# Flavored Tobacco and Cardiovascular risk in the African American Community

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# Our Mission.

The Center for Black Health & Equity exists to facilitate the development and implementation of comprehensive and community -led public health programs to benefit communities and people of African descent. "
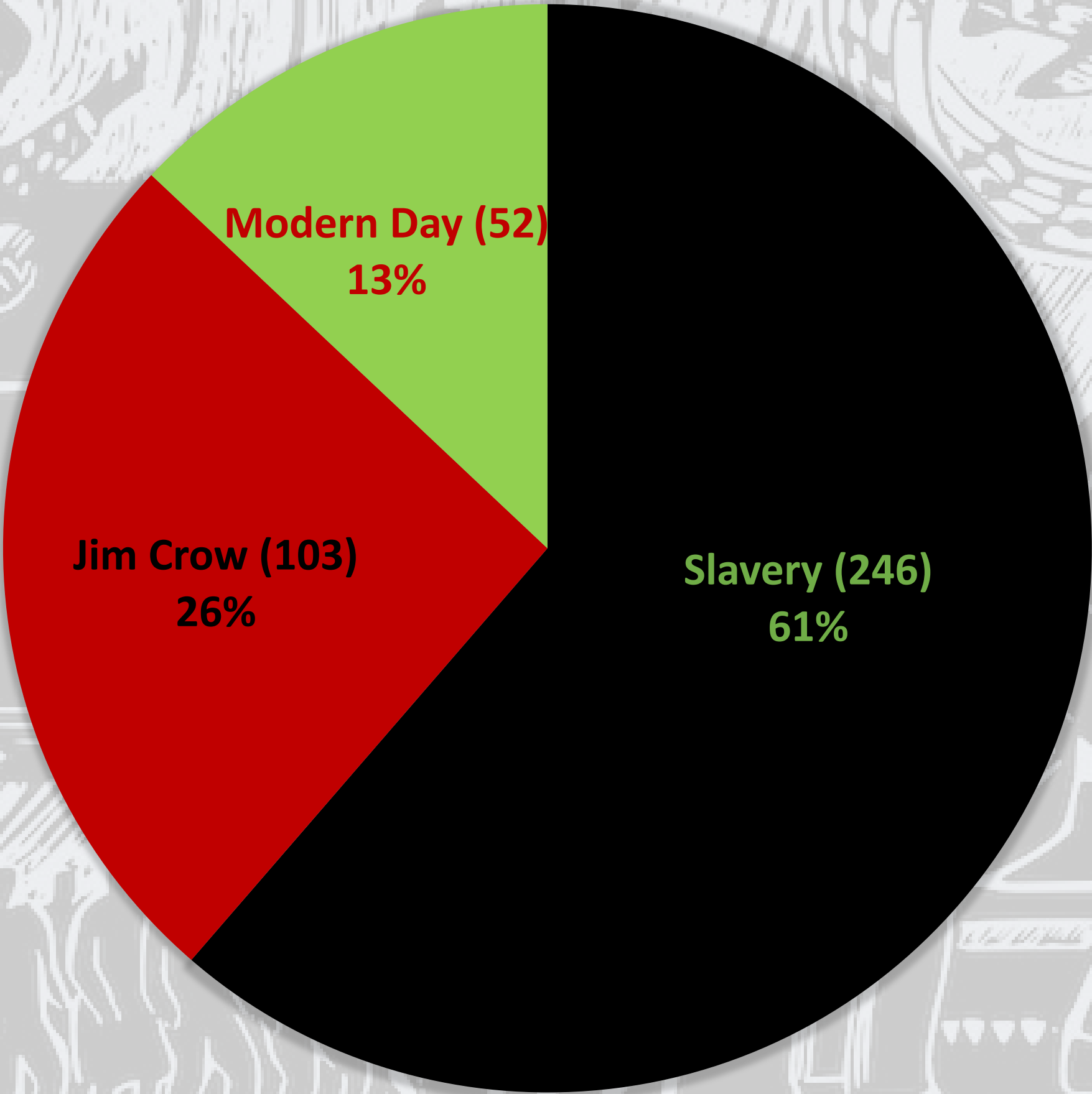
TOBACCO COMPANIES KILL THEIR BEST CUSTOMERS.

