

# Washington State Department of Social and Health Services | Underage Drinking Prevention Campaign

**Reaching College Students**

September 2017



*Washington State*  
Department of Social  
& Health Services

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*Transforming lives*

# Reaching College Students

# Reaching College Students

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01 | *Considerations for Campaign Development and  
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## Introduction

While rates of alcohol consumption among college students have declined over the past 25 years, most college students still drink (*Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, 2017). Underage drinking among college students can have both short-term and lasting consequences—ranging from decreased academic performance and social embarrassment to severe health risks and increased chance of being in dangerous situations and serious accidents.

Despite the multiple risks and consequences involved with underage drinking, designing a prevention campaign to reach college students effectively can be challenging. College students, particularly at four-year colleges and universities, are at a unique time in their lives when they believe experimentation is encouraged and accepted. They are also legally adults and taking on increased independence and control of their lives. Finally, the culture of alcohol is prevalent in college life and underage students share the campus with other students who can legally drink.

To inform direction for underage drinking prevention campaigns reaching college students, the Washington State Department of Health

& Human Services (DSHS) conducted focus group research among this audience and initiated a scan of existing public education campaigns.

### **Underage Drinking Prevention Small Group Interviews Among 18- to 20-year-old College Students**

- In late August and early September 2017, one-on-one and small group interviews were held with 54 students enrolled at colleges and universities in Washington. Northwest Research Group, Hardwick Research and GMMB worked with DSHS on the assessment design.
- The interviews sought to better understand attitudes toward alcohol consumption among this audience, to probe for reasons behind underage drinking and to test the strength of different prevention messages. (No questions regarding personal drinking behavior were asked or answered.)
- While the results are qualitative and the sample size was relatively small, the participants included students of varying ages, genders, two- and four-year institutions, and ethnicities/races, as well as on-campus and commuter students.
- Limitations to the study include: a short timeframe for recruiting and research which did not allow for participant targets; participation

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incentives that were lower than industry average which limited each session's discussion time to roughly 30 minutes; and the qualitative nature of the research which means results should be taken as an indicator of perceptions and not as an indicator of the views of college students in Washington overall.

## **Preventing Underage Drinking Among College Students: Environmental Scan of Campaigns**

- In September 2017, GMMB examined state and national campaigns by government agencies, colleges and universities, and advocates reaching college students with messages about underage and binge drinking.
- The review of the campaigns informed the development of key takeaways and promising practices—along with examples of creative concepts and visuals.
- The scan allows DSHS and partners to have perspective beyond Washington on the approaches, messages and tactics that are innovative, memorable and effective.
- Limitations of the scan include the limited number of campaigns evaluated and not all of the campaigns were based on research and/or measured their results.

This document synthesizes the top-level findings from both of these resources, and is followed by the full results presentations for each. Together, these resources can help inform the work of DSHS and partners across Washington—including health departments, colleges and universities, and advocates—who share a commitment to protecting the health of college students.

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## Knowing the Audience

- **Drinking is perceived to be part of college life.** College students ages 18- to 20-years-old are likely to use alcohol and see few negative consequences of drinking. Many consider drinking during college as “just what you do”—an expectation reinforced by popular culture. This was true across genders, two- and four-year colleges, and students who commuted and those who lived on or near campus. The main difference between community colleges and universities is where students report drinking takes place.
- **College students believe at least a majority of their classmates drink alcohol.** While students’ definitions of whether someone drinks vary—from having tried alcohol, to occasional use, to drinking heavily—on average they believe only 10 to 20 percent of their classmates do not drink at all.
- **Reasons to drink may change from high school to college.** Students who drink in high school sometimes do so to “practice” for college. Also, some students said there is more external peer pressure to drink in high school, whereas the pressure to drink in college is often internal. One student explained that high schoolers drink to be cool and college students drink to be social.
- **Students see themselves as independent adults and view the legal drinking age as arbitrary.** Students notice that—unlike with tobacco—cautionary messages connected to alcohol are often to delay, rather than not to use. Those types of messages combined with lower drinking ages in Europe and seeing their parents and other adults drink without ill effects lead them to see “drinking responsibly” as safe (with the exception of drinking and driving).

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## Messaging

- **Small group interviews with college students in Washington showed the two most effective messages to be (1) information about severe consequences of drinking—such as poor grades, car crashes and risky situations, and (2) information regarding the health risks of drinking—such as brain damage, alcohol dependency and cirrhosis.** However, other substance use prevention campaigns show that messaging must go beyond a “just the facts” approach and provide a personal and/or emotional connection. Furthermore, follow-up discussions showed that messaging using scare tactics and “worst case” scenarios was unlikely to be believed.
- **The third best-testing message was “alternatives to deal with or relieve stress.”** However, while students would appreciate knowing alternatives to dealing with stress, this approach was rarely seen by students to be an effective deterrent to drinking.
- **Students shared that the consequences must feel real in order for them to pay attention.** Long-term health consequences such as cirrhosis and fear tactics such as getting kicked out of school may fall on deaf ears, according to participants. More relatable negative consequences—such as doing something embarrassing while drunk, getting out of shape or having their grades drop—align more closely with what they see around them.
- **Participants often volunteered that a campaign aimed at deterring binge drinking could be more effective than a prevention campaign.** While not all partners can implement a harms reduction campaign—in part to avoid being seen as tacitly approving other underage drinking—an anti-binge drinking campaign may be a viable strategy for others.
- **Students respond to different reasons not to drink. For example, some participants saw staying in shape as a reason not to drink and others suggested keeping up their grades as a stronger deterrent.** Campaigns that offer a range of reasons may be effective at appealing to a broader number of students. It’s important to keep in mind that no one communications piece—such as a poster or a social media image—should try to do it all. However, a suite of materials in a campaign could highlight different message points.

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## Tone and Style

- **College students sees themselves as adults (and, legally, they are).** Approaches perceived as talking down to them or telling them what to do are unlikely to work. While they're open to new ideas, new facts and new perspectives, they see themselves as the decision-maker and appreciate campaigns that put them in that role.
- **Statistics alone fail to engage students if they're not brought to life.** Especially on a campus with so many distractions, numbers and percentages without context can be dry and easily ignored. Students need to see engaging visuals and have an emotional connection to the message.
- **Materials tailored to a local area or to a college or university may yield better results.** Students are more likely to pay attention when they see themselves in a campaign. The more the message is tailored, the harder it is to ignore. For example, a college may do well to modify a piece of creative by adding its own name, logo, a campus visual, a well-known reference or a localized statistic.
- **A reminder about campaigns that may be seen to “judge” or “shame.”** As with any substance, the reasons for using and the individuals' backgrounds vary widely. With this in mind, campaigns should avoid creative content that shames the user.

