Smoking and Vaping

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The world is a social place where individuals exhibiting different patterns of behaviors and actions interact with each other. It is hard to fathom how society is influenced by these minute actions of every individual. Although, these interactions are an inevitable part of an individual's life, sometimes it is hard to keep those interactions due to individual discipline and practices that might be disturbing. One such example is the habit of smoking and vaping among individuals of various age groups in our society. It is hard to ignore the magnitude of this habit prevalence since every second person around you may be involved in either smoking or vaping. Ranging from family to the old neighborhood where you lived decades ago, the smoking practice is quite prominent. Walking in the streets, it is nearly impossible for you to not see cigarette butts lying around. Tobacco cigarettes and E-cigarettes advertisements might give you an idea about the trend of smoking and vaping around the world and how it has been promoted among the masses by the advertisements, which fail to recognize the complexity of the issue. Now coming towards the global statistics of cigarette smoking, until now, 1.1 billion people are reported to be involved in the practice of smoking and vaping (“30 Surprising Smoking Statistics & Facts (2019 Edition),” n.d.). Although the habit of smoking has been prevalent for decades the new sophisticated version of smoking which is thought to have fewer health effects is emerging readily nowadays (Tomashefski, 2016). More or less associated with smoking, it is mainly the inhalation of vapor generated by the device called electronic cigarettes. With the older generation sticking to the old traditional smoking via cigarettes, vaping is more commonly observed among teens and adults (Yoong et al., 2018). As a university student, I have also observed the use of e-cigarettes among my classmates who are mostly around my age.

 I am extremely disgusted by the habit of smoking and vaping among adults and youngsters around me for several reasons. Considering the health effects of smoking and vaping, it is quite evident that it is the major reason for the prevalence of lung cancer among individuals; not only smokers but the non-smokers as well. Last year, 18,000 people have been reported to die as a consequence of smoking (“Lung Cancer | CDC,” n.d.). It is extremely injurious to health. It is perilous, yet individuals decide to smoke. A slight puff seems harmless to them, however, it is not. We are at a loss of health due to smoking. Although, people like us who do not like to smoke or be around smokers are exposed to the smoke containing harmful chemicals such as nicotine which have negative effects. The toxic substances we inhale via breathing should be taken under account. Three key substances found in tobacco smoke are CO, tar, and nicotine. They are known to cause shocking impairment to the human body especially the heart, lungs, and brain (Eysenck & Eaves, 1980). The high practice of such a habit is the only cause of passive smoking. Passive smoking is characterized by the inhalation of smoke from nearby smokers(Ritchie & Roser, 2013). It is quite distressing that despite knowing the harmful effects of cigarette smoke, smokers refuse to acknowledge the fact that they are not only killing themselves but are also contributing to the gradual deterioration of public health. There is no difference between the harm caused by active or passive smoking because the magnitude of both is the same. The smell of cigarettes contributes to giving headaches, lightheadedness, and nausea. I do not like smokers because of the negative aura around them. Smokers do not look appealing as they do not have the most charming personality, and have dirty fingernails and pale teeth. They seem lethargic, and on various occasions, refuse to pay attention to others due to the feelings of relaxation. Moreover, because of my concern for the environment, I am extremely unhappy about the fact that extreme smoking among masses is the cause of air, land and consequently water pollution. First, the smoke contributes to the bad air quality due to the release of harmful chemicals into the air. The same air when inhaled by various individuals in society including children and pregnant ladies, cause their health to deteriorate. Secondly, smokers contribute to land pollution by throwing cigarette butts around every other corner. These cigarette butts litter the environment and later the harmful chemicals seep into soils and waterways consequently causing water pollution. Also, the key ingredient used in the production of cigarettes that smokers consume is wood. It requires almost 40 pages to make one roll of cigarette. Where do you reckon are all those pages come from? Deforestation (Rinkesh, 2017). Deforestation is ultimately causing global warming, earth erosion, and loss of biodiversity. These smokers are indirectly affecting the environment that on a small scale does not seem like a critical issue but is actually a major threat to the ecosystem. Another major reason for my disgust towards smokers is their unwavering attitude towards non-smokers. Despite knowing that they may not be recognized as “pleasant individuals”, they still encourage and pressurize others to smoke or vape in some cases. Most of the smokers in my neighborhood have developed this habit by getting inspiration from their smoker friends during public interactions. I have also been under peer pressure of smoking, that is why I dislike this attitude of smokers, as they seem to influence society and neither care for themselves nor their fellow human beings. I believe all these reasons are enough to justify my unlikeness for smoking.

My feelings of disgust for smokers have affected my relationship and communication with them in various ways. I am highly concerned about the non-pleasant smell of cigarettes when I am around them. It gives me headaches and nausea. I work at a private firm, as a part-time employee and the person beside me is a chronic smoker. Although, he does not smoke inside the office, whenever he comes back after smoking outside, he brings the unpleasant odor with him which spreads throughout the office. It is nearly unbearable to sit with him during work when he comes back after fulfilling his appetite for nicotine. This is just the one case that I am discussing which has significantly decreased my productivity at work. Moreover, some smokers have an unacceptable habit of blowing cigarette smoke in your face which I believe is quite rude. In such cases, I have experienced various episodes of coughing, which in most cases, make smokers feel embarrassed. Throughout the day, ranging from the workplace to my home, I have difficulty while coping with smokers. My father is also a smoker and he has been smoking since the day he retired from his job. Most of the times I do not feel like sitting with him and telling him about my day because of the unpleasant smell and aura around him. The extremely unpleasant habit of smokers according to which they leave their cigarette butts lying around the streets and public places makes me frustrated. Educating smokers about the various impacts of environmental pollution and health consequences have instead contributed to the weakening of relationships because smokers are willing to do anything rather than quitting their habit of smoking in public settings.

 However, some of the smokers in my social circle do not necessarily smoke in front of me. They ask if I am comfortable being around them, and when I refuse, they go somewhere else to smoke. But, most of the time, I am the one who has to compensate for people’s practice of smoking in public interactions. When I am offered a cigarette in a public or group setting, I initially refuse, but if I feel I am being pressurized, I leave the place for good. I have developed a communicating style, so smokers around me do not get offended. When I get a severe headache, I let the smoker know that it might be due to the cigarette smoke. They immediately apologize and take the cigarette outside or put it out, altogether. In some cases when they unintentionally blow smoke in my face, I intentionally cough to make them realize that I am not comfortable with this practice. I often tell them, “I am avoiding smoke to stay healthy so if you don’t mind taking cigarette outside, it would be a huge favor”. Many smokers do not like to be told about not smoking around so in that case, if they light up a cigarette I say, “I don’t like to be around cigarette smoke so I would come back later when you are done smoking”. If this also does not work I tell people that I am allergic to cigarette smoke. This eventually makes smokers take their cigarettes away from me. When I walk past smokers in public, I sometimes cover my nose with a cloth or shirt, or make a gesture that suggests that I am bothered by the smoke. All these communication styles have somewhat enabled me to cope with the situation I don’t like. I believe, no one but you can solve the potential problems around you via coping effectively.

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