~ The Fresh Quotes ~

# Agenda

- History & Health Effects
- Work from a Health Equity Lens
- Why Menthol
- Debunking Tobacco Industry Misinformation

Modern Day (52)
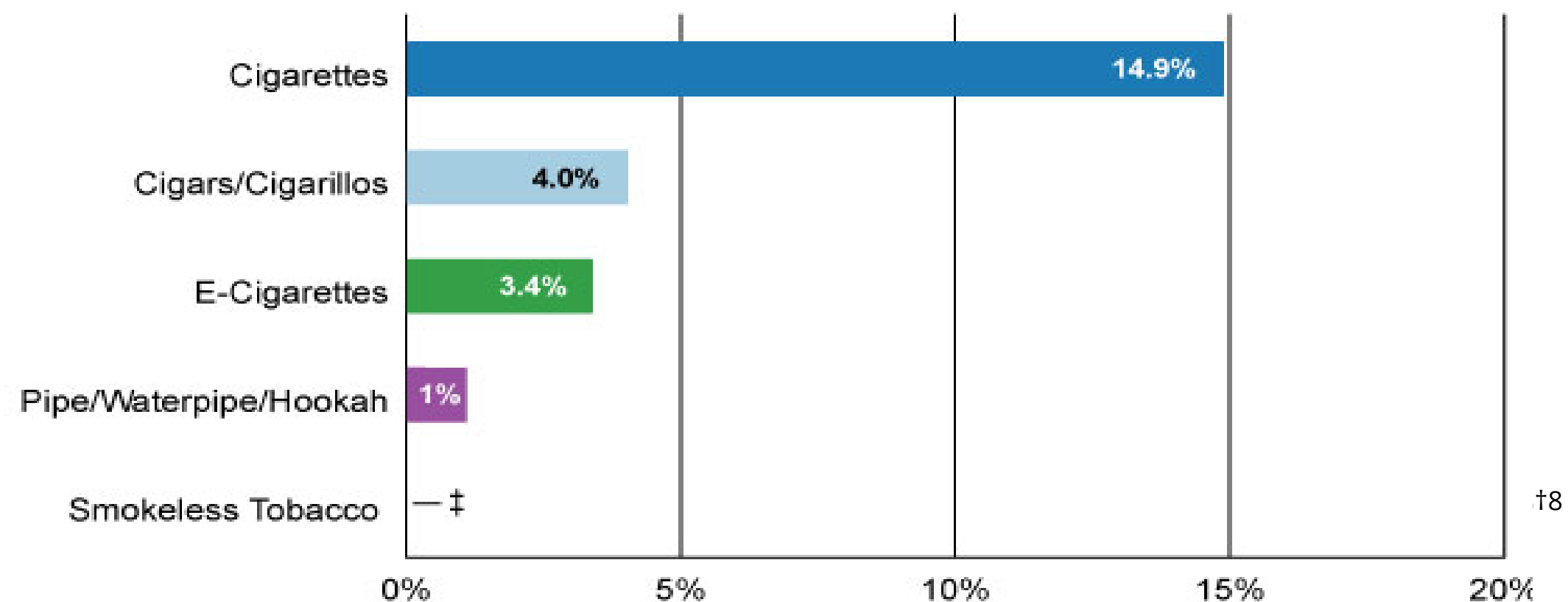13%

Jim Crow (103)
26%

Slavery (246)
61%

Tobacco Use Prevalence

Patterns of Tobacco Use

Secondhand Smoke Exposure

Quitting Behavior

Tobacco Industry Marketing and Influence



Current Tobacco Use* Among African American Adults—2019[†8]

# Tobacco Industry Marketing and Influence

**Targeted Marketing**

- The tobacco industry has aggressively marketed menthol products to young people and African Americans, especially in urban communities

**Menthol Cigarette Advertising**

- Historically, the marketing and promotion of menthol cigarettes have been targeted heavily toward African Americans through culturally tailored advertising images and messages. [13,14]
- Over 7 out of 10 African American youth ages 12 -17 years who smoke use menthol cigarettes [15]
- African American adults have the highest percentage of menthol cigarette use compared to other racial and ethnic groups.

**Price Promotions, Retail, and Point -of -Sale Advertising**

- Tobacco companies use price promotions such as discounts and multi-pack coupons—which are most often used by African Americans and other minority groups, women, and young people—to increase sales.[19]
- Areas with large racial/ethnic minority populations tend to have more tobacco retailers located within them, which contributes to greater tobacco advertising exposure.[19]
- Menthol products are given more shelf space in retail outlets within African American and other minority neighborhoods.

https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/disparities/african-americans/index.htm

# Menthol and Black Communities

# Health Risk

- African Americans who smoke appear to have more than twice this risk of developing [coronary heart disease](#) compared to those who do not smoke.

