



Healthy Teen Network

VOLT20 STUDY RESULTS

ABOUT VOLT 20 PLAN

Adolescence and young adulthood is a time when individuals begin to think about what they want for their futures—completing school, the type of work or career that best suits them, perhaps forming a long-term relationship, and generally enjoying life. During adolescence and young adulthood, youth are considering their futures through self-reflection, talking with people they trust, and seeking out reliable information on their own.

Volt is the ultimate health resource guide every young person needs to help them thrive. Volt helps youth think about their lives, decide what they like about their lives right now, what they wish were different, and plan for a healthy future. Volt helps adolescents and young adults, focus on what’s going on with their bodies, minds, relationships, and the places they live, learn, work, and play. It helps them create a written “game plan” for establishing, maintaining, or sustaining a life of health and well-being.

STUDY PURPOSE

In 2017, Healthy Teen Network conducted a study of Volt20, previously called Generate My Healthy Future Plan to examine the utility of the activity for adolescents, young adults, and caring adults. Specifically, we sought to answer the following questions:

1. How easy do users find the activity to use?
2. How comfortable are users in completing the activity?
3. To what extent do users like the theme and look of the activity?
4. Do users prefer an online or print version of the activity’s resources?
5. What proportion of users rate the activity to be too long, too short, or just right in length?
6. With whom, if anyone, do users work with to complete the activity, and with whom, if anyone do they prefer to work?
7. Do users recommend this activity to others or want to repeat it one day?
8. Do users feel that the activity helps them take charge of their health, or guide a young person to do so?
9. To what extent do users complete the activity with at least 80 percent fidelity (that is to say, read the sections indicated by their responses to the *Questionnaire* and/or make notes in the *Journal* provided to them)?
10. To what extent do users intend to take any actions (if warranted) as a result of doing the activity?
11. To what extent do adult guides gain confidence to talk with the same or additional youth in the future after guiding one youth through the activity?
12. What improvements are warranted in the activity or its facilitation?

STUDY METHODS

Study Design & Participants

We conducted the study using a post-test questionnaire plus follow-up telephone interview design. An institutional review board for human subjects convened by Solutions IRB approved the study protocol.

We collected data for this study from the youth and adults participating in the study. Youth included in the study were adolescents aged 14 through 17 able to speak, read, and understand English, with one parent or legal guardian able to read and understand English; and young adults aged 18 through 24 able to understand English. Adults included in the study were aged 18 and older and able to speak, read, and understand English. Participants self-reported their ages and English language proficiency.

We recruited participants using posts through Healthy Teen Network social media channels, flyers disseminated by community- and faith-based organizations (CFBO) serving as host sites for the study, and oral presentations by CFBOs to youth and adult study candidates.

Recruitment materials and scripts directed interested participants to a study webpage, where they learned more about the study and answered questions to determine their eligibility. We directed youth who met all study criteria to an online consent form to complete. We asked youth aged 17 and younger to also provide an email address or postal mail address for a parent/guardian, who we then provided information about the study and linked to or sent consent forms to complete. Youth and adult participants completing the study at a CFBO site received study information and consent and assent forms and returned their forms to study staff in advance of commencing the activity.

Participants who completed the study received a gift card issued by a national consumer goods merchant in the amount of \$25 for completing the activity and a post-test survey, and an additional \$10 for completing a telephone interview, if they were selected.

One hundred forty-two (142) adolescents and young adults completed the study's initial questionnaire and post-activity questionnaire, including 54 (38.0%) who participated independently at a location of their choice, 48 (33.8%) who participated in a CFBO setting, and 40 (28.2%) who participated with a parent at a location of their choice. Sixty-seven (67) adults matched to a study youth completed a post-activity questionnaire.

Data Collection

We collected data via a post-test survey directly following completion of the activity and individual interviews with a subset of participants selected by study staff.

From youth participants, we collected their responses to the *Questionnaire* they completed to begin the activity and their responses to a survey immediately after completing the plan. The post-activity survey included questions about which parts of the guide they read after completing the activity and whether they intended to take any actions in any of the healthy future subjects. Also, the survey assessed general reactions to the plan itself. These data were collected through an online survey system or a print survey returned through postal mail (participants selected their preferred method), or by study staff collection of print surveys at host site events. Study staff manually entered data collected on print surveys into the online survey system.

From adult participants, we collected their responses to a survey immediately after completing the activity. The survey included questions about the adult's perceptions about the activity's ease of use, length, and relevance of the healthy future subjects, as well the time taken and outcomes they observed (positive or negative) for themselves and/or the youth. These data were collected through an online survey system for participants who chose online entry or a print survey returned through postal mail (participants selected their preferred method), or by study staff collection of print surveys at host site events. Study staff manually entered into the online survey system data collected on print surveys.