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## Targeting and Timing

- **Students stressed the importance of reaching them early.** Small group participants said that orientation and their first academic semester or quarter may present the most opportunities for outreach—and that they would likely be the most receptive during this time. It can be more difficult to convince students once they've already been exposed to other students drinking and as they get closer to being of legal drinking age. The small group research suggested a correlation between increasing student age and decreasing message effectiveness.
- **Public education campaigns aimed at reducing or preventing underage drinking often reach students through both on-campus and online channels.** Campaigns analyzed as part of the environmental scan utilized a mix of social media, posters, radio PSAs, mobile-first websites, and materials ranging from fact sheets to coffee sleeves. However, the nature of the institution and its students may determine the most effective tactics for outreach. While a college or university where most students live on or near campus may have high-visibility opportunities for posters and flyers throughout freshmen and sophomore dorms and in the dining halls, colleges where most students commute might do better with a campaign that is primarily disseminated via social media and email.
- **Students who don't and/or who aren't inclined to drink benefit from support and from messages that they're not alone.** Although less than a majority, many college students do not drink. However, these students may incorrectly feel like they are the only ones who don't drink and eventually cave into a desire to conform. There may be value in a campaign that highlights the fact that many students don't drink—for reasons ranging from academics to wellness to personal choice. (A subset of these students are intrinsically rule-followers and don't want to drink—and are less likely to drink when they know they're not alone.)
- **Promoting activities for students that don't involve drinking may play a role.** Students are looking for ways to have fun, spend time with friends and/or meet new people. Whether the activity is community service, music, the outdoors, a day trip or sports, giving students alternatives to spend their days and evenings—particularly from Thursday through Saturday—could have the effect of helping students find and form friend networks that don't involve drinking.

02 | *Small Group Interviews Among 18- to 20-year-old College Students*

# Reaching College Students

# Washington State Department of Social & Health Services (DSHS)

Underage Drinking Prevention  
Small Group Interviews  
18-20 Year Old College Students

Submitted to: GMMB

Submitted by: Northwest Research Group + Hardwick Research

Date: 09/18/2017

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# Background / Objectives

- To better understand attitudes toward alcohol consumption among 18-20 year old college students, small group discussions were held to...
  - Understand their perceptions of drinking.
  - Probe for reasons behind underage drinking.
  - Test the strength of different prevention messages.
- No questions regarding personal drinking behavior were asked or answered.
- Results from these discussions will be used to design future outreach programs to reach college students with prevention information about drinking.

# Methodology

- A total of 26 small group or one-on-one discussions were held.
  - Each session lasted approximately 30 minutes.
- All participants were between the ages of 18 and 20 and enrolled in and scheduled to attend a college or university in Washington state this fall (2017).
  - International students were excluded.
- Professional recruiters at a local qualitative marketing research firm used their database, referrals, and other methods to recruit the primary participants.
  - The primary participants were asked to invite two to three friends to attend.
  - Nine of the 26 groups had a single participant. The remainder consisted of two to four participants.

# Participant Characteristics

- A total of 54 participants took part in the study.
- The majority of participants were attending a 4-year college or university.
  - 15 were attending the University of Washington.
  - Other colleges / universities represented include: Bellevue College, Central WA, Gonzaga, Seattle Pacific, Seattle University, University of Puget Sound, UW Bothell, and Western Washington University.

	Number of Participants (54)
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	31
Female	23
<b>Age</b>	
18	14
19	20
20	20
<b>Race / Ethnicity</b>	
White	40
Asian	7
Black	4
Hispanic	2
Mixed Race	1
<b>School Type</b>	
4-Year College/ University	41
Community College	13
<b>Class</b>	
Freshman	20
Sophomore	24
Junior	10

# Limitations

- The short time frame for research limited the ability to reach a fully diverse group of participants.
  - Despite time limitations, students from a variety of colleges and universities were represented. In addition, the full age range (18 to 20 years old) was represented and some race / ethnic diversity was obtained.
- Lower-than-industry averages for incentives limited the length of discussion times.
  - Despite the below-average incentives, a high show rate was achieved – 26 of the 29 lead recruits showed up for the discussion.
  - The lower incentives made it more difficult for the lead recruits to recruit friends.
- In reviewing these results, it is important to bear in mind that this research was qualitative in nature and these results do not represent what might be found among the general population of college students in Washington. These can only be used as an indicator of perceptions.

# Key Takeaways

- 18-20 year old college students are very likely to drink and they see few negative consequences of drinking, including little to no enforcement of existing laws or campus rules/policies. Incoming freshmen may have already experimented with drinking. Moreover, as students get older (approach legal drinking age), they see fewer issues with or consequences of drinking.
  - Reaching college students as they enter the new environment with a strong message is important.
  - A strict “don’t drink” message is likely to be ineffective. Instead, a message as to what could happen if you do drink may be effective. For example, some participants suggested stories from peers. Specifically, it should be from someone close to their age, who ended up in a bad situation with huge consequences. Having learned from that situation, they now regret choosing to drink.
  - Spotlighting the severe risks and lasting consequences may be more effective with those not inclined to drink.
  - In-person discussions, meetings with peers and older students are potentially effective. Outreach through email or posters is easier to ignore. Social media could supplement a larger outreach effort.

# Key Takeaways (CONTINUED)

- Research participants chose two prevention messages as the most effective: (1) information about possible severe consequences of drinking (e.g. poor grades, car crashes, victim of sexual assault) and (2) Information about health risks of drinking (e.g., brain damage, alcohol dependency, cirrhosis).
  - These two messages were chosen for their ability to remind 18-20 year-olds of the severe consequences that could result if they drink.
  - Although some participants pointed out that they have a few friends who think these things will never happen to them, they felt these messages will influence others.
  - In addition, other health issues related to drinking were shared by some including: gaining weight and not being in good enough shape the next day for working out or taking tests.
- Many participants noted that stories are a very effective way of getting a message across. They suggested a story of someone their age or slightly older, who experienced something tragic and now regrets their decision to drink.

# Detailed Research Findings

# *Attitudes Toward Alcohol*

# Few Differences Between Groups

- Similar responses about alcohol use among participants were observed. There were no overall differences in the discussions between:
  - Males and females.
  - Those who attended community colleges versus four-year colleges and universities.
  - Those who attended commuter colleges versus residential colleges.
- Every category saw high levels of alcohol usage among peers whether on campus or off, whether male or female.
- That said, those attending residential colleges reported that alcohol use took place on or near campus while those in commuter colleges said alcohol use took place off campus.
  - Commuter college students heard about students accessing alcohol with fake IDs or through older friends, while residential college students report that drinking took place at parties and Greek events (where alcohol was initially sourced with fake IDs or by older friends).

# Drinking Is Perceived to Be Part of College Life

- Nearly all participants indicated that drinking during college is perceived as “just what you do.” It is considered part of the college experience and television and movies portray college as the time to party and get drunk.
- Participants shared many reasons 18-20 year olds drink alcohol including:
  - To have fun
  - To meet people, make it easier to talk to others, have a social life, meet potential partners
  - You are at a party, everyone else is drinking, and you want to fit in (many felt no specific peer pressure, rather the pressure was self-imposed)
  - To have something to do at the party, a reason to talk to other people
  - To relax and de-stress
  - Fraternity members are expected to consume a lot of alcohol regularly (in these settings there is more pressure to drink)
  - To celebrate after an exam
  - Expression of perceived freedom from rules and independence from parents
  - They feel that they are close enough to legal drinking age and are legally adults

# Perceptions of Underage Drinking

- When asked to estimate how many of their peers drink alcohol, 18-20 year olds shared percentages in the range of 50-70%, with some stating it was as high as 90% or “all.”
  - There was some difference of opinion on what level of drinking should be included in this percentage, with some feeling that it meant daily and others every weekend.
- Rough ranges of participants’ estimates of levels of consumption among peers are:
  - About 10-20% do not drink.
  - About 40-70% sometimes drink.
  - About 30-40% drink heavily (“*get hammered*”).
  - 70-100% have consumed alcohol.

