in Hamilton (2023)

### Vaping among youth is prevalent but declining

↓ Ever Tried

**1 in 3**

32% of Hamilton high school students ever tried vaping which is a decline from 44% in 2019 [1]

↓ Past Year Use

**18%**

of high school students in Hamilton vaped in the past year which is a decline from 33% in 2019 [1]

Daily Use

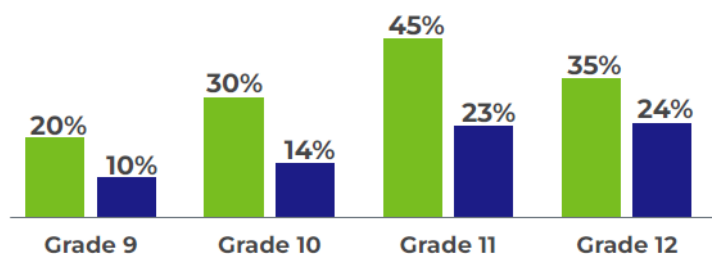
**1 in 12**

8% of high school students in Hamilton vape on a daily basis which is similar to 2019 (9%) [1]

**81%** of Hamilton high school students who vaped daily in 2023 reported using nicotine [1]

% of Hamilton students who vaped in the past year [1]

■ 2019 ■ 2023



When did Hamilton's grade 12 students first use a vape? [1]

**41%**  
started in  
grades  
7-8

**25%**  
started in  
grades  
9-10

**32%**  
started in  
grades  
11-12

### Vapes are easy for youth to access

Where do Hamilton high school students get their vapes? [1]

Got it from a family member, friend, or someone they know

**78%**

**Most youth get their vapes from friends or family (social supply)**

Bought it from a retail supplier such as convenience store, gas station, vape store/lounge, pharmacy, or online

**22%**

**75%**

of Hamilton high school students said it would be very or fairly easy to get a vape if they wanted one [1]



## Vaping increases smoking initiation



Vape users are 4-times more likely to initiate tobacco smoking [2]

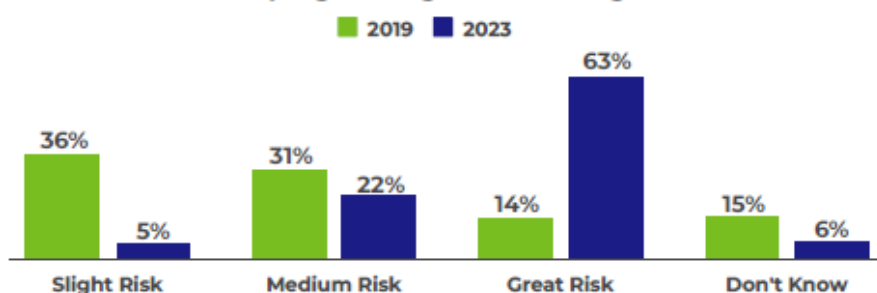
For every 6 non-smoker youth who vape, 1 of them will initiate smoking tobacco cigarettes [3]



**58%**

of Hamilton high school students who vaped in the past year have never tried tobacco cigarettes [1]

Perceived risk of vaping among Hamilton high school students [1]