- Data from nearly 4,500 participants in the [Jackson Heart Study](#), the largest cohort study investigating cardiovascular disease exclusively in African Americans.

**(The finding that even small spikes in blood pressure can lead to a higher risk of death; and a sickle cell trait linked to a higher risk of kidney disease.)**

- Cigarette smoking causes inflammation and atherosclerosis, and coronary heart disease. Despite a marked decline in smoking among African American adults in recent years, almost 15% reported current cigarette smoking in 2019.

- *"Smoking is a modifiable risk factor for cardiovascular disease and 73% of African American adults who smoke want to quit," said David Goff, M.D., Ph.D., director of the NHLBI's Division of Cardiovascular Sciences. "However, compared to whites, African American patients are less likely to receive information about smoking cessation treatments that we know can make a difference. Fully addressing tobacco-related disparities requires addressing conditions where people live, work, and play."*



Oshunbade, A. et al. Cigarette Smoking, Incident Coronary Heart Disease and Coronary Artery Calcification in African Americans: The Jackson Heart Study. *Journal of the American Heart Association.* March 2021. DOI: 10.1161/JAHA.120.017320
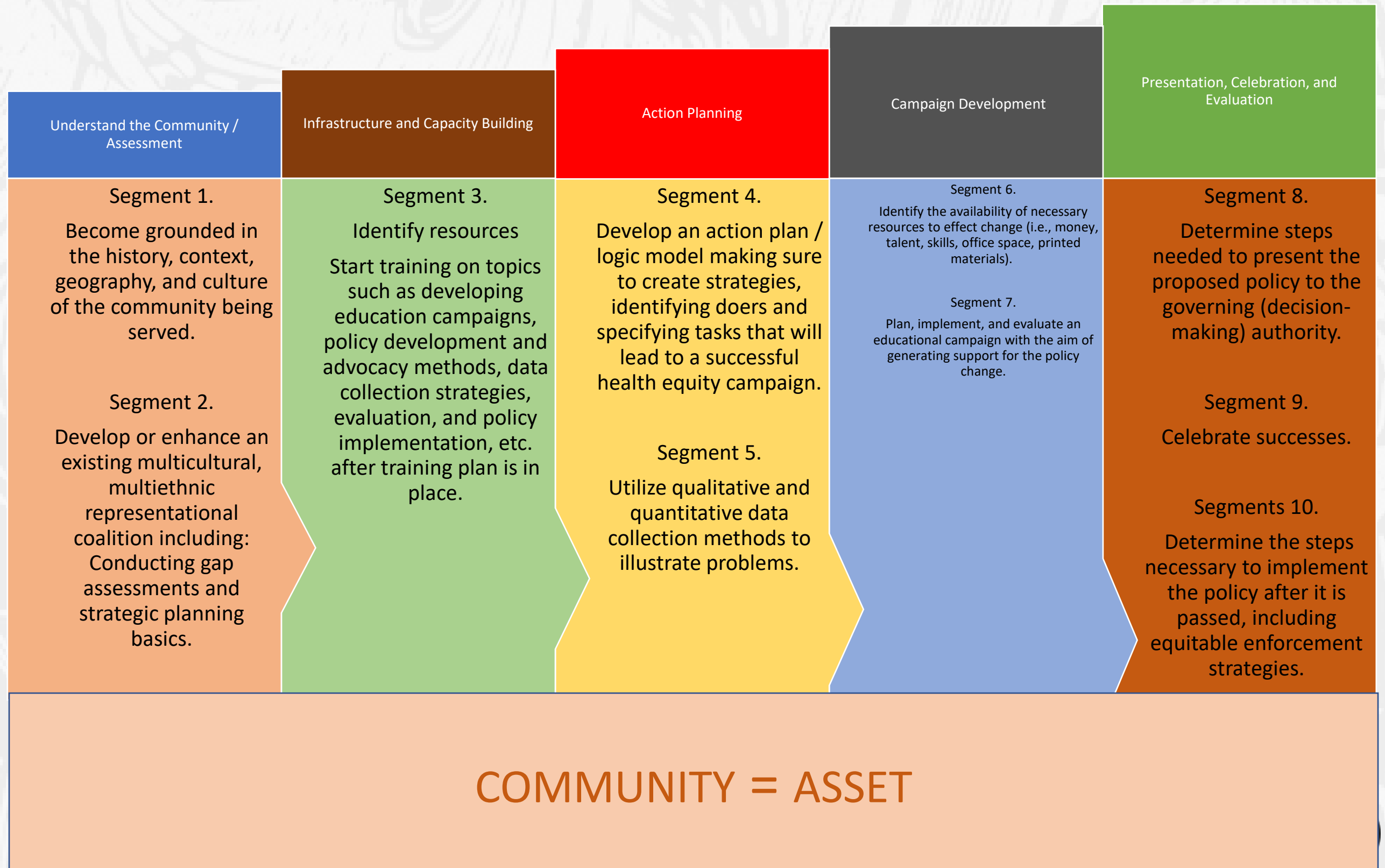
# Nicotine Hooks You!!
# Menthol Keeps You!!