# Drinking Before College is Prevalent

- Participants reported that drinking is very common for high school students.
  - Participants said some of their peers chose to drink in high school to practice (learn how to react to it) and prepare for college.
  - Drinking is equated with having fun.
  - Students might drink because they are told not to by adults, which is perceived as hypocritical since the adults drink themselves. Participants see drinking as part of a rite of passage – i.e., being independent, it is a part of growing up/being an adult.
  - Most participants reported knowing adults who drink and feel that there are no big risks.
- Like college students, high school students drink at big parties, small house parties with friends (aka “kickbacks”) and sporting events.
- There is more peer pressure to drink in high school than in college.

# *Reasons to Drink / Not Drink*

# Participants Are Receiving Mixed Signals

- Most participants thought that underage drinking was not an issue if done “responsibly.”
- Some felt that alcohol was safe because it is legal at age 21 and they are taught to delay use rather than never use (as with cigarettes or hard drugs). If alcohol was that bad, the message would be similar.
- They have seen anti-smoking and anti-drug ads on television but the alcohol/beer ads are all about parties and having fun.
- They have seen their parents have a glass of wine or a few beers to no ill effect.
- Some felt that the differing legal ages for participating in various activities were arbitrary and made no sense given that the brain is developing until about age 25. These include voting, cigarettes and medical marijuana (age 18), alcohol and recreational marijuana (age 21). In addition, the lower drinking ages and lax attitude toward drinking in Europe were also added to the mixed messaging.

# Examples of Mixed Signals

“

“Age is a pretty arbitrary measure of whether or not someone can drink or not. In other countries, the drinking age is 13. It's not like those kids are getting more messed up than American teenagers. It might be the other way around.”

“It's accepted that 21 is the age, but very few people wait until 21. Maybe if they explained why 21 is the age, if they had a better understanding of why that rule is set, they wouldn't [drink].”

“When you go home you see your parents, they have these careers, they're successful, they have a great family. They are drinking a class of wine. You can't tell me how it's going to ruin my life... You can't teach complete abstinence when you have all your role models drinking alcohol.”

“It's pretty idolized on social media and television too. Shows about college students, they will be drinking all the time. So when you get to college, you just have that expectation of what you saw on TV.”

“There's plenty of people that drink or show that they're drunk. That's another thing is that social media makes drinking look like it's all fun.”

”

“In our state, at 21 you can smoke weed, you can drink. But at 18 you can only smoke cigarettes and it's a weird situation. A lot of people will say you can go and die for your country but you can't go have a drink. It's a balancing act because do we put the health of the public, 18-year olds, their brains are developing, at risk... If they were that concerned about brain development, it would be 24 or 25.”

“You look abroad in Europe, and lots of countries will let you drink at 16. For me, going over to a relative's house if I'm visiting family somewhere, they'll offer me a beer. I'm within family boundaries.”

# Reasons for Not Drinking are Minimal

- When asked to share why some college students choose not to drink the participants had a hard time coming up with a reason. Reasons shared include:
  - Religious beliefs
  - Family history of problems with alcohol
  - A test or work the next day
  - Choosing to smoke marijuana instead
  - Being the “DD” Designated Driver
  - Health reasons including not wanting to gain weight
  - Wanting to be in control/not make a fool of oneself
  - Being in sports and not wanting to impact performance or jeopardize a scholarship

# Marijuana Replacing Drinking for Some

- When asked why college students choose to not drink alcohol, some participants noted that they know people who are using marijuana rather than drinking alcohol.
  - Reasons cited included:
    - Have a history of alcoholism in their family.
    - Do not want a hangover.
    - Believe they feel more in control.
    - Perceive it as cool.

“

“Smoking, vaping, squishers [extract essential oils] – that type of thing is way more popular [than drinking].”

”

“All of my college friends, literally none of them drink and they all smoke weed. It’s legal, it’s new, it’s fun. Drinking makes you feel like s\*\*\*. Smoking weed makes you high. I feel weed is the new alcohol.”

# Some Felt Unspoken Pressure to Drink

- When around friends, participants felt they could refuse alcohol without any negative ramifications. However, when at a larger party some felt they might not be invited back to the party if they did not drink.
- Many admitted that it is not fun to be at a party and be the only sober person. Their friends do stupid things and they end up taking care of the sick people.

“

“I carry around a drink at parties because I don't want to deal with it...There's a huge peer pressure that goes on with it just because of the way people think about sobriety.”

“Kids drink so much they get sent to the hospital. Kids drink and then they need help the whole night. That's a huge thing – kids drinking to the point where they're throwing up, then the friend who is less drunk, they help them out.”

“If you're trying to stay sober at a party, people are more likely to try to get you to drink. They're trying, they're like drink, drink, drink.”

“If you're not drinking then...Someone is puking, I have to take care of them. I don't want to deal with that.”

”

# *Evaluation of Prevention Messaging*

# Approach to Evaluating Prevention Messages

- Participants were asked to rate nine statements representing things that might discourage underage drinking.
- Information about consequences of drinking is potentially most effective.
  - Secondary messages that provide alternatives to drinking can support the main message.
- Multiple participants wrote in other options that focused on a strategy and/or message that rules and policies are enforced and that there are consequences to violating these rules—a spin on the prevention message about providing a list of campus/student rules/policies regarding alcohol consumption.

# Summary: Most Effective Prevention Messages

- The two most effective messages (based on average ratings) were:
  - Information about severe consequences of drinking (e.g.; poor grades, car crashes, victims of sexual assault).
  - Information regarding the health risks of drinking (e.g.; brain damage, alcohol dependency, cirrhosis).
- Although “alternatives to deal with or relieve stress” was rated third, participants did not actually discuss this as a potential deterrent. Rather they shared suggestions related to:
  - Information about less severe consequence of drinking (e.g.; saying something you regret, being sloppy, slurring your words).
  - Ideas for meeting others.

# Prevention Messages: Overall Ratings

Below you will find a list of things that might discourage someone from underage drinking. Please rate your level of agreement with how well each will work to discourage underage drinking.

Strongly disagree – I believe this will not work to discourage underage drinking	1	2	3	4	Strongly agree – I believe this will work to discourage underage drinking
Messages					Mean Rating
Information about possible severe consequences of drinking e.g., poor grades, car crashes, victim of sexual assault)					3.32
Information about health risks of drinking (e.g., brain damage, alcohol dependency, cirrhosis)					3.25
Alternatives to deal with or relieve stress					2.67
Information about possible less severe consequences of drinking (e.g., saying something you regret, being sloppy, slurring words)					2.32
Ideas for meeting others (social skills)					2.30
Factual statistics on the number of 18 – 20 year olds who drink (e.g., 4 out of 5 18-20 year olds are not drinking)					2.28
Suggestions on ways to say no to alcohol					2.17
List of campus/student rules/regarding alcohol consumption					2.09
A reminder your parents and other adults like coaches and teachers may be disappointed if you drink					1.98

*Mean rating is based on 4-point scale where “1” means “strongly” and “4” means “strongly agree” message would discourage underage drinking.*

# Prevention Messages: Differences in Ratings by Gender

- For most statements, female participants tended to be slightly more likely than their male counterparts to believe the messages would be effective; however, the difference is negligible.