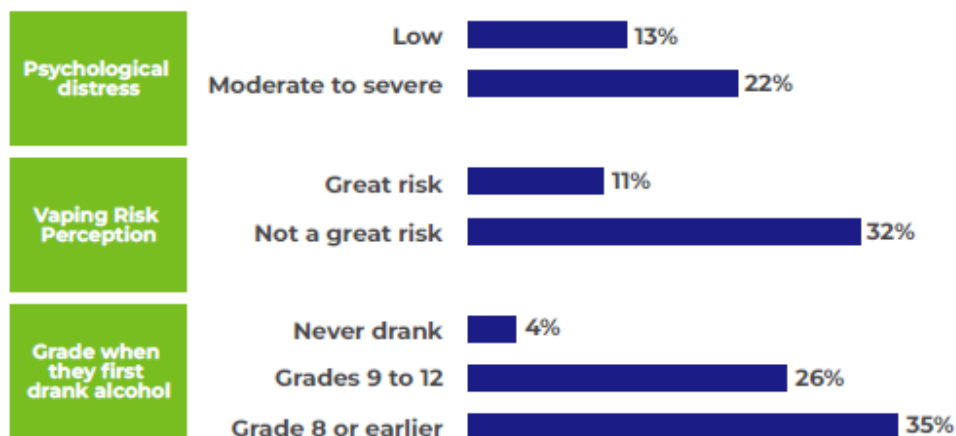


**The risk perception of vaping has shifted**

More youth perceive vapes as harmful and fewer youth are trying vapes

## Vaping is linked to other factors

% of Hamilton high school students who vaped in the past year [1]



Youth were more likely to try vaping in the past year if they reported greater psychological distress, lower risk perception of vaping, or had early exposure to alcohol

### Data Sources:

[1] Grade 9-12 students in the City of Hamilton, OSDUHS (2019 & 2023).

[2] O'Brien et al. BMC Public Health 2021 Jun 3;21:954.

[3] Soneji et al. JAMA Pediatrics 2017; 171(8): 788-97.





## Youth Engagement

### What is Youth Engagement?

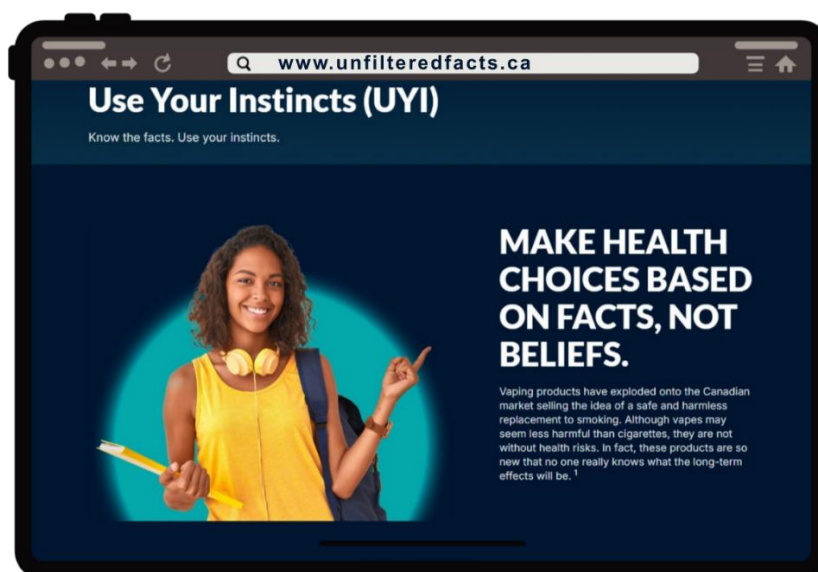
**Youth engagement** (YE) is more than participation. It's a partnership where youth are empowered to make decisions and create positive changes in programs, events, or activities.<sup>10</sup>

UFF strives to engage youth in making decisions, designing and implementing activities, and changing social norms. The goal is to reduce nicotine initiation and use in the Hamilton community.

### Difference between Youth Participation and Youth Engagement

	Youth Participation	Youth Engagement
<b>Youth Role</b>	Youth are invited to join a specific activity, task, or decision.	Youth get to choose how they want to get involved.
<b>Decision Makers</b>	Adults make the final decision.	Youth and adults are involved in the decision-making process.
<b>Activity Selection</b>	Youth hear about the pre-selected goals and may be asked for their input.	Youth help identify and pick goals by researching the problem and working with adults.
<b>Measuring Progress</b>	Adults track progress and may or may not update the youth involved.	Youth help track and report progress and check if goals were met.
<b>Information Sharing</b>	Youth are not told how their input was used or if it made a difference.	The process is transparent and youth see how their work and input shaped the results.

