

TSET Better Health Podcast Transcript

Episode 12: Swap Up! A New Look at Teen Health

March 2, 2021

Summary: Swap Up is an exciting new statewide education campaign from the TSET Healthy Youth Initiative. Focused on youth nutrition and obesity prevention, Swap Up is collaboration between TSET and Rescue Agency and is tailored to the specific health needs of Oklahomans 13-18. Join James and Cate as they pull back the curtain on this groundbreaking campaign as it positions itself to help build a brighter future for Oklahoma youth. Hear from guests Julie Bisbee, TSET Executive Director; Jeff Jordan, Rescue Agency founder; and Kelly Day, Rescue Agency Senior Creative Director.

[Theme music]

[0:15]

James Tyree: Hello and welcome to the TSET Better Health Podcast. This is James Tyree, health communication consultant at TSET.

Cate Howell: And this is Cate Howell, your co-host and podcast producer.

J. Tyree: Well, we have to celebrate a milestone today, Cate. Today marks the release of our 12th episode, which means the TSET Better Health Podcast is completing its first year!

C. Howell: Yes! Happy birthday, TSET Podcast! It has been a bumpy ride navigating the new world of remote work during a pandemic, but we pulled it off! Thanks for all the hard work you do both behind and in front of the mic, James.

J. Tyree: Thank *you*, Cate. This is *your* idea, and this podcast keeps getting healthier and stronger with your hard work and dedication.

And speaking of that, today's topic is about a new initiative to help kids and teens grow stronger and healthier and feel better. As part of the TSET Healthy Youth Initiative that launched in August, TSET this month launched Swap Up, a new marketing campaign that speaks to youth about how *they* can choose healthier options to eat and drink, and why they would want to. With this new approach, we want to change the conversation around making healthy choices with food and nutrition.

C. Howell: Yes, and this is really exciting because it's addressing nutrition and obesity prevention for youth in a way that's more innovative than other public health efforts have been in the past. TSET partnered up yet again with Rescue, a health behavior change marketing agency, to create quick, funny, informative, relatable ads that promote healthy "swaps" or food choices for teens. First up, TSET Executive Director Julie Bisbee stopped by to tell us why this is such a big priority for TSET.

[2:14]

[Music: [Sorrow and Hope by Adieu Adieu](#) licensed through PremiumBeat]

Julie Bisbee: So obesity is the cause of more than 13 different cancers. When we're looking at what is it going to take to move the needle on the health of Oklahomans, we have to be addressing obesity and nutrition.

Obesity is a complex issue. This year, we know that the cost of healthcare associated with obesity is likely to outpace the cost of care associated with tobacco, and so it is important that we are addressing this and being proactive.

C. Howell: One major way to be proactive is to educate young people on how to live healthier. Julie explained TSET's new plan for doing this.

J. Bisbee: The TSET Healthy Youth Initiative is something that our Board of Directors prioritized during their strategic planning sessions over a year ago. They really wanted to put that focus on young people, and what the research shows and what we know is that when healthy habits are learned young, they last for a lifetime, and so this was something where we thought, "We really need to put an emphasis on this."

The TSET Board of Directors approved funding for a 3-phase program which includes efforts that prevent and reduce tobacco use among youth and addresses nutrition and obesity.

C. Howell: The first messaging phase launched last fall and aims to prevent and reduce youth vaping and tobacco use. This new phase that addresses nutrition and obesity prevention is called "Swap Up".

J. Bisbee: Our research shows that young people are interested in eating nutritious food; young people are interested in having additional options, but where they fall short sometimes is having the resources or the know-how to make those choices, and so the Swap Up campaign is really looking at what are the easy choices that the average youth can make in their daily lives. It's really looking at the real world, those issues that are important to teens, the costs and the benefits that they're weighing out in their daily lives, and giving them the tools that will equip them to make healthy choices.

TSET, created in the constitution, was established to have a long-term vision and make long-term investments that would benefit the next generation, and this youth initiative really helps us do that.

[4:50]

J. Tyree: So for the Healthy Youth Initiative, TSET partnered with the Rescue Agency to help create messaging that will resonate with Oklahoma youth. I recently got to speak with Jeff Jordan, the company's founder and president.

[5:08]

[Music: [Oh So Happy by Gentle Fire Studio](#) licensed through PremiumBeat]

Jeff Jordan: So Rescue Agency is a health behavior change marketing agency, and so what that means is that we work exclusively with positive health behavior change programs, such as preventing tobacco use and vaping, promoting nutrition and physical activity, preventing drug use, et cetera, and we've been around for about 20 years and have been working in Oklahoma with TSET for almost 10 years now tackling a number of issues. But I'm here today about one of our newest initiatives to promote healthy eating and physical activity to Oklahoma teenagers called "Swap Up".