Message	Females	Males
Information about possible severe consequences of drinking (e.g., poor grades, car crashes, victim of sexual assault)	3.55	3.16
Information about health risks of drinking (e.g., brain damage, alcohol dependency, cirrhosis)	3.27	3.23
Alternatives to deal with or relieve stress	2.64	2.70
Information about possible less severe consequences of drinking (e.g., saying something you regret, being sloppy, slurring words)	2.41	2.26
Ideas for meeting others (social skills)	2.32	2.29
Factual statistics on the number of 18 – 20 year olds who drink (e.g., 4 out of 5 18-20 year olds are not drinking)	2.36	2.23
Suggestions on ways to say no to alcohol	2.20	2.14
List of campus/student rules/regarding alcohol consumption	2.32	1.94
A reminder your parents and other adults like coaches and teachers may be disappointed if you drink	2.09	1.90

*Mean rating is based on 4-point scale where “1” means “strongly” and “4” means “strongly agree” message would discourage underage drinking.*

# Prevention Messages: Differences in Ratings by Age

- In most instances, message effectiveness tended to decrease slightly with age. Even with the small sample sizes and the fact that this is qualitative data, some of these differences are significant.

Message	18	19	20
Information about possible severe consequences of drinking (e.g., poor grades, car crashes, victim of sexual assault)	3.77↑	3.30	3.05↓
Information about health risks of drinking (e.g., brain damage, alcohol dependency, cirrhosis)	3.77↑	3.35	2.80↓
Alternatives to deal with or relieve stress	3.17↑	2.25↓	2.80
Information about possible less severe consequences of drinking (e.g., saying something you regret, being sloppy, slurring words)	2.62	2.15	2.30
Ideas for meeting others (social skills)	2.62	2.25	2.15
Factual statistics on the number of 18 – 20 year olds who drink (e.g., 4 out of 5 18-20 year olds are not drinking)	2.69↑	2.35	1.95↓
Suggestions on ways to say no to alcohol	2.75↑	1.83↓	2.11
List of campus/student rules/regarding alcohol consumption	2.15	2.10	2.05
A reminder your parents and other adults like coaches and teachers may be disappointed if you drink	2.00	2.10	1.85

↑ ↓ denote statistically significant differences in mean ratings between age groups.

Mean rating is based on 4-point scale where “1” means “strongly” and “4” means “strongly agree” message would discourage underage drinking.

# Prevention Messages: Differences in Ratings by College Type

- In most instances, messages were slightly more effective with participants at 4-year colleges / universities than with those attending community colleges. However, the differences are minor.

Message	2-Year	4-Year
Information about possible severe consequences of drinking (e.g., poor grades, car crashes, victim of sexual assault)	3.08	3.64
Information about health risks of drinking (e.g., brain damage, alcohol dependency, cirrhosis)	3.08	3.24
Alternatives to deal with or relieve stress	2.62	2.68
Information about possible less severe consequences of drinking (e.g., saying something you regret, being sloppy, slurring words)	2.31	2.40
Ideas for meeting others (social skills)	2.15	2.32
Factual statistics on the number of 18 – 20 year olds who drink (e.g., 4 out of 5 18-20 year olds are not drinking)	2.23	2.16
Suggestions on ways to say no to alcohol	2.17	2.09
List of campus/student rules/regarding alcohol consumption	2.15	2.20
A reminder your parents and other adults like coaches and teachers may be disappointed if you drink	1.85	2.12

*Mean rating is based on 4-point scale where “1” means “strongly” and “4” means “strongly agree” message would discourage underage drinking.*

# Prevention Messages: First and Second Choice Tally

- As a follow-up to the rating question, participants were asked to indicate the top two most effective messages.

	First Choice	Second Choice	Total
Information about health risks of drinking (e.g., brain damage, alcohol dependency, cirrhosis)	15	18	33
Information about possible severe consequences of drinking (e.g., poor grades, car crashes, victim of sexual assault)	17	10	27
Information about possible less severe consequences of drinking (e.g., saying something you regret, being sloppy, slurring words)	5	10	15
Alternatives to deal with or relieve stress	1	6	7
Ideas for meeting others (social skills)	3	3	6
A reminder your parents and other adults like coaches and teachers may be disappointed if you drink	4	1	5
Factual statistics on the number of 18-20 year olds who drink (e.g., 4 out of 5 18-20 year olds are not drinking)	2	3	5
List of campus/student rules/regarding alcohol consumption	1	4	5
Suggestions on ways to say no to alcohol	1	3	4

# *Participant Recommendations for Messaging*

# Messaging Will Be a Challenge

- Participants almost universally agreed that drinking will continue. Moreover, the majority of participants felt a campaign would not be able to stop underage college students from drinking, no matter what message was shared.
- They continually suggested that educational messages regarding how to drink safely were needed.
  - A “safe drinking” message *might* help to discourage binge drinking and other dangerous behaviors, but is not likely to stop drinking completely.
  - A “don’t drink” message is more likely to be ignored.
- Many felt education regarding alcohol needed to start in middle school.
- Participants who lived off-campus were as likely as those on campus to be drinking. They just did it elsewhere.

# Stronger Campus-Based Enforcement Needed

- Some participants suggested that if campuses actually enforced the no-drinking rules and followed up with real consequences, there would be fewer underage college students drinking. It also might discourage others from drinking as often. “

- Strong deterrents include:

- Expulsion from school.
- Loss of scholarships.
- Being kicked out of dorm.
- Suspension.

“At our orientation... a campus police officer spoke... She was joking and she was like, ‘We don’t really arrest UW students for doing stuff.’ Even drugs, I don’t think they really get in trouble that much.”

“There’s a lot of warnings and, ‘It’s fine. We won’t write you up this time.’ If it was more serious and there were suspensions, expulsions, being kicked out of the dorms, and things like that, it would also get the parents involved.”

“Especially on security, I could see a lot of kids walking around, in the daytime even, that were obviously under the influence of something... I would see security guards that are just ‘oh hey, what’s up?’ You should pull someone aside if they look like they are on something.”

”

# Most Effective Messaging

- Participants considered information about the severe consequences and health risks related to drinking alcohol to be the most effective.

– Emphasize the severe consequences of:

- Car crashes, hitting someone with your car
- DUIs
- Being involved in non-consensual sex
- Hangovers and partying on school performance
- Drinking so much you need to be hospitalized or die

“

“When I see someone who is completely random on the road and innocent, and then someone hits them drunk driving, that’s way more powerful than someone hitting a pole because they were drunk driving.”