Also, we conducted 20 telephone interviews with a sample of 10 youth participants and 10 adult participants. We collected more detailed comments about the user experience with the activity than participants might be inclined to include if asked to write on a survey only.

Data Analysis

We analyzed the data using statistical software (SPSS) to generate frequencies and cross-tabulations by group where appropriate. We also generated a measure of “fidelity” to the activity by comparing youth post-test survey responses on the actions youth participants took regarding each subject after doing the activity. If the post-activity response was considered appropriate based on the initial response, the youth participant was coded as having followed the activity with fidelity for that particular subject. For example, if a youth indicated that they wanted to “learn more” about a particular healthy future subject, they were considered to have taken appropriate action if they reported either reading a passage in the *Guide*, reflecting or talking about it, checking out a resource, or planning an action. If they reported that they did not do any of these, they were not considered to have taken an appropriate action regarding that subject. We counted the number of times a youth took an appropriate action on a healthy future subject and compared them with the number of subjects overall to derive a proportion describing the extent to which youth followed the activity as intended, with “fidelity.”

STUDY RESULTS

How easy did users find the activity to use?

88.7 percent of youth participants found the activity very easy (47.9%) or mostly easy (40.8%) to use. Further, 71.8 percent of youth participants found the activity instructions clear and an additional 28.2 percent of youth found the instructions somewhat clear.

Of the 11.3 percent of youth participants who found the activity somewhat hard, more of them were aged 17 and younger (compared to aged 18 and older) and/or completed the activity with their parent or legal guardian (compared to having completed the activity independently or a non-parent caring adult).

Ninety-four (94) percent of adult participants found the activity very easy (50.7%) or mostly easy (43.3%). Further, 62.7 percent of adult participants found the activity instructions clear and an additional 29.9 percent of adults found the instructions somewhat clear.

Illustrative Participant Comments

- “It was easy to complete. For me it wasn’t difficult to find answers.”
- “I liked that all the information you would have needed if you had a question was right there.”
- “It was ok, everything was very clear. There was nothing confusing about it. I liked it. I appreciated that it had links in the categories we were reviewing. There was nothing I didn’t like.”

How comfortable were users in completing the activity?

95.8 percent of youth participants found the activity very comfortable (60.6%) or somewhat comfortable (35.2%). Comfort with the activity was consistent across age groups and activity settings of the youths. Only 4.2 percent of youth participants found the activity somewhat uncomfortable (2.8%) or very uncomfortable (1.4%).

94.1 percent of adult participants found the activity very comfortable (50.7%) or somewhat comfortable (43.3%).

Illustrative Participant Comments

- “I really liked talking with my [caring adult match.] I knew her, but not well. She provided insight going into my first year of college that I didn’t expect, that I hadn’t thought about.”
- “I liked how the [caring adult] seemed very engaged in the conversation and it was not like with a boring monotone voice. They were engaged in the conversation, and you felt like they were interested in helping our generation become better.”
- “What I liked the most were the reflection questions. Those really helped the adult to guide the conversation in a way that you’ll be able to cover the entire topic. I felt like sometimes the teens didn’t know what exactly to ask, or what exactly they wanted to know, so then the reflection questions were definitely helpful. They could help anybody.”

To what extent did users like the theme & look of the activity?

91.5 percent of youth participants mostly liked (69.0%) or somewhat liked (22.5%) the “energy” theme of the activity. 95.8 percent of youth participants mostly liked (66.2%) or somewhat liked (29.6%) the colors and fonts of the activity’s resources.

Did users prefer an online or print version of the activity’s resources?

We offered youth completing the activity independently or with a parent the option to access the materials online or printed. Youth completing the activity in a group setting completed the activity on paper. We found that youth and adults tended to be satisfied with the format they used for the activity. Overall, youth participants’ preferred access methods were computer (63.4%), smartphone (35.2%), paper (28.2%), and tablet (24.6%). (Total exceeds 100 percent because youth could express more than one preference.) Adult participants’ preferred access methods were paper (59.7%), computer (34.3%), tablet (22.4%), and smartphone (11.9%). (Total exceeds 100 percent because adults could express more than one preference.)

What proportion of users rated the activity as too long, too short, or just right in length?

76.1 percent of youth participants rated the activity as just right in length. 16.9 percent of youth participants rated the activity as too long. 3.5 percent rated it as too short. The remaining 3.5 percent had no opinion on the activity length.

80.6 percent of adult participants rated the activity as just right in length. 11.9 percent of adult participants rated the activity as too long. The remaining 7.5 percent of adults had no opinion on the activity length.

With whom, if anyone, did users work with to complete the activity, & with whom, if anyone would they have preferred to work?

Youth participants completed the activity as follows:

- 39.4 percent completed it alone
- 32.4 percent completed it with a non-parent caring adult
- 25.4 percent completed it with a parent
- 2.8 percent completed it with a peer

Generally, youth participants indicated a preference for working with the same type of person/arrangement with whom/in which they completed the activity.