J. Tyree: Kids and teenagers are bombarded with messages all the time on what to eat; some are healthy but much of it is not. But Jeff explained how Swap Up is different when it comes to speaking to youth.

J. Jordan: We had a lot of pre-existing research that told us that most people want to eat healthier, including teens, but they didn't know how; they didn't know what that meant in their life. Having that pre-existing knowledge actually allowed us to walk into this research and say, "Okay, let's hyper focus on what are the opportunities that are common amongst teenagers that they could actually incorporate healthier foods into their life?" So rather than creating a campaign to tell them to eat healthier or make them want to eat healthier, we needed to show them how, and in order to show them how, we needed some pretty specific information about them and their life and when they are making different food decisions.

J. Tyree: If you're thinking this strategy is "SAVI", you are right!

J. Jordan: So, "SAVI" came out of the notion that when it's a complicated behavior such as nutrition, you can't keep telling people to do the top line behavior, which is eat healthier, over and over again. When we as public health professionals are talking about something complicated and we either oversimplify it or we don't address the complexity, what that does is it puts the burden on our audience, so now our audience has to figure out how to make this happen, and, you know, they don't have time for that. They may not have the interest level to do that. And so if we can actually move that over to our side and we can figure it out for them and tell them, "Hey, this is exactly what you have to do," then it becomes a lot more likely that they're going to adopt the behavior. And so what does it mean taking on that burden? Well, it means creating a "SAVI" message.

So SAVI stands for, first, "specific": the message we're going to provide includes real examples to reduce our audience's burden of how to eat healthier. Right? So we want a specific food that they currently eat and we want to tell them what to swap it with, when. So if you're going to a convenient store and you're buying this thing, we want you to look at this other thing in that same store to swap it with.

The next one is "attainable", and this means that the swaps in the ingredients and recipes that we talk about—that they're affordable and have a similar cost to the

unhealthy food that's being replaced. Right? So we don't want to replace a dollar candy bar with a five dollar salad. That isn't realistic, so we've got to find comparable swaps.

The next one is "viable", and this one means that the examples that we include need to be feasible for our audience from the perspective of time, skill, family, culture and taste. So, for example, if a teenager is looking for something sweet, we want to give them a sweet alternative. If they're looking for something savory, we want to give them a savory alternative. It's really important that we recognize that, you know, they're not just making a decision because it's healthier; they're making a decision because they're craving a certain kind of food, they have a certain amount of hunger, a certain amount of time, maybe certain cultural aspects that they're taking into consideration that we have to take into consideration with the replacement as well.

And the last one is the "I", and "I" stands for "impactful", and that means that, because we are a media campaign and we're going to make commercials, we're actually investing a lot into one specific swap. We've got to pick stuff that would have a really big impact on their life if they did that one thing. So that means we gotta look for behaviors that are happening all the time. What's something they're doing every morning or every afternoon or every time they grab snack that if they change it would have this cumulative caloric impact and just overall nutrition impact.

And so that's S-Specific, A-Attainable, V-Viable, and I-Impactful, and so every message that we're doing with Swap Up is what we call a "SAVI" message.

[9:52]

[Music: [Know Me by Sirius Music](#) licensed through PremiumBeat]

- C. Howell: These ads are designed to really resonate with kids by speaking to how and why they choose the things they eat and drink, not just telling them what they should eat and drink.
- J. Tyree: That's true, and Jeff spoke a bit more on how Swap Up will help youth see the immediate benefit of making an easy but healthy choice.
- J. Jordan: We want to make it clear to them that these changes they're making are actually going to improve their lives in tangible ways. So one thing that's really innovative that Swap Up is doing with TSET is we're talking about the immediate physical effects of eating differently in terms of energy, focus, memory. These are real effects, and teens may not yet be linking these things together. They may be very aware of that kind of gross, greasy feeling or lethargic feeling, but they may not be connecting that it's because of those curly fries that you just ate [laughs] during lunch. So we want to connect those dots and really show them that these swaps are not just healthier but they're actually going to improve their life in real time.

J. Tyree: One important thing to note is that swapping up does not mean dieting, as we often think of it, or having a negative view of food. Rather, it's about young people making healthier choices for themselves that will help them make them feel great.