– Emphasize the health risks:

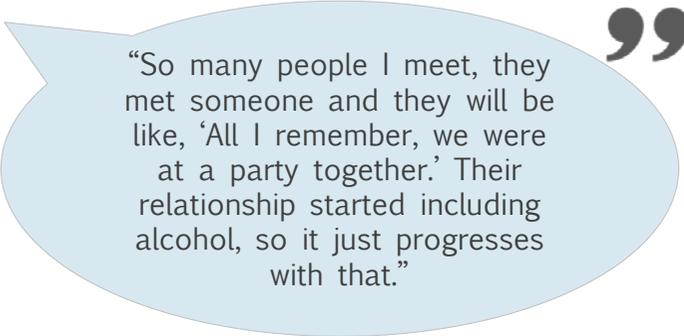
- The high number of calories in alcohol and the weight gain
- How alcoholism is not entirely an inherited disease and can happen to anyone

“There’s little leeway there. I see people where as soon as they start drinking they lose track and all of a sudden they don’t know how close they are to actually being dead... Give them objective facts where it’s like 2.4 percent blood alcohol you’re dead. Here’s how many drinks if you’re this body weight it takes to get there.”

”

# Other Potential Messages/Approaches

- Based on participant comments, a variety of avenues and messages will be needed to appeal to a wide range of college students.
  - In addition to the prevention messages tested, other suggestions shared include:
    - Provide other ways than drinking for college students to make friends on campus (e.g.; organized activities, communication techniques).
    - Remind college student of the costs of consuming alcohol (i.e.; beyond the financial – loss of friendships, health, grades – like the cigarette ads where the teens has to provide their teeth in exchange cigarettes).
    - Provide statistics where possible.



“So many people I meet, they met someone and they will be like, ‘All I remember, we were at a party together.’ Their relationship started including alcohol, so it just progresses with that.”

# Consider Message Centered on Behavior

- Consider a message that plays off the many stories of inappropriate drunken behavior. Society currently positions drinking as fun, yet there is an ugly side to drinking that is not glamourized.
  - Highlight the social cost of alcohol.
  - Talk about having to take care of very drunk friends, people saying/doing crazy, thoughtless things they never would when sober.
  - Point out that drunken behavior caused some students to do things they normally would not. Their actions can ruin friendships and others' perceptions of them.
- Be careful, as this may backfire; some college students pretend to be drunk in order to fit in or have an excuse to act out.

“

“A lot of people I see drinking are people that are not normally very outspoken or very confident when they're sober. And they are looking for that outlet where they can also be like, 'Oh no, I was drunk. I didn't mean any of that.' so kind of a safety net as well.”

“A lot of people act drunker than they are. They think it's cool. They want to fit in but maybe they don't want to black out. They want to remember so they pretend to be drunker than they are.”

”

# *Avenues for Message Delivery*

# Avenues for Potential Anti-Drinking Messages

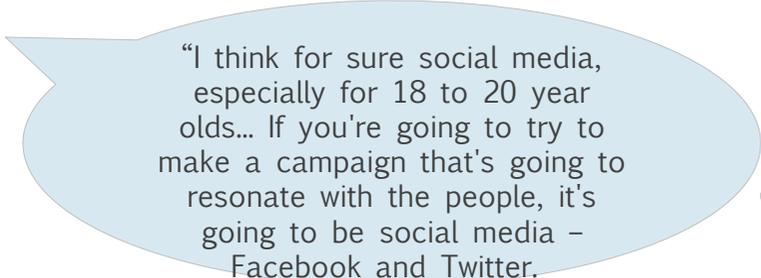
- Participants shared a variety of ways to share anti-drinking messages with them. These include:
  - Communication from their college/university.
    - Email
    - Texts
  - Social Media.
    - Potentially via Facebook and Twitter
    - Preferably through Instagram and Snapchat
  - Posters.
  - Orientation for college/university.
    - In-person mandatory meetings and small group peer discussions
    - Online interactive campus rule introduction and pledge

# Email and Text

- Several participants suggested adding content to the regular e-mail newsletters sent out by the school administration.
  - There was often important information in those e-mails so students generally read them.
  - A few participants said school-generated e-mails were deleted without being read.
- Other suggestions for disseminating information included:
  - School text messaging/alert system.
  - Student portal (for checking grades, assignments, financial aid, etc.).
  - School newspaper.
  - Single mass email that comes from a notable student body person.

# Social Media

- Participants suggested Instagram or Snapchat. Facebook and Twitter were also mentioned.
  - “Instagram is the most effective...If you can slide a little advertisement in there, and it’s not too much in the way. It’s just there and then you can glance at it. It’s got a picture that grabs your attention, and once you’re done reading the lower caption, you can keep going.”
  - Snapchat would have an element of surprise: *“It would shock you. You could put something on there. I think videos get to me more than words, just seeing it happen. That makes it feel more real.”*



“I think for sure social media, especially for 18 to 20 year olds... If you're going to try to make a campaign that's going to resonate with the people, it's going to be social media – Facebook and Twitter.”

”

# Posters

- Although participants said posters are not very effective, some of them referred to posters they see on campus, so they can be effective.

“

“I think if they got a slogan and catch phrase, and they started making these posters about consequences and putting them around campus in really prominent areas where people go a lot, people will get scared. They’ll see these posters, and they’ll be like, ‘Crap. They’re stepping up their game.’ They will probably try to avoid parties for a little while.”

“[Posters] unless they’re pretty visually striking don’t capture my attention. Maybe if there’s some visual rhetoric to it, there’s pictures, it’s like that makes me not want to drink.”

“I see similar stuff like that around my school... No one really I feel pays attention to posters that much.”

“Little posters don’t grab your attention. Have graffiti.”

“There’s a lot of posters around. Those are pretty decent, because in the dorms or around campus you’re always walking by them. You glance at them periodically.”

“They become scenery that people will not pay attention to.”

”

# Campus-Based Mandatory Education

- Colleges/ universities should consider holding some type of educational session with follow-up small group peer discussions.
  - Participants recommended holding a mandatory event at the beginning of each year. Ideas expressed about how the sessions would be conducted include...

- Provide facts about drinking (including severe consequences and health risks)
- Have guest speakers to deliver those facts
- Ensure adult speaker are relatable and engaging, and provide an open atmosphere where college students can be honest about their own alcohol usage
- Incorporate stories from older students who had issues but now do not drink
- Include panel discussions made up of peers
- Have professors talk about the effect on grades
- Allow time for 18-20 year olds to ask questions of the speakers and then talk among themselves (perhaps led by their dorm's Resident Advisor)
- Always Include free food to maximize attendance
- Consider fines for those missing the meeting

# *Messaging Content and Nuances*

# Incorporate Visuals in Campaign

- Be visual when communicating messages.
  - Show health effects visually, similar to smoking ads e.g. a damaged liver or effect on a college student brain.

“

“If you started earlier, with alcohol too and show the liver, like we showed the lungs and everything, maybe that would help. I really have been so turned off from cigarettes.”

“I think videos get to me more than words, just seeing it happen. That makes it feel more real.”

“If you’ve seen, they had this car on display at our school once of this student who died because she was texting while she was driving. The whole driver’s side was smashed in. Images like that stick in your mind, and they will come back to you when you are trying to make a decision.”

”

# Consider Language Used in Messaging

- Use language that speaks to college students.
  - Do not use the term “underage” as some say it is judgmental. They see themselves as adults. They also see this term as one used by old people.
  - Watch language around sexual assault – don’t imply that it is the girls’ fault (e.g.; Do not drink or you risk being assaulted).
  - Use up-to-date language.
- Consider incorporating humor.