Youth participants aged 17 and younger indicated a preference for completing the activity, in order of preference, with a parent (85.7%), non-parent caring adult (74.3%), peer (52.4%), or alone (13.8%). The preference order flipped for youth participants aged 18 and older, with youth of those ages indicating a preference for completing the activity, in order of preference, alone (86.2%), a peer (47.6%), a non-parent caring adult (25.7%), or a parent (14.3%).

Illustrative Participant Comments

- “My parents helped me a lot about understanding health information in the *Guide* that I have saved in Google Drive. These activities make us closer.”
- “Some of the *Guide* information. I was having confusion about it. But my parents gave the explanation patiently, and I easily understood.”
- “I think this activity was a great way to break the ice between youth and adults. Allowed both parties to be open and honest.”
- “Talking with my [caring adult] helped tremendously. She was just real wise about it. She would read what the [Guide] said, then go in depth and provide a different way of seeing stuff and provide advice that I’d never heard before or thought of.”
- “I think [the activity] is beneficial. Sometimes [youth] might not feel comfortable asking those questions to other adults, especially their parents. As long as kids have an opportunity to answer these questions with an adult they trust, it’s helpful.”
- “[The activity] opened up lines of communication [between youth and parents] where there otherwise might be none.”

Would users recommend this activity to others or want to repeat it one day?

87.3 percent of youth participants reported they would recommend the activity to a peer or sibling. 11.3 percent of youth participants indicated they would maybe recommend the activity to a peer or sibling. Only 1.4 percent of youth participants reported they would not recommend the activity.

79.1 percent of adult participants reported they would recommend the activity to a friend or family member to do as a volunteer, and 77.6% reported that they would recommend this activity to a parent or guardian who wanted to do it with their own child. 20.9 percent of adult participants indicated they would maybe recommend the activity to a friend or family member to do as a volunteer or as a parent/guardian with their own child.

Illustrative Participant Comments

- “I would explain to them how easy it is, how it makes you think about all of your goals and how to reach them by laying them out in front of you. It helps you decide what you really want to do and what you want to put aside.”
- “Mak[ing] healthy future plans should start from now, before anything bad and negative happens.”
- “If you’re struggling with trying to figure different stuff out you should try the activity to gain a different perspective.”
- “I work with youth, so I thought even as an adult it was a good activity because it helped her reflect. I would recommend this activity for students or teens because I think everyone needs a form of reflection and this activity did just that.”

Did users feel that the activity helped them take charge of their health, or guide a youth to do so?

80.3 percent of youth participants reported they felt the activity helped them take charge of their health. 18.3 percent reported they maybe felt the activity helped them take charge of their health. Only 1.4 percent of youth participants reported they felt the activity did not help them take charge of their health.

Illustrative Participant Comments

- “I received a lot of feedback from the *Guide* that contained important and helpful information. Maybe I just read some topics, but it [was] really great, useful.”
- “I liked the *Journal* & the prompt questions in the *Guide*.”
- “The *Journal* is very helpful to me in achieving the goal of health for the future.”
- “Great experience I got after studying the *Guide* and writing down some of my life's goals in the *Journal*.”
- “I have received a lot of information about health, social and problems that happen to youth, and there are many [resources] giving the best solution to every problem.”
- “I [got] a lot of helpful knowledge in making the right decisions about how to get [a] future according to my dreams and happiness.”
- “Reading the *Guide* gave me a better understanding in managing the health of the future. Activities with parents are fun and provide a more family atmosphere.”
- “I enjoyed [the activity] very much. It gave me much to reflect on.”
- “Now I am a better young man and have confidence for the future.”
- “Ever since [completing the activity], I've been more interested in eating more fruits because I realized how unhealthy I've been eating.”
- “[The activity] helped me start a plan, to write down a plan. You can't do something unless you have a plan, and this helped me do that.”
- “I think it's a great activity where the adolescents can think about questions they rarely come across, like [physical] health, issues at home/school.”
- “Now I can see a positive difference [in] my child's behavior because he started to learn to be responsible for himself. This is progress in him, everything should start slowly but to get the desired goal.”
- “The child I worked with was an older kid, but he said his biggest obstacle was smoking. We got to talking about it and the [*Facilitator Companion*] gave me more questions to be able to talk with him. He's a young father, and we got to talk about how the smoke is harmful not just to him but that the smoke in his clothes is harmful to his baby.”

To what extent do users complete the activity with at least 80 percent fidelity (that is to say, read the sections indicated by their responses to the questionnaire &/or make notes in the journal provided to them)?

We considered youth participants to have completed the activity with full fidelity if they read sections of the activity *Guide* indicated by their responses to the questionnaire and/or made notes in their activity *Journal*.

