Correcting Misperceptions to Change Substance Use Behaviors: A Campus-Wide Prevention Approach

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Breakout Session Timeline

- College student substance use and related consequences
- Social norms theory and applications for prevention and early intervention services
- Utilizing a strategic prevention framework to design, implement, and evaluate a social norms campaign
- Challenges and application to special populations
- Demonstration of social norms activity
- Question and Answer
Overview

Substance Use/Misuse and Related Consequences
Alcohol Misuse
National Reports of Alcohol Use

2019 National College Health Assessment Findings

Any Use Last 30 Days: 59.4%
Used 1 – 9 Days: 46.3%
Binge Drinking in the Last 2 Weeks: 25.6%

Number of Drinks Last Time Partied:
- 65.2% ≤
- 11.3%
- 7.9%
- 15.6% +

(American College Health Association, 2019)
Alcohol: Related Consequences

Impairments in Cognitive Ability
- Decision-making
- Impulse control
- Motor skills

Health & Mental Health
- Blacking out/ memory loss
- Injury
- Physical and sexual assault
- Alcohol use disorder
- Death

Risky Behaviors
- Unprotected sex
- Drunk Driving (~2.7 million / year)

Alcohol-Related Problems
- Decreased academic performance
- Property damage
- Police involvement

(White & Hingston, 2013)
Cannabis Use
National Reports of Cannabis Use

2018 Monitoring the Future College Students and Young Adults Survey Results

ANNUAL MARIJUANA USE AT HISTORIC HIGHS AMONG COLLEGE AND NON-COLLEGE PEERS

(Schulenberg et al., 2019)
National Reports of Cannabis Use

2019 National College Health Assessment

- Any Use Last 30 Days: 22.1%
- Used 1 – 9 Days: 13.7%
- Used 10 – 30 Days: 8.5%

2018 Monitoring the Future College Students and Young Adults Survey Results

- Used Daily or Near Daily: 11.1%
- Non-College: 5.9%

(American College Health Association, 2019; Schulenberg et al, 2019)
National Reports of Cannabis Use

2018 Monitoring the Future: Past Month Marijuana Vaping

(Schulenberg et al, 2019)
Cannabis: Related Consequences

Impairment in Brain Development
- Concentration
- Verbal learning
- Working Memory

Deficits in Cognitive functioning
- Motor-vehicle accidents
- Decreased motivation
- Psychosis
- Substance use dependence

Physical and Mental Health

Skipping Class
- Barrier to Academic Achievement
- Lower GPA
- Increased Time to Graduation

(Arria et al., 2015; Hanson et al., 2010; Pearson et al., 2017)
Prescription Stimulant Misuse
National Reports of Prescription Stimulant Misuse

(Schulenberg et al, 2019)
Misuse of Prescription Stimulants: Consequences

- **Decreased Academic Performance**
  - Skipping class
  - Less study time
  - Lower GPA

- **Mental Health**
  - Depressed mood
  - Consider suicide*

- **Other At-Risk Behaviors**
  - Cigarette use
  - Alcohol misuse
  - Cannabis use disorder

*(Benson et al., 2015)*
Impact of Substance Use

Evidence-Based Prevention

- Cognitive Functioning
- Academic Performance
- Mental Health
- Physical Health
- Risky Behaviors
At-Risk Groups

- First Year Students
- Greek Life Members
- Student Athletes
Universal Prevention
SOCIAL NORMS CAMPAIGN
Social Norms Theory

↑ Healthy behaviors, ↓ Risk behaviors

Norms shape health behavior

Perception of norms vs. Actual norms
Social Norms Campaign

2019 Estimates of College Student Alcohol Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of Use</th>
<th>Actual Use</th>
<th>Perceived Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never Used</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used 1-9 days</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
<td>39.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used 10-29 days</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>40.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used all 30 days</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any use in last 30 days</td>
<td>92.9%</td>
<td>58.4%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(American College Health Association, 2019)
Social Norms Campaign

2019 Estimates of College Student Cannabis Use

Reported Frequency (%)

Frequency of Use

- Never Used
- Used 1-9 days
- Used 10-29 days
- Used all 30 days
- Any use in last 30 days

(American College Health Association, 2019)
Typical Friday Night

How I Drink
[typically, the norm]

How Most of My Peers Drink
[the norm]

How I THINK My Peers Drink
[misperception]

How I Drink to Be More Like My Peers
Social Norms Model

Baseline
Identify Actual & Misperceived Norms

Intervention
Intensive Exposure to Actual Norms Messages

Initial Impact
Less Exaggerated Misperception of Norms

Predicted Results
Less Harmful or Risky Behaviors
Strategic Prevention Framework
Planning framework developed by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

Dynamic

Data-driven

Relies on a team approach
Assessment [identify needs]

Goals
- Areas of concern
- Perceptions versus actual behaviors
- Healthy norms

Methods
- Conduct data
- Key Informant interviews
- Focus groups
- Population-level survey

Considerations
- Timing
- Mode of administration
Capacity [building resources]

**Goals**
- Staffing and time
- Expertise
- Funding
- Stakeholder buy-in

**Methods**
- Collaboration between departments and organizations
  - Engage professionals and students
- Grant opportunities and funding
- Educating stakeholders

**Considerations**
- Who are the right people and departments to “own” your social norms campaign?
- Who are your stakeholders?
- How often do staff and stakeholders need a refresher?
Planning [selecting and preparing to implement interventions]

Goals
- Develop messages
- Design appealing materials
- Determine mode(s) of dissemination
- Fidelity to social norms approach