# Community Model

**Asset-based – The Community Development approach helps to foster a greater understanding of the resources and strengths that exists within a community, while providing a framework necessary to solve those problems within the existing shortfalls of the community.**

# 5-Part Capacity Building Training Series

## Understand the Community / Assessment

**Segment 1.**

Become grounded in the history, context, geography, and culture of the community being served.

**Segment 2.**

Develop or enhance an existing multicultural, multiethnic representational coalition including: Conducting gap assessments and strategic planning basics.

## Infrastructure and Capacity Building

**Segment 3.**

Identify resources

Start training on topics such as developing education campaigns, policy development and advocacy methods, data collection strategies, evaluation, and policy implementation, etc. after training plan is in place.

## Action Planning

**Segment 4.**

Develop an action plan / logic model making sure to create strategies, identifying doers and specifying tasks that will lead to a successful health equity campaign.

**Segment 5.**

Utilize qualitative and quantitative data collection methods to illustrate problems.

## Campaign Development

**Segment 6.**
Identify the availability of necessary resources to effect change (i.e., money, talent, skills, office space, printed materials).

**Segment 7.**
Plan, implement, and evaluate an educational campaign with the aim of generating support for the policy change.

## Presentation, Celebration, and Evaluation

**Segment 8.**

Determine steps needed to present the proposed policy to the governing (decision-making) authority.

**Segment 9.**

Celebrate successes.

**Segments 10.**

Determine the steps necessary to implement the policy after it is passed, including equitable enforcement strategies.

## COMMUNITY = ASSET

Equality

Equity

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# DON'T WAIT FOR THE FDA ON MENTHOL

## THE COST OF WAITING

While we wait for the FDA, menthol harms rage on:
- Black children and young adults continue to be targeted and become addicted.
- Black people of all ages suffer from lower quality of life and eventually die; people lose family, friends, elders, and community members
- The industry continues to profit.



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# DON'T WAIT FOR THE FDA ON MENTHOL

## STATE AND LOCAL ACTION

- Strong support in the **Purpose & Intent / Findings** section
  - Abundance of data showing allure, preference, and harms associated with flavored tobacco products

- Clear, consistent **definitions**
  - Comprehensive definition of "flavored products" that includes all flavored tobacco products, without exceptions for certain flavors or product types.
  - Some jurisdictions have left certain products or flavors out of the definition of "flavored tobacco products," which conflicts with purpose and intent and leaves susceptible to litigation.
  - Including language re: presumptive evidence of what a flavored tobacco product is will help with enforcement and compliance
    - E.g., a public statement or claim (express or implied) by manufacturer or authorized person

- The **sales regulation** itself can be simple: "No person shall sell or offer for sale any flavored products."
  - Some jurisdictions have exempted certain retail establishments from flavored tobacco sales regulations.
    This conflicts with purpose and intent and leaves susceptible to litigation.
  - If included, these retailer exemptions should be drafted in consideration of industry response to workaround loopholes (e.g., building structure and revenue criteria).

- Consult a lawyer: Public Health Law Center can assist with sample language or existing ordinance review/revisions.

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# Menthol Increases Addiction and Makes it Harder for Smokers to Quit

Research published since FDA's and TPSAC's reports continue to demonstrate the detrimental public health impact of menthol cigarettes:

• A 2014 randomized clinical trial of FDA-approved cessation treatments among 1,500 US adult smokers found that menthol smoking was associated with reduced likelihood of quitting, compared to non-menthol smoking. African American female menthol smokers had the lowest quit rates of all groups in the study.[1]

• A meta-analysis of findings from nearly 150,000 smokers found that among African Americans, menthol smokers have a 12% lower odds of smoking cessation compared to non-menthol smokers.[2]

• Relying on these studies as well as the FDA's and TPSAC's findings, the 2020 Surgeon General Report on Smoking Cessation determined that the evidence was suggestive, but not conclusive as to the role of menthol on smoking cessation, finding the strongest evidence for reduced likelihood of smoking cessation among African American menthol smokers.