Table 1: Adapted from ACT for Youth and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.<sup>10,11</sup>





## Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation

Hart's Ladder of Participation is one of the earliest frameworks to describe different levels of youth engagement in a community or an organization. The higher up the ladder, the more active and genuine the youth engagement; UFF aims to reach the top of the ladder.

Youth engagement provides opportunities to:

- Share your thoughts and ideas
- Make new connections
- Share experiences with peers
- Develop skills
- Build confidence
- Explore your passion
- Make a difference

Organizations gain:

- New perspectives<sup>10, 11</sup>
- Creative solutions to problems<sup>11</sup>
- Unique and valuable skills<sup>11</sup>
- Influence through youth-led initiatives that shape peers' health attitudes and behaviours<sup>10, 11</sup>

## HART'S LADDER OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION

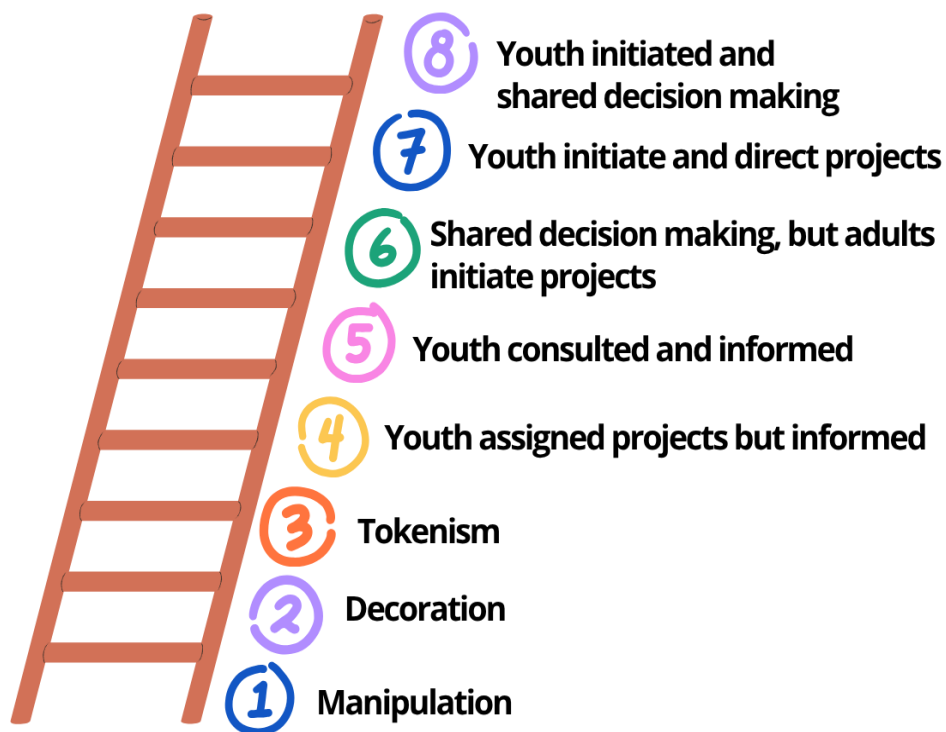


Figure 1: Adapted from Hart R., and Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario.<sup>12, 13</sup>

See? Scholars say **your power is real**. Click to learn more about [Roger Hart's Ladder of Youth Participation](#)







## Ready to Take Action?

### Schools

- **Join** and participate in a **Health Action Team** or student health and wellness club to help create positive change.
- **Create** educational campaign posters for your school to help denormalize smoking or vaping.
- **Host** a trivia game at lunch in collaboration with Hamilton Public Health to spread awareness about vaping and smoking.
- **Plan** events that include guest speakers (e.g., public health staff or youth advocates) to share facts and stories.

