



# Best Practices for Crafting Social Media Messages to Support Youth and Young Adult Cessation

**California Youth Advocacy Network (CYAN)** has been creating and placing cessation campaigns for youth and young adult audiences since 2020. All campaign materials are consumer tested with young people throughout California and feedback is incorporated prior to launch. Although there is no universal standard, these suggested best practices have come directly from young people throughout California and are utilized by CYAN when crafting social media messages to motivate and support youth and young adult quit attempts:



**KEEP IT SIMPLE.** Provide clear, direct, and easy to digest information.



**DON'T BE TOO WORDY.** Young people are less likely to read or engage with a post that has too much text.



**TERMS MATTER.** Be sure you are using the terms young people are using. For example, use 'vape' instead of 'electronic cigarettes' in your messaging.

**BE POSITIVE.** Focus on the benefits of quitting and avoid overly negative scare tactics.



**PROVIDE QUIT TIPS.** Don't just tell young people they need to quit; instead, provide actionable tips to support and motivate a quit attempt.

**INCLUDE A RESOURCE.** Always link to youth and young adult-specific quit resources.

**MAKE THE RESOURCE EASY TO ACCESS.** Avoid requiring young people to copy and paste a link. Use (link in bio) and add the link to your profile.



**FREE AND ANONYMOUS.** Young people prefer quit resources that are both free and anonymous and like to see this called out before accessing.

**USE COLOR.** Bright, vibrant, and colorful images are attention grabbing and consistently test and perform better with youth and young adult audiences.

**AUTHENTIC REPRESENTATION.** Diverse and inclusive imagery is critical. Young people want to see faces that look like them and not stock imagery.

**REAL FACES.** Images of real faces, particularly happy smiling faces, are preferred over objects, illustrations, or vectors.

**MEET YOUNG PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE AT.** Ensure you are placing your posts where young people will see them. CYAN has had the most engagement and reach on Instagram, and the least on Facebook and X.



**IN ACTION:** A side-by-side comparison of CYAN's first social media campaign in 2020 versus a post from a 2022 mental health campaign and the number of young people who clicked on the quit resource linked to each post.

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Visit [cyanonline.org/digitalmedia](https://cyanonline.org/digitalmedia) to view all of these best practices in action and download CYAN's social media posts for FREE.