Although fewer than half (40.8%) of youth participants met the benchmark of taking appropriate action at least 80 percent of the time, on average, participants took appropriate action with 73.2 percent of the healthy future subjects. The proportion of youth participants meeting the 80 percent benchmark was higher among youth aged 17 and younger (40.8%) than youth aged 18 and older (34.3%).

To what extent did users intend to take any actions (if warranted) as a result of doing the activity?

To answer this question, we first determined whether or not any action might be warranted by calculating the proportion of youth participants who expressed an interest in exploring at least one healthy future subject, and determined that all youth fell into this category. 81.7 percent of youth participants planned to take at least one action as a result of doing the activity.

To explore the healthy future subjects on which youth intended to take action, we calculated the proportion who reported on the post-activity questionnaire that they planned to take action on a particular subject among the group of youth who had expressed interest in exploring that subject. We found that the highest proportions initially expressed interest in exploring the subjects of diseases (83.8%), health care (76.8%), and food/diet (78.9). The lowest proportions reported interest in exploring the subjects of violence where they sleep (33.8%), violence where they learn/work (48.6%), drugs (49.3%), and online activity (49.3%).

On the post-activity questionnaire, there was wide variation across health issues in the proportions of youth participants reporting that they planned to take action, with the highest proportions reporting that they planned to take action in the areas of how or with whom they spend their free time (74.6%), their diet (64.3%), or their physical activity (61.9%). The lowest proportions planned to take action in the areas of alcohol (12.1%) or drugs (7.1%).

Illustrative Participant Comments

- “I was a young man who quickly took a decision without thinking what would happen, but after reading the *Guide* and writing in the *Journal* for my future, I became better at making a final decision and goal.”
- “The *Guide* that I have saved to Google Drive will be my guide in making decisions for my future health, and a *Journal* is a critical success of my life purpose, may be amended in the coming years.”
- “I learned a lot from the *Guide* and I expect to complete the *Journal* within this month.”
- “I want to create a healthy future plan according to the *Guide* I have learned from your site, and all the information I receive [d] is very useful and important as my guideline.”
- “[The activity] made me more excited to work towards my goals. There was one category that talked about family and friends. I have a daughter. It made me think about my future and how it would affect her. It made me think about how having another child would reroute my health.”

To what extent did adult guides gain confidence to talk with the same or additional youth in the future after guiding one youth through the activity?

67.2 percent of adult participants felt the activity and resources helped them feel better equipped to help a young person take charge of their health. 32.8 percent of adult participants felt the activity and resources may have helped them feel better equipped to help a young person take charge of their health.

Illustrative Participant Comments

- “I believe this is a great opportunity to get youth to open up and allow them to express themselves. It's also a great way to help adults learn to listen.”
- “Yes, I feel like I'm just more equipped with better options to help them live healthier lives. For example, instead of saying ‘just get more sleep,’ I can give them better answers or resources for that behavior if they ever asked.”

What improvements are warranted in the activity or its facilitation?

Few study participants found the activity and/or resources lacking and in need of improvement. Those improvements suggested from youth participants included providing a bit more explanation for completing the activity and substituting some images in the *Guide*. Adult participants recommended more preparation time before engaging with their youth match. Others recommended that the adult and/or youth have access to an electronic device during the activity so that they could examine healthy future online resources referenced in the *Guide* and *Facilitator Companion*.

STUDY DISCUSSION

Overall, study participants indicated high satisfaction with the activity and resources in their current form, finding it easy, comfortable to do (alone or with another), appealing in theme and look, and of a good length. Participants preferred both paper and online options for completing the activity, so both formats should be maintained. Alterations to the activity and resources' design and content are not warranted.

Several steps can be taken to improve the user experience with the activity and resources. We should consider developing additional and alternate methods and materials (such as demonstration videos) for instructing participants on how to complete the activity. We should remind users that feel the activity is too long or overly rich in content that they have the option to complete the activity over multiple sessions. We should differentiate our promotion of the activity to encourage adolescents to complete the activity with a parent or non-parent caring adult, and young adults to complete the activity independently or with a peer.

The best validation of *Volt 20 Plan* is that nearly 100 percent of youth and adult participants indicated that they would definitely or maybe recommend the activity to others. This high praise builds our confidence that *Volt 20 Plan* is a welcome addition to the national inventory of adolescent and young adult health promotion resources, and therefore worthy of promotion by Healthy Teen Network and of uptake by many more youth and those who support them.



Healthy Teen Network

1501 St. Paul Street, Suite 114
Baltimore, MD 21202
410.685.0410
www.HealthyTeenNetwork.org

Suggested Citation:

Healthy Teen Network (2018). *Volt 20: Study results*. Baltimore: Author. Available [online](#).

Volt 20 Plan is made possible (in part) by an independent grant from Merck.