### Community

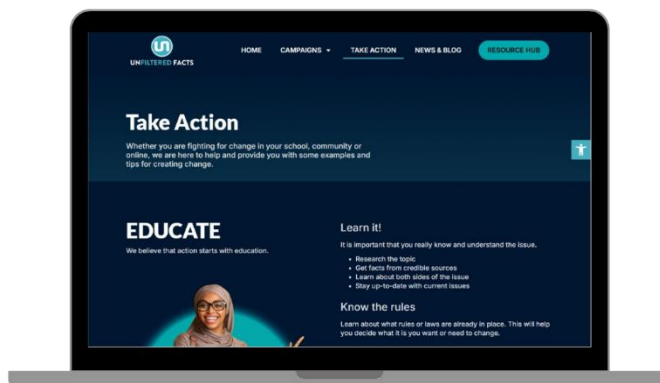
- **Connect** with a local youth group (e.g., [HamOntYouth](#)) to collaborate on campaigns that promote tobacco and vape-free living.
- **Sign and share** an e-petition encouraging the government to strengthen laws that protect youth from smoking and vaping.
- **Host** a community event like a movie night that promotes healthy living and avoids showing smoking or vaping.
- **Volunteer** with UFF at community events.

### Digital

- **Follow and engage** with advocacy social accounts like UFF and re-share their posts to inform your friends and followers.
- **Volunteer** with UFF to create social media or website content that is tailored to youth on UFF channels.

**Check out our website to learn more on how you can take action:**

<https://unfilteredfacts.ca/take-action/>





## Current Opportunities: Digital Storytelling

### Goal

To create digital content that shares real **unfiltered** and **uncensored facts** about nicotine use so youth can make informed decisions about their health. Through content creation, we hope to grow UFF brand as a trusted and relatable voice for young people across social media platforms.

### Objectives

1. Learn about vaping ([Key Messages](#)) – Industry tactics, health effects, school rules, policies etc.
2. Brainstorm social media content ideas
3. Create content for the UFF social channels that highlight youth voices
4. Gain/enhance skills and get recognition for your contributions

### Roles

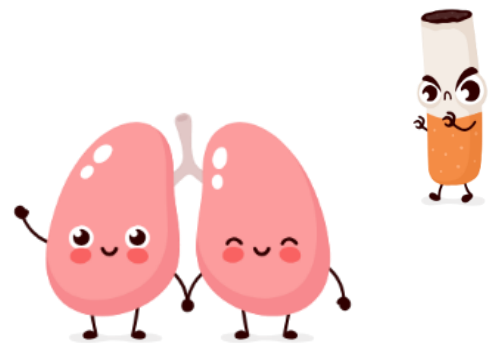
- Film/create content
- Edit content
- Perform in content

### Target Audience

- Hamilton youth, ages 13-18

### Content goals

- Educate (increase awareness and /knowledge)
- Motivate/inspire change
- Promote (UFF brand, events etc.)
- Advocate for policies that impact youth
- Engage with the digital content through likes, shares, comments etc.
- Convert (increase traffic to UFF website)



Hey! You've made it this far. Time take action and defeat Tar. If you **volunteer with UFF**, you could get **volunteer hours** and cool **UFF swag**!





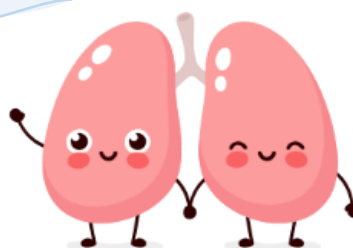
## UFF Content Pillars

Educate	Engage	Empower	Entertain
e.g., Share relevant vaping prevention information	e.g., Join the conversation, take action, share	e.g., Access to resources, insider insights	e.g., Share jokes, memes
Nicotine prevention content  Industry denormalization content	Get people thinking and talking  Personal/relatable story  Question, poll, opinion  Link to e-petition	Celebrate others  Share success stories  Insider access  Cessation resources	B roll footage  Bloopers  Jokes/memes

**Content should include a “Call to Action”**  
*(whenever possible)*

Here are **examples of calls to action**:

1. Interested in quitting or joining the movement? Learn how by checking out [unfilteredfacts.ca](http://unfilteredfacts.ca)
2. Want to get involved? Check out [unfilteredfacts.ca](http://unfilteredfacts.ca) and follow us on Instagram.