“

“It’s really not appropriate to say that’s a consequence of drinking, because someone is raping you, that is not the fault of someone who is inebriated. That is absolutely not their fault. To put that on PSAs and stuff, that’s not appropriate.”

“I want to hear what sounds like my peer talking to me in their language, in their words.”

“If it’s funny, it’s easier to remember. The health place at my school, there were a bunch of condom usage [ads]. ‘Netflix and chill is one D away from Netflix and child.’ The funnier they are, the more likely people are to remember them. It’s spelled in condoms, I think it was on the window.”

”

# Consider Incorporating Role Models

- Participants have the impression that nearly everyone drinks.
  - Their parents
  - Their friends and peers
  - Celebrities (actors, musicians)
- Drinking alcohol to have a good time (party) is promoted in media (TV, movies, social media).
- Participants suggested finding role models who do not drink.

“

“Kids who don't even want to be at parties will go to parties because it's a party. When they actually see somebody that's there, but not drinking it can make a huge difference. That's completely different than from somebody coming in a classroom and saying, 'I don't drink. I'm a great guy. I have lots of friends.'”

“Telling people that other people are sober and it's okay if that's something you want to adopt in your life.”

“I always want people to go the next day and be like, 'Oh, he was so calm at the party. He helped so many people. He wasn't drinking at all.' I would much rather have people saying that then having those people who look up to me hear that than, 'He was so f\*\*\* up he was throwing up.’”

”

# Sexual Assault Issues May Have a Role

- Some participants raised concerns about alcohol use and sexual assault.
  - Men were slightly more likely than women to raise this issue.
  - Both genders agreed that alcohol can loosen inhibitions making it easier to approach someone they are interested in.
  - Some men were concerned that alcohol can blur the lines and cause mixed signals.
  - Fraternities have the reputation of a place where women have to be particularly careful.

“

“With guys you have to be so careful because a girl can be begging for you to do stuff with her and she can be super drunk. If she wakes up the next morning and is like, ‘Why did I do that? That was horrible.’ Your life can be completely ruined right there.”

“He was supposed to be looking out for his [female] friend, but he didn’t do a great job of it because he went and got even more drunk. If it was any other fraternity, like one of the worse ones, then who knows what could have happened to her. It could have ended really badly. Luckily, this was a safe fraternity, nothing bad was going to happen to her.”

”

03 | Environmental Scan of Campaigns

# Reaching College Students

# Preventing Underage Drinking Among College Students

Environmental Scan

---

September 2017

# What we're doing and why

- + Even though rates of alcohol consumption among college students have declined over the past 25 years, most college students still drink<sup>1</sup>
- + WA DSHS and GMMB want to understand creative and strategic approaches of alcohol consumption prevention campaigns targeted at underage college students
  - We also examined campaigns addressing other issues relevant to college students such as mental health and sexual assault
- + Findings will be used to identify best practices for campaigns that prevent alcohol consumption by underage college students

1. Source: *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, 2017

# What we examined

- + State and national campaigns targeting college students with messages about underage and binge drinking
- + Student-created campaigns for individual universities
- + *The takeaways and best practices reported here are qualitative in nature and based on analysis of a limited number of campaigns*
- + *Some—but likely not all—of the public health campaigns assessed were informed by research and measured results. The campaign summaries in this deck include mention of research and/or results when this could be ascertained via publicly-available information.*

# Key Takeaways

- + **Binge drinking prevention** has become a more common focus than general alcohol prevention
- + While **facts and statistics** are a sobering reminder of alcohol's consequences, they can come off as **impersonal** and thus less relevant when used alone
- + **Social norms approaches** are a **less common** and potentially less compelling approach given the prevalence of alcohol consumption among college students
- + Although **severe risk messaging** is common and powerful, personal and relatable consequences such as academic performance or negative reputation have the potential to also be impactful
- + Two call to actions dominate campaigns: directives ("don't drink") and invitations ("think about it"). Approaches that **respect individuals' abilities to make the best decision** for themselves may resonate more with this college-age audience
- + Language used in campaigns is largely inconsistent with how college students talk about alcohol consumption. And more broadly, campaigns tend to **talk at students, not with them**
- + College students aren't the only target of underage drinking campaigns. Some reach college students by **targeting the adults** in their lives (parents, professors, etc.)

# Creative considerations moving forward

- + Consider approaches that **warn against binge drinking vs. overall prevention**: the prevalence of alcohol consumption and “almost legal” sensibility means a general prevention message may resonate less
- + If outlining risks and statistics, consider ways to **bring them to life** and make them feel more **personal** for the audience
- + When speaking to consequences, consider those that **directly impact college students’ everyday goals and desires**, such as academic performance or maintaining one’s reputation
- + College students are adults who are gaining independence and making decisions on their own. Approaches should be **relevant to this unique stage** of life. Messages that **respect their ability to make decisions for themselves**, rather than telling them what to do, may be effective
- + College students are **motivated to do what’s right**. Messages that **encourage them to intervene** on behalf of their friends may be effective
- + Continue reaching **parents and trusted adults**, as their voices are influential in preventing underage drinking
- + Tone and language matter. **Speak to them like a trusted peer** and avoid talking down to them like an authority

# Underage Drinking Campaigns



# College Drinking: Changing the Culture (2012)

**COLLEGE STUDENTS & ALCOHOL ABUSE**

Full-time students are at least 2x more likely to engage in heavy drinking during their college years.



**1/5**

1 out of every 5 college students is considered a heavy drinker.

**2 out of 5** college students report regular binge drinking.

**BINGE DRINKING: THE HIDDEN TRUTH**

BINGE DRINKING is a pattern of drinking that brings your blood alcohol content (BAC) to .08 grams percent or above - when women consume 4 or more and men 5 or more drinks in about 2 hours.

**70%** of binge drinking episodes are by adults age 18 to 24.

**42%** of college students report binge drinking.

**92%** of adults who drink excessively report binge drinking in the past 30 days.

Half of all frequent binge drinkers report having five or more alcohol-related problems during the school year - **20 times** the rate as students who drink but do not binge.

Alcohol is a factor in **28%** of college dropouts.

Every year about **3,925** college students between the ages of 18 and 24 DIE from unintentional alcohol-related injuries, including motor vehicle crashes.

Over 30,000 students each year need emergency health care for alcohol overdose.

Alcohol kills more teenagers than ALL OTHER DRUGS combined. It is a factor in the three leading causes of death among 15-24 year olds: accidents, homicides, and suicides.

Binge drinkers are 14 times more likely to drive under the influence than non binge drinkers.

**90%** of students consumed 10 or more drinks in the past 24 hours.

Students who pay less than a dollar per drink or who pay a flat "all-you-can-drink" rate are more likely to binge than those who pay more.

Binge drinking is associated with higher rates of unintentional injuries (car crashes, falls, drowning) as well as intentional injuries (assault, sexual assault, domestic violence).

Women who binge drink are more likely to have unprotected sex.

While the number of male arrests for drunk driving has decreased over the past 10 years, significantly more women are being arrested for drunk driving incidents, often associated with binge drinking.