Methods
- Analyze data
- Student input (e.g., Planning Committee)
- Graphic design
- Train students

Considerations
- Timing of messages
- Campus policies regarding posting
- Appeal and relatability to students
Implementation [deliver evidence-based programs]

Goals
- Universal exposure to social norms campaign messages
- Fidelity to social norms approach

Methods
- Hang posters in visible locations
- Post on web and social media
- In-person presentations and programs

Considerations
- Build social media presence
- Establish pathways to access students in person
### Evaluation [examine the process and outcomes]

#### Goals
- Assess effectiveness in correcting misperceptions and changing behaviors
- Identify challenges in implementation

#### Methods
- Surveys
- Focus groups
- Monitoring and tracking implementation
- “Mall intercepts”

#### Considerations
- Representative student feedback
- Impact of other interventions
- Impact of broader campus and society
Cultural Competence

[ability to understand and interact effectively with various groups]

• Social Norms Planning Committee to ensure the campaign appeals to and is understood by students
• Photos with the face of the campus in mind

Sustainability

[building an adaptive system that can maintain long-term results]

• Many groups work cohesively to make it work
• Multiple people in each group
• Monitor spending
Social Norms Model

Baseline

Identify Actual & Misperceived Norms

Spring Student Health Survey – questions about individual use and about perceived behaviors of typical students

Intervention

Intensive Exposure to Actual Norms Messages

UAlbany Social Norms Campaign – 100s of posters, social media, events, presentations

2004 - 48% believe typical student drinks daily

2019 - 24% believe typical student drinks daily

Initial Impact

Less Exaggerated Misperception of Norms

2004 - 19% abstain from alcohol

2019 - 32% abstain from alcohol

Predicted Results

Less Harmful or Risky Behaviors
Selected Findings

UAlbany Social Norms Campaign
Percent Who Believe the Typical Student Drinks Daily

UAlbany Student Health Survey

Changes in Perception

Percent of Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percent Who Believe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overcoming Challenges
Data Collection
- Paper and pen
- In class survey
- Use IRB’s help to get representative sample
- Divide and conquer among staff to schedule and administer surveys

Hanging Posters
- Rely on students to hang ~600 posters
- Get service credit
- Clear instructions
- Sign a contract
- GA checks how well posters are hung

Poster "Health"
- Removed early
- Defaced
- Weekly cycle
- Post in high visibility areas
- Defaced = interaction = saw the message
- We love collectors!
## Misunderstanding of Social Norms Theory

- Poster disbelief
- Flip statistic

### Poster Look

- Appealing to students
- Representative
- Photos

### "Open House Push-Back"

- Worries about the way the messages portray students

### Overdosing

- Posters may be tuned out and the message missed if they are too prevalent

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## Challenges - Conceptual

### Misunderstanding of Social Norms Theory

- Educate the public to better understand the theory and point of the posters
- In class presentations, focus groups, social media

### Poster Look

- Work with graphic designer, focus groups
- Statistically and in photos
- Don't use images of the negative behavior

### "Open House Push-Back"

- Build capacity so that you have key faculty, staff and administration on your side

### Overdosing

- Strategically place posters in places that students frequent
- Mall intercept
65% of UAlbany students do not drink to a level of impairment* when they “party”/socialize.

*Blood alcohol level < .08

DID YOU KNOW

72% of UAlbany students manage stress in ways that promote academic success.

1,001 Students: Spring 2009 Anonymous Survey Random Representative Sample
www.albany.edu/healthpromotion/center

DID YOU KNOW

MOST UALBANY STUDENTS

DON'T USE MEDICATIONS prescribed to others
DID YOU KNOW

87% MOST UALBANY STUDENTS USE ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION

DID YOU KNOW

MOST UALBANY STUDENTS PACE DRINKS TO 1 OR FEWER AN HOUR

GREAT DAILY CHOICES!

USUALLY OR ALWAYS TAKE STEPS TO BE SAFER AT PARTIES

- Just a designated driver
- Pace drink to 1/2 Litre
- Avoid drinking games
- Don't drink alone
- Drinking usually

Check out the guide to safer drinking at www.360guide.org

S.O. Facebook

D.O. twitter.com/360guide

Check out the guide to safer drinking at www.360guide.org

S.O. Facebook

D.O. twitter.com/360guide
63% CHOOSE NOT TO USE MARIJUANA

96% DON'T LET ALCOHOL AFFECT THEIR ACADEMICS

70% don't let alcohol interfere with having safer sex
88% would encourage others to see a mental health professional

80% make healthier decisions when they socialize
Alternate Alcoholic Drinks with Nonalcoholic
Pace Drinks to 1 or Fewer per Hour
Avoid Drinking Games
Choose Not to Drink

58% choose not to use marijuana
Targeting At-Risk Populations

First Year Students

99%
Don't let alcohol affect their academics

Student-Athletes

Did you know

Most UAlbany Student Athletes

Choose not to use marijuana

Most = 90%
Support Policy Change

breathe easy...

91% of us Choose NOT to smoke cigarettes

www.albany.edu/tobaccofree/

Developed with Generous Support from the American Cancer Society Tobacco-Free Generation Grant Initiative
Come on Down!
In a survey of over 1,000 students, what percent said they had not smoked cigarettes or e-cigarettes in the past 30 days?
In a survey of over 1000 UAlbany students, what percentage said they drink 5 or fewer alcoholic drinks in a typical week?
In that same survey, what percentage of UAlbany students said they had NOT used marijuana in the last 30 days?
In that same survey, what percentage of UAlbany students said they had NOT taken stimulants without a prescription in the last 30 days?


Thank you!