

Preventing Underage Drinking in Washington State

Campaign Report

OVERVIEW

According to the 2016 Healthy Youth Survey, underage drinking in Washington state continues to decline. However, about 20 percent of youth (10th graders) still report consuming alcohol in the last 30 days and serious risks remain. Alcohol plays a significant role in all three leading causes of death among youth: injuries, suicides and homicides. In addition, those who begin drinking before age 15 are six times more likely to develop alcohol dependence or abuse later in life.

Over the course of four months, GMMB partnered with the Washington State Department of Social & Health Services (DSHS) to develop and implement a statewide effort to prevent underage drinking, reaching high school teens directly with the *Out of the Picture* campaign and reaching parents of teens with the *Looks Can Deceive* campaign. Directed by previous research, both campaigns leveraged a social norms messaging approach to educate and—with sustained implementation—impact behavior among target audiences. A separate effort aimed at informing future campaigns reaching college students was also developed.

Strategy and tactics were directed by primary research where possible, as well as substance use prevention knowledge and experience reaching target audiences with social marketing campaigns. The short timeline for the work was also a factor impacting campaign concepting and execution. Key activities included the following.

High School Teens

- Creative campaign concepting and development, including two 15-second videos, two animated banner ads in multiple sizes, four Facebook and Instagram static ads, and profile and cover images for the campaign Facebook Page.
- Concept testing through intercepts with 91 teens in Seattle and Spokane.
- Development of a microsite featuring campaign assets, risks and consequences, and refusal skills.
- A statewide media buy reaching teens with digital ads on Facebook, Instagram, Pandora, YouTube, and a host of other websites and apps.

Parents of High School Teens

- Creative campaign concepting and development, including two animated banner ads in multiple sizes, four Facebook ads, and three *Seattle Times* takeovers.
- A statewide media buy reaching parents of high school teens with digital ads on Facebook, Google, *The Seattle Times* and a host of other websites.

- A partnership with Univision featuring Spanish-language assets such as a broadcast and digital PSA, an interview with a campaign spokesman, and social media content.
- A toolkit for partners that included tips for implementing the campaign in local communities, campaign assets, posters in multiple languages, and flyer and billboard files.

College Students

- Small group interviews with 54 college students ages 18- to 20-years-old and a report of findings regarding attitudes towards underage drinking, and effective prevention messages and outreach strategies.
- An environmental scan of campaigns aimed at preventing underage drinking among college students, including key takeaways and recommendations.
- A memo for DSHS and partners outlining considerations for future campaign development and implementation.

KEY TAKEAWAYS: TEENS + PARENTS

The following are key takeaways from the underage drinking prevention effort targeting teens and parents:

- **Digital ad buys are a fast and effective way to reach teens.** Ads secured more than 69 million impressions during the campaign and resulted in over 261,000 clicks. The overall click-through rate (CTR) was 0.38 percent. There were nearly 6 million video completions with a video completion rate of 72 percent, well above the industry benchmark of 64 percent
- **Favoring mobile increases ad efficiency with teens.** The digital buy confirmed that teens engaged with the campaign at a much higher rate on mobile versus desktop platforms. Nearly 79 percent of website visitors were on a mobile device. This highlights the importance of a “mobile first” strategy with teens.
- **Parents are also engaging through mobile apps.** Mobile proved to be effective with parents as well as teens, especially through in-app placements. Apps such as Words With Friends, The Score and Podcast Addict were top performers in the buy.
- **Parents around the state engage with *The Seattle Times*.** Our homepage takeovers drove 9,750 clicks to StartTalkingNow.org.
- **In-Stream Video on Facebook greatly contributed to video completions.** This new Facebook Video ad placement, which delivers 5- to 15-second mid-roll video ads to people watching videos on Facebook, was an effective way to increase video completion rates among teens, contributing to the overall video completion rate of 72 percent.