1. Smith, SS, et al., "Smoking cessation in smokers who smoke menthol and non-menthol cigarettes,"
Addiction, 109: 2107-2117, 2014

2. Smith, PH, et al., "Use of Mentholated Cigarettes and Likelihood of Smoking Cessation in the United States: A Meta-Analysis,"
Nicotine & Tobacco Research, 2019, published online June 17, 2019

# Menthol

Spud Cigarettes

# It 's Not A Conspiracy

# Decriminalizing Commercial Tobacco
## Addressing Systemic Racism in the Enforcement of Commercial Tobacco Control

This joint statement from a consortium of public health organizations sets forth aspirational principles to help local and state health departments, decisionmakers, advocates, and other stakeholders advance equitable enforcement[i] practices related to the purchase, possession, sale, and distribution of all tobacco products.[ii] These principles can also help address tobacco addiction and reduce tobacco-related harms while maintaining and improving the efficacy of enforcement of commercial tobacco laws and policies.



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[i] This document adopts the definition of equitable enforcement set forth in the ChangeLab Solutions resource _Equitable Enforcement to Achieve Health Equity: An Introductory Guide for Policymakers and Practitioners:_

> "Equitable enforcement is a process of ensuring compliance with law and policy that considers and minimizes harms to underserved communities. An equitable enforcement approach means considering equity — both at the level of the public entity's overall enforcement strategy and at the level of individual enforcement actions. It also means considering equity at all stages of enforcement, from determining when to undertake an enforcement action — and against whom — to deciding which enforcement tools to use."

[ii] We recognize the important role of ceremonial and traditional tobacco for many indigenous communities. This document is intended to address commercial tobacco, not the provision, possession, or use of tobacco products as part of an indigenous practice or other recognized religious or spiritual ceremony or practice. All references to tobacco and tobacco products in this document refer to commercial tobacco, including e-cigarettes.

This statement is for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. Readers should consult with an attorney licensed to practice in their state before adopting any recommendations in this statement.

# Menthol Ban and Key Tobacco Industry Rebuttals

Tobacco use is the number one preventable cause of death and disease among African Americans. A prohibition on the manufacture and sale of mentholated tobacco products will help decrease the rate of preventable deaths in the Black community.

**I know many White people who smoke menthols. Why is this a racial issue?**
For decades the tobacco industry specifically marketed menthols to African American communities. The industry appropriated elements of Black culture and heavily invested advertising dollars into African American publications. They are known for sponsoring Black events like the KOOL Jazz festival, saturating urban Black neighborhood stores with ads, and pricing menthols more cheaply in Black neighborhoods. As a result of their efforts, 85% of African American smokers choose menthols while less than 30% of White smokers prefer menthols.

**Isn't tobacco use an issue of personal responsibility?**
The tobacco industry used to distribute free samples of their deadly products to underage youth, handing them out from mobile units in Black neighborhoods like an ice cream truck. To this day, tobacco companies donate millions of dollars to institutions that provide credible unbiassed information for making good decisions. These include historically Black colleges and universities, African American newspapers, civic leaders, researchers and elected officials. Research shows that quitting menthols is more difficult than quitting tobacco without this characterizing flavor. African Americans consistently report more, but less successful, attempts at quitting menthols. It is possible that tobacco use is not as *personal* of a choice as many assume.

**Won't a ban on menthol increase the potential for unjustly criminalizing African Americans**
This is a tobacco industry argument that exploits the real issues of police brutality and mass incarceration. Excessive force and systemic racism are problems that must be addressed independently of public health measures. The FDA ban on mentholated tobacco polices manufacturers and retailers of the product—not an individual's use or possession of them.

**Isn't it true that a ban on menthol will only create a black market?**
Data from countries (including Canada) that have already banned menthol cigarettes and data from the United States after banning other flavored cigarettes show no likelihood of international, illicit trade of menthol cigarettes after they are prohibited. Surveys show, in fact, that a ban would encourage African Americans to quit menthols rather than seek them from a black market.

**Is the FDA just trying to take away our personal freedom?**
Like food, drugs, cleaning products and cosmetics, the FDA regulates products that pose a threat to the public's health or safety. They do not regulate personal choices.

**Aren't there bigger issues facing the Black community?**
Tobacco related illness kills more African Americans than murders, suicides, HIV and car accidents combined. It would be an injustice to be silent on the issue.

# The Target

# Discussion

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