J. Jordan: Food is more than just about your weight. That is just the tip of the iceberg of what food represents. Food represents how you feel. It represents how clearly you can think, how well you remember things, how much energy you have. It affects your mood, whether you're happy—there's food that can actually make you depressed, make you feel sad. It's such a bigger deal to eat healthy than simply weight management, and we really want people to understand that, because especially for kids, you know, we don't want to be talking to kids about their weight and making them feel bad about themselves. We want to empower them and show them, like, "You can do what you want more effectively," whether it's sports, whether it's do well at school, whether it's just being happier, you can achieve that by eating better.

[12:12]

J. Tyree: Jeff explained the research and the rationale behind the Swap Up messaging, but now let's hear how this youth campaign was brought to life.

C. Howell: For that, let me introduce Kelly Day, head of the creative team behind the campaign.

[12:30]

[Music: [Repeat Customer by Flash Fluharty](#) licensed through PremiumBat]

Kelly Day: I work for Rescue Agency and my title there is senior creative director, and I oversee the department that comes up with all of our creative ideas.

C. Howell: Rescue Agency focuses on approaching a variety of health topics in the most effective way. But addressing health messages to teens can be a little awkward. You don't want to be too preachy or instructive, but you also don't want to come across as cheesy or trying too hard. Kelly and the creative team behind Swap Up had the difficult task of creating something relatable and educational to this unique and evolving demographic.

K. Day: The major goal of the campaign is to increase the amounts of fruits, vegetables and water that teens drink. We're trying to help them get healthier. We want to focus on how food makes you feel. It's a different approach because people don't always focus on that.

We also focused on some of the areas that teens can control in their life. We know that they live with their parents, so them going out and doing all the grocery shopping isn't going to be something that they can always do, but what they can control are the things within their own environment, whether they're going out for lunch or they're buying lunch at school—there's different choices that they can make even right at the vending machine or in the cafeteria school line that might be healthier, and they're still filling. Same at fast food restaurants, and then also at gas stations. So whether that's, you

know, instead of going to a convenient store and buying nachos, we give them an option instead that's something that they can find in their area, whether that's a pack of apple slices with peanut butter, which is something that they can pick up, or something else like hummus with some pretzels. Teens are on the go. We know that they need pick up something really fast sometimes and keep moving, so we want to give them some ideas to pick up something that's not only fast but healthy, too.

So those are some of the ways that we're making them stand out and be different, and then we also are looking at using humor in the ads as well. We want to engage teens and help them remember them, and we do that with humor.

C. Howell: In addition to understanding the reality that teens live every day, Rescue and TSET also wanted to be organically persuasive. So, in a stroke of brilliance, they took a tactic used in fast food, soda and energy drink ads and turned it on its head: simply put, they make healthy food look irresistible.

K. Day: We really try to make it so that the options not only are healthier but they sound appealing and they look appealing, too. The negative foods out there or the unhealthy foods that are out there when they're showing them on TV or whatever other way you see them, they want them to look delicious, and so we're doing the same thing with healthy food. If we show a grilled chicken sandwich, we want it to look like the most beautiful and amazing grilled chicken sandwich you've ever seen. For water, we don't want to just show a room temperature bottle of water—we want it to be a cold, delicious glass of water with lots of ice, the water droplets on it, so that it really looks yummy and delicious. Alternatively, any time we're showing an unhealthy food, it's not going to make you feel good, so we want to also make sure that it doesn't look good as well. We're showing it for what it is.

C. Howell: So we've covered what's in the ads and the strategy behind them, but how did they put it all together? Here's a sneak peek of the Fuel for Football radio spot.

[15:58]

[Background cheering, a football kick]

Coach: [blows whistle] Hey, why aren't you practicing?

Player: I drank a slushie, and now I'm so tired.

Coach: You know sugary drinks slow down your game, right? And they all come with a crash that makes you feel weak.

[tackle sounds]

Player: [sighs] I'm out of energy.

Coach: You gotta skip the sugar. Drink water instead.

[drinking from a water bottle]

Coach: You'll feel faster and more energized!

Player: [gulps] Aaah, much better. Time to get back on the field. [walks away]

Narrator: Skip the sugar. Energize with water. Learn more at SwapUpOK.com.

[16:29]

K. Day: Yeah, so, in that one, we were trying to show the literal use of sugary drinks holding you back, and so we did that by having the slushie, which is a drink that you can pick up at a lot of different gas stations, come to life. So we have a giant slushie who's actually holding a football player back in real life to help illustrate quickly with a visual that sugary drinks do hold you back. And the main idea for that spot is when you drink sugar, they actually do give you energy for a little bit, but they cause a crash, so we wanted to emphasize that by showing the slushie holding the football player back and not letting him run anywhere, until, of course, he drinks water, and then he's influenced by his coach to grab some water, drink it, and then stand up, and now all of a sudden he's feeling faster and more energized because when you're hydrated, that does help give you more energy and helps you feel faster as well.