# Content Creation Guidelines

## UFF Digital Channels

- Website – [www.unfilteredfacts.ca](http://www.unfilteredfacts.ca)
- Instagram – [@unfiltered\\_facts](https://www.instagram.com/unfiltered_facts)
- Facebook – [@unfilteredfacts](https://www.facebook.com/unfilteredfacts)
- YouTube – [@unfilteredfacts1854](https://www.youtube.com/unfilteredfacts1854)

## Digital Media Best Practices

Do's	Don'ts
Use high-quality images and videos	Create any content without ensuring it aligns with these guidelines
Keep videos short to maintain attention	Share personal opinions or unrelated content
Complete consent release forms for all people who appear in the content	Share any unverified information
Ensure all content aligns with the Unfiltered Facts branding, mission and values	Use offensive language
Follow social media accessibility (AODA) guidelines and add captions to videos if possible	
Seek final approval from public health staff for any drafts to ensure it aligns with key messages	

## Unfiltered Facts Branding

### Logos (High-res files provided)



**UNFILTERED FACTS**



Colours	RBG	Hex
Light Teal	Red = 71    Green = 175    Blue = 193	#47AFC1
Dark Teal	Red = 21    Green = 95    Blue = 112	#155F70





## Social Media Specs

Platform & Format	Recommended Dimensions/ Resolution	Aspect Ratio	Max File Size	Video Format	Max Length
<b>Instagram</b>					
Carousel Videos	1080 x1080 1080 x 1350	9:16	4GB	.MP4 or .MOV	60 mins
Instagram Stories (Organic)	1080 x 1920	9:16	4GB	.MP4 or .MOV	90s
Instagram Reels	1080 x 1920	9:16 (4:5 for feed)	4GB	.MP4 or .MOV	3s up to 15 mins
<b>Facebook</b>					
Post - Landscape	1280 x 720	16:9	4GB	.MP4 or .MOV	240 mins
Post-Portrait	720 x 1280	9:16	4GB	.MP4 or .MOV	240 mins
Reels	9:16	9:16	-	.MP4	90s
Stories		1.91 to 9:16	4GB	.MP4 or .MOV	60s
<b>YouTube</b>					
Shorts	1080 x 1920	9:16 or 1:1	-	MP4 or .MOV	60s

Adapted from Sprout Social. For more details: ["Social Media Video Specs Cheat Sheet"](#)

## Fonts

- San Serif Fonts (e.g., Arial, Calibri, Helvetica)
- Size 12 font (minimum)
- Do not write in all caps
- Do not underline, use italics, or bold random words
- When possible, add captions to your videos
- If using hashtags, use Pascal Case (e.g., #UnfilteredFacts, #EscapeTheVape)

For more information on social media accessibility:  
[Social Media Accessibility: Inclusive Design Tips for Marketers](#)

## Final Approval of Content

Public health staff have final approval for all content created and shared on UFF digital media accounts.



## UFF Volunteer Digital Storyteller Sign-Off: Declaration/Checklist

As an Unfiltered Facts (UFF) member, I understand and agree to adhere to the following guidelines while creating content for the UFF website and/or social media accounts.

### 1. Respect and Professionalism:

- I will be respectful and professional in all communications.
- I will avoid engaging in arguments or negative discussions.

### 2. Privacy and Confidentiality:

- I will not share any personal or sensitive information without explicit written consent (use the City of Hamilton Photograph/Video Consent, Release and Waiver)
- I will respect the privacy of all individuals featured in content.

### 3. Consistency and Brand Voice:

- I will maintain the tone and voice consistent with UFF mission and values.
- I will use inclusive, positive, and encouraging language.

### 4. Content Guidelines:

- I will share relevant and valuable nicotine prevention content for youth in Hamilton.
- I will fact check my content to ensure I am sharing facts, not beliefs.
- I will ensure all content is approved by public health staff.