**Binge drinking often begins around age 13.**

**SOURCES**  
 CDC, Fast Facts, Binge Drinking  
 National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism  
 CollegeDrinkingPrevention.gov

Created by:  
**elements**  
 BEHAVIORAL HEALTH  
 RESEARCH AND PROMOTION DIVISION  
 www.elementsbhvioralhealth.com

## Client:

- + The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

## Campaign Goal:

- + Raise awareness of the dangers of binge drinking on college campuses

## Research:

- + NIAAA has adapted campaigns several times since its inception in 2002 based on somewhat regular [research updates](#). The most recent research confirms the benefits of a hyper-targeted and multimedia approach, and the limitations of social norms *only* strategy.

## Key Message:

- + Alcohol consumption is a problem among college students. Here's what you need to get informed about alcohol abuse and binge drinking.

## Channels:

- + Partnerships with college presidents
- + Website

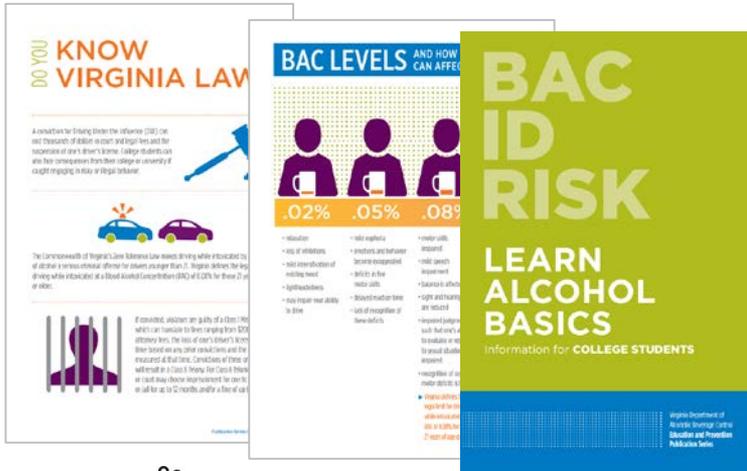
## Creative Approach:

- + Combines surprising facts and messages about consequences
- + Offers a tool for colleges to identify effective interventions

## Results:

- + Has been successful in raising awareness and reducing heavy binge drinking, but results have been more short-term

# Buzzkill (2016)



## Client:

- + Virginia Dept. of Alcohol Beverage Control

## Campaign Goal:

- + Provide information to college students on topics such as Virginia law, standard drink sizes, and signs of alcohol poisoning

## Research

- + Informed by secondary research that shows incorporating law enforcement interventions into programs in colleges has significant benefits. (Source: [NIAAA](#) and [US Dept. of Education](#))

## Key Message:

- + Mostly facts and information, no overarching message

## Channels:

- + Downloadable 24-page booklet
- + Twitter - @PartySafeVA

## Creative Approach:

- + Infographics, visually catchy design and text treatments

## Results:

- + The campaign on college campuses has led to significant reductions of BAC drinking and driving among teens and young adults. (Source: [SmartSafeandSober.org](#))

# The Other Hangover (2011)



## Client:

- + University of Minnesota-Twin Cities

## Campaign Goal:

- + Decrease binge drinking in college students by increasing awareness of negative social and reputational effects of overconsumption

## Research:

- + Primary research identified five "Triggers" for why students over-consume alcohol: "social lubricant," "college syndrome," "clocking out," "competitive spirit," and "bargain boozing." (Source: [campaign evaluation report](#))

## Key Message:

- + Binge drinking has many consequences, including harming your reputation

## Channels:

- + Out-of-home, print, and promotional materials
- + Social media

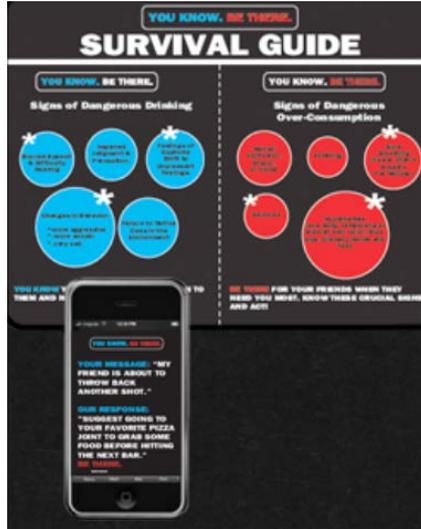
## Creative Approach:

- + Grounded in research with students, which showed that a majority agreed that binge drinking could result in regrettable, reputation-harming behavior

## Results and Miscellaneous :

- + Finalist campaign in AAF's National Student Advertising Competition
- + Based on post-campaign surveys, resonated more with college students than other responsibility campaigns
- + 72.9% unprompted recall during height of campaign activity; 86% recalled the campaign logo; 54.8% of all students reported discussing the campaign with friends. (Source: [campaign evaluation report](#))
- + Success led to its expansion to three other schools in Minnesota

# You Know. Be There. (2014)



## Client:

- + George Washington University

## Campaign Goal:

- + Prevent overconsumption of alcohol by raising awareness of its signs and symptoms

## Research:

- + Student research confirmed that “preachy” messaging is a turn off, and that students recognize signs of overconsumption and want to help friends, but don’t know how. (Source: [GWU](#))

## Key Message:

- + Be there for your friends by helping them out when they’ve drank too much

## Channels:

- + Posters
- + Mobile ads

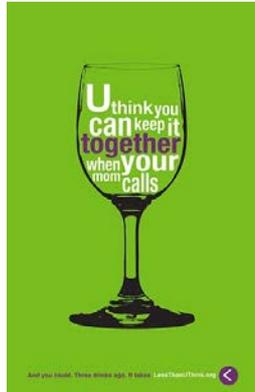
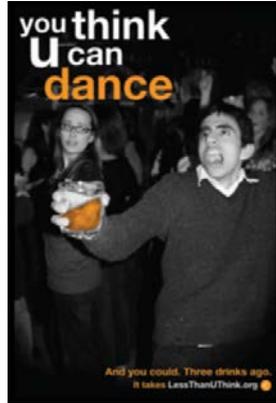
## Creative Approach:

- + Uses a simple, minimal approach with dark colors and straightforward messaging

## Results:

- + Finalist campaign in AAF’s National Student Advertising Competition
- + Surveys following the campaign showed positive results. 60% of freshmen were aware of campaign, 93% of those knew it promoted safer drinking; nearly 50% reported intervening to help a friend who drank too much

# Less Than U Think (2010)



## Client:

- + The University of Alabama

## Campaign Goal:

- + Raise awareness of the physical and social consequences of binge drinking

## Research:

- + Formative and evaluative research conducted by The Century Council, which found that the term “binge drinking” is not relevant to college students, embarrassing behavior is indicative of a great night out, and peer-based messaging only works if it actually about a student’s own peers, among others (Source: “Communication Strategies for College Binge Drinking Prevention” presentation)