C. Howell: One thing I found fascinating was how thoughtful this California team was in crafting a message that would be palatable and respectful to all different kinds of Oklahomans. Their messaging is wisely not a one-size-fits-all strategy.

K. Day: The first thing that we did is we researched the two different audiences, so we break them down into what we call rural and urban, and for rural teens, we really wanted to understand, "Okay, they're in a more remote area—what kind of foods are available for them?" So that was one of the things that we researched. We did work with a registered dietitian in Oklahoma, so she knew from just living in Oklahoma but also she went out and did a little bit of research to figure out what foods are available where, so that we made sure within the ads we're actually showing something that people can find.

We also looked at just different rituals between the two audiences, and we learned that for a lot of rural teens, they're allowed to go off campus during lunchtime, and so that was something that we wound up using as part of one of our spots. We show a teen who's gone off campus, she's at a fast food restaurant.

As we create the spots, we also want to make sure that we're showing a variety of people that reflect the variety that's within Oklahoma, so ethnic diversity, as well as accents. We made sure that we had, for the rural spots, the right accent dialed in, including for one of the spots upcoming, we used someone as our main talent who was from Oklahoma, which worked out awesome, and so she had the accent completely dialed in.

When we're talking to the rural audience, we know that they like it more when they see someone, they connect with a person who talks to them, so in the rural spots, you'll see someone talking more to camera. We know as an insight for our country audience that they really like just a slower-paced TV spot, so we go in when we create that creative knowing that we're going to have mostly fewer lines in those spots and just a lot slower delivery of those lines as well.

[19:24]

[Music: [Pumped Up Magic by Roommate](#) licensed through PremiumBeat]

C. Howell: Between the research and creativity that Rescue brings to the Swap Up campaign and the Healthy Youth Initiative, this TSET partnership is poised to benefit kids and teens throughout our state. Kelly said she is pleased for the opportunity to work on this initiative.

K. Day: Working with the team at TSET was amazing because they already had great insights into the audience, and I just loved how open the TSET team was to the different ideas that we brought to the table. And it was cool to see when the testing came back from research that these ads performed really well. They also said they were memorable because of the humor, and again, that's something that we had tried to plan for. We wanted to make these funny spots, and it was really neat to see that the teens recognized that and that it helped make the spot more memorable to them as well.

And then overall, I just had such a fun time directing these on set. Like for the Fuel for Football, having the football player chase the slushie was just hilarious seeing that go down because he could not see out of the slushie outfit, so we had to basically, like, call for him so he could not run into something. [laughs] So that was really funny. Overall, it was just—it was a lot of fun. It was a lot of fun to direct these and just be on set with the actors. So I can't wait for you all to see all the different spots that we put together. I think we got some really great footage, and Fuel for Football is a great one to launch with, especially with how big the football audience is in Oklahoma and what a big sport it is there, I think it's going to be a really fun spot to launch with.

[21:02]

C. Howell: I can't wait to see more of these Swap Up commercials; they're going to be great.

J. Tyree: I know, I know; I love the football one and we're hearing the other ones will be just as good if not better. But for now, we invite you to check out the new TSET Healthy Youth Initiative website at TSEHealthyYouth.com. There you will find more information on the Behind the Haze campaign against youth vaping, Down and Dirty to fight youth tobacco use in rural Oklahoma, My Life My Quit, a new service that's specifically tailored to help teens ages 13 to 17 quit tobacco, and very soon this new Swap Up campaign.

C. Howell: Also, this month, Shape Your Future has some exciting new content by pediatrician Dr. Ashley Weedn and registered dietitian Melissa Oishi. There you'll find lots of great tips for parents and teens to incorporate healthier habits into your day.

J. Tyree: And you can find that at the Shape Your Future website, which is ShapeYourFutureOK.com.

C. Howell: And that's a wrap on this 12th monthly episode. Please be sure to listen to any of our previous podcasts at the TSET website, TSET.ok.gov/podcast, or wherever you listen to podcasts, follow us on social media, @OklahomaTSET on Facebook and Twitter, and please join us as next month as the TSET Better Health Podcast begins its second year.

J. Tyree: And until next time, this is James Tyree—

C. Howell: And Cate Howell—

J. Tyree: Wishing you peace—

C. Howell: —and Better Health.

[Theme music]

[22:56]