### 5. Do's and Don'ts:

Do's	Don'ts
Use high-quality images and videos	Create any content without ensuring it aligns with these guidelines
Keep videos short to maintain attention	Share personal opinions or unrelated content
Complete consent release forms for all people who appear in the content	Share any unverified information
Ensure all content aligns with the Unfiltered Facts branding, mission and values	Use offensive language
Follow social media accessibility (AODA) guidelines and add captions to videos if possible	
Seek final approval from Tobacco Control staff for any drafts to ensure it aligns with key messages	



Tip: Make sure that **everyone** who appears in the videos or photos **signs and submits a consent form** found on the next page.





# UNFILTERED FACTS

## PHOTOGRAPH/VIDEO CONSENT, RELEASE AND WAIVER



I authorize the City of Hamilton ("City") to permit photographers and/or videographers employed or designated by the City to take photographs, videos or other electronic representations of me and/or my child. I grant the City the irrevocable right to use and publish such photographs, videos or other electronic representations for the purpose of materials which promote the City and its programs and services, in both printed and electronic formats, including without limitation, brochures, multi-media presentations, videos and on the internet through the City's website, other websites or through social media.

I have not requested and will not request either now or in the future, compensation of any kind for the rights I have assigned to the City in relation to the use and publication of photographs, videos or other electronic representations of me and/or my child.

I release from any claim and waive any claim against the City that I may have arising out of the use or publication of the photographs, videos or other electronic representations of me and/or my child.

I understand that if any of the photographs, videos or electronic representations are posted on a City or other website or on social media, they will be available to the public. As such, I also understand that the City has no control over and is not responsible for, the use or misuse of materials available on its website, other websites or on social media, including any photographs, videos or other electronic representation of me and/or my child.

This consent, release and waiver covers the use or publication of photographs, videos or other electronic representations of me and/or my child for an unlimited period of time. I understand I can revoke this consent anytime in writing and my photos, videos and other information will no longer be used by the City; however, posts already made, as authorized by this consent form, may not be able to be removed or deleted.

I ACKNOWLEDGE THAT I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THIS CONSENT FORM.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Parent or Legal Guardian if under 18 years of age.)

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(mm/dd/yyyy)

**Print Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_



**Notice of Collection:** Personal Information as defined pursuant to the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (MFIPPA) is collected under the legal authority of section 227 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*. The information will be used for the purpose of creating materials which promote the City and its programs and services, in both printed and electronic formats, including without limitation, brochures, multi-media presentations, videos and on the internet through the City's website, other websites or through social media. By providing your email address, you are consenting to receiving emails from the City of Hamilton and/or their agents/contractors related to this project (if necessary). For more information, contact the Social Media & Marketing Coordinator, Adele Bedard at 905-973-3854.

### STAFF USE ONLY

<b>PROJECT NAME</b>	<b>Unfiltered Facts Youth Engagement/Content Creation</b>
Employee Name	<b>Sharon Munn &amp; Kristin Olive</b>
Employee Division	<b>Public Health - Services Healthy Environments</b>

Photograph/Video Consent – Modified for Communications, Marketing and Social Media, Release and Waiver Form V1  
July 20, 2022





Thank you!

Thank you for being awesome and joining us on this journey.

We've made it to the end but learning doesn't have to stop here. There is still so much to explore.

We think **you'll find these resources below interesting and helpful**. Check them out and keep the momentum going!

**HINT:** hold CTRL and click.

Not An  
Experiment

Get Support -  
CAMH Youth-  
VAST

Consider the  
Consequences



Vaping Risks

Quash App

## Contact Us

Interested in volunteering with UFF or know someone who would be?

E-mail [unfilteredfacts1@gmail.com](mailto:unfilteredfacts1@gmail.com) and we will share current opportunities.



## References

1. Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. Tobacco. Mental Illness & Addiction Index [cited 2025 Jul 31]. Available from: <https://www.camh.ca/en/health-info/mental-illness-and-addiction-index/tobacco>
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