## Key Message:

- + Drinking too much may limit your ability to do the things you want to do

## Channels:

- + Website
- + Posters
- + T-shirts
- + Social media

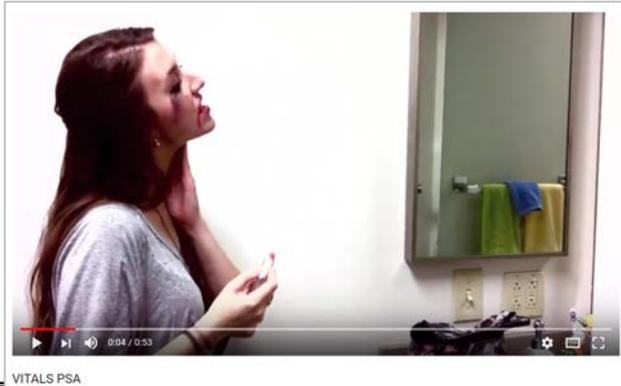
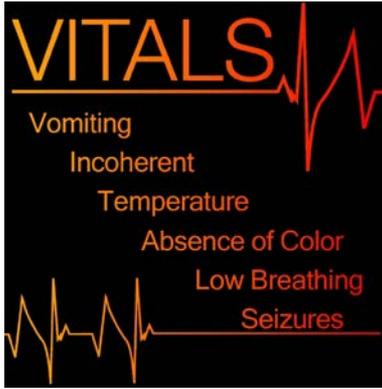
## Creative Approach:

- + Messaging takes away the glamor and coolness of drinking

## Miscellaneous:

- + Finalist campaign in AAF’s National Student Advertising Competition
- + Campaign is entirely student-created and run
- + Versions of campaigns have been implemented at other universities

# VITALS (2011)



## Client:

- + Texas Christian University

## Campaign Goal:

- + Raise awareness of signs of alcohol poisoning

## Research:

- + TCU survey showed 33% of students said they or friends experienced alcohol poisoning

## Key Message:

- + Know the signs of alcohol poisoning
- + There are legal, physical, health and social consequences to excessive drinking.

## Channels:

- + Website (no longer active)
- + Posters
- + Social media, video
- + Can cozies

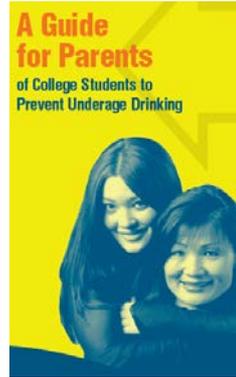
## Creative Approach:

- + Eye catching, bright, edgy

## Results and Miscellaneous:

- + Finalist campaign in AAF's National Student Advertising Competition
- + VITALS stands for "vomiting, incoherent, temperature, absence of color, low breathing and seizures."
- + Evaluative research showed that 89% of students were likely to share what they learned about VITALS with family and friends. (Source: [Seasonal Campaign Report, 2012](#))

# Underage Drinking: Not a Minor Problem- College Edition (2007)



## Client:

- + New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services

## Campaign Goal:

- + Empower college students to make the decision not to drink by changing community attitudes towards underage drinking

## Key Message:

- + Underage drinking is harmful and illegal until an individual is 21

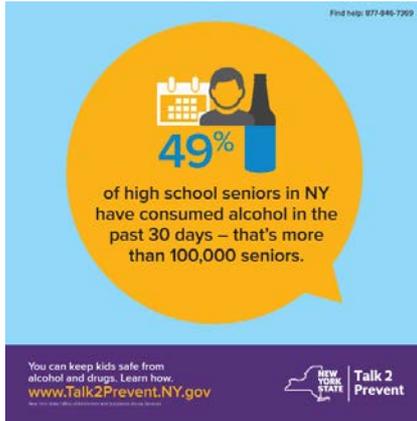
## Channels:

- + Previews in movie theaters
- + Print materials distributed to campuses and communities

## Creative Approach:

- + A contest to create a PSA was conducted between Universities in the state with the winner receiving up to \$25,000 to develop it
- + Content was divided between parents, students, communities, and universities

# Talk2Prevent (2016)



## Client:

- + NY State Agency partners – Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services, Liquor Authority, DMV, Police

## Campaign Goal:

- + Prevent underage drinking, drug use, and addiction on college campuses

## Key Message:

- + Parents can keep kids safe from alcohol and drugs

## Channels:

- + Posters, fact sheets, postcards, kitchen table toolkit, coffee sleeve
- + Social media assets
- + Radio PSAs

## Creative Approach:

- + Uses a straightforward tonality

## Anything else notable:

- + NY has not yet implemented a larger outreach campaign to campuses, only developed assets.
- + Materials are translated in Spanish
- + Children whose parents talk with them regularly about underage drinking risks are 42% less likely to drink alcohol. (Source: [NYSOASAS](#))

# Adjacent Issues



# It's on Us (2014)

**PLEDGES  
TAKEN:  
400K**

**CAMPUS  
EVENTS:  
2K**

**PARTNER  
ORGANIZATIONS:  
95**

**IT'S ON  
US  
IS A  
CULTURAL  
MOVEMENT  
AIMED AT  
FUNDAMENTALLY  
SHIFTING  
THE WAY  
WE THINK  
AND TALK  
ABOUT  
SEXUAL  
ASSAULT.**

It's a rallying cry, inviting everyone to step up and realize that the solution begins with us. Launched in September 2014, It's On Us works to educate, engage, and empower students and communities across the country to do something, big or small, to end sexual assault. The campaign has three core pillars – consent education, increasing bystander intervention, and creating an environment that supports survivors.



**WEEK OF ACTION**

November 8-14, 2015

## Client:

- + Civic Nation, The Ad Council

## Campaign Goal:

- + Reframe the conversation about sexual assault to give responsibility to enablers, especially on college campuses

## Key Message:

- + We have a responsibility and the power to stand up against sexual assault

## Channels:

- + Traditional and non-traditional advertising methods

## Creative Approach:

- + Campaign accredits timing and the increase in sexual assault coverage in news and pop culture with its success

## Results:

- + Arguably the most successful social awareness campaign in history. Campaign was launched by 300+ schools, hosted 650+ events, over 220,000 took a pledge to end sexual assault on college campuses, and PSA viewed over 10 million times, generating 3 billion media impressions. (Source: [The White House](#))
- + Successfully changed the conversation about sexual assault at universities

# Half of Us (2006)



I'M FEELING...

## STRESSED

"I feel overwhelmed all the time."

how to deal



I'M EXPERIENCING...

## LGBTQ ISSUES

"I'm scared about people finding out I'm gay."

how to deal



Need help now? Text START to 741-741 or call (800) 273-TALK (8255)

Click here to find resources

## Client:

- + MTV U
- + JED Foundation

## Campaign Goal:

- + Show young adults struggling with mental health that they are not alone, and encourage them to seek help

## Research:

- + Primary research showed emotional preparedness is a major factor to students' success during 1<sup>st</sup> year of college. (Source: [The Harris Poll](#))
- + Over 51% of students found it hard to get emotional support at college; if they did, they 76% more likely to turn to friends than to university staff (24%). (Source: [The Harris Poll](#))

## Key Message:

- + You have the power to help yourself or someone you know who is struggling

## Channels:

- + On-air programming on MTV
- + An interactive website and social media pages

## Creative Approach:

- + Used celebrities to share personal stories of struggles with mental health and drug issues

## Results:

- + Received minimal attention outside of MTV, but receives extensive reach through the TV network and its other platforms