- **Teens who visited the website stayed to learn more.** The website featured a mobile-optimized, interactive experience that encouraged youth to test their perceptions of social norms of underage drinking against the reality, learn the risks of underage drinking and gain refusal skills. The average Time On Page was more than 3 and a half minutes, which indicate visitors stayed to read more about the risks and refusal skills.
- **Underage drinking is less controversial than other topics.** Teens used social media to engage with the campaign, ask questions and give feedback. The main themes in teen comments were questions about the validity of the true social norm, and claims that teens now favor marijuana over alcohol. However, this campaign received far fewer negative comments compared to more hot-button issues like marijuana. Parents hardly commented at all, which is a departure from their online behavior on more controversial issues.

HIGH SCHOOL TEENS

The following summarizes key activities and assets developed for the *Out of the Picture* campaign for teens.

Key Activities

Concept testing: Research is a key step to ensure understanding of knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors of target audiences, as well as the messages and messengers that resonate. Since we already knew that the frame for the campaign would focus on social norms, we developed initial concepts directed by previous research, substance use prevention knowledge and experience reaching teens with social marketing campaigns. Two creative platforms with two executions for each platform were developed and tested with 91 Washington teens via in-person intercepts in Seattle and Spokane to find out what was working and what wasn't. Youth represented different ages (13-17), races and ethnicities, geography (Seattle and Spokane), and household incomes.

Both concepts performed well, but the *Out of the Picture* campaign was most effective at conveying a strong social norms message. The *Out of the Picture* campaign takes the social media practice of using emojis to cover up inappropriate items, such as beer or cigarettes, and turns it on its head. Although the emojis initially look like they could be concealing alcohol, they soon disappear to show there is nothing untoward behind them and that the teens in the image are keeping alcohol "out of the picture." Some participants, notably in Spokane, were confused by the emojis saying they "didn't get it." But most participants understood that the immediate assumption is that the emojis were hiding alcohol but were instead simply hiding fun things such as a microphone for singing or athletic equipment.

Time and stipend limitations did not allow for focus group research, which would have been useful in determining perceived social norms and the messaging and messengers that would most resonate with teens.

Creative asset development: We developed a suite of creative assets based on intercept findings and research about teens’ digital media habits. The assets informed teens about the true social norm that four out of five Washington teens don’t drink alcohol. The ads featured a diverse set of teens across the campaign.

The campaign developed the following creative assets: (See Appendix A for images)

- **Campaign microsite** to provide more information such as risks and refusal skills
- **Two 15-second videos** promoted on sites such as YouTube and Facebook.
- **Two banner ads** in various sizes for mobile and desktop promotion on websites and apps popular with teens
- **Four paid social media ads** for Facebook and Instagram
- **Two images for Facebook** for Cover and Profile placement

Campaign Microsite: Today, having a digital footprint plays a critical role in enhancing a campaign’s online reputation and effectiveness. Even for limited-run campaigns, having an online home can go a long way in improving the ability to disseminate information and build credibility with key audiences. The campaign website, OutofthePicture.org, provided teens with more information about the risks of underage drinking, suggested refusal skills, and resources for advice and recovery. The website was designed with mobile use in mind to accommodate teen usage habits. The digital ad buy drove over 85,000 unique users from across the state between August 28 and September 29, 2017. There were over 134,000 total website sessions.

As expected, Seattle had the highest volume of website visits (25% of total visits) followed by Tacoma, Spokane and Portland (this is likely due to mobile users pinging towers across the Oregon state line.) Over 78 percent of website visitors were on a mobile device. This highlights the importance of a mobile-friendly website strategy.

Statewide digital ad buy: Based on the timeline and budget for the underage drinking campaign and the media consumption habits of the target audience, we conducted a statewide digital advertising buy that leveraged display, social and mobile platforms to deliver campaign



messaging. Buys that lean heavily on digital allow for precise targeting and are relatively quick to implement. The ad buy ran for approximately five weeks from August 28, 2017 through September 29, 2017.

GMMB has executed several media buys targeting Washington teens with health messages and we brought the lessons learned about top-performing platforms, websites and apps to the implementation of the underage drinking prevention buy to start from a place of high effectiveness of placements and cost efficiency. In addition, our existing relationships with media vendors and the sheer amount of advertising we place annually meant DSHS was offered the most competitive rates and access to premium inventory.

The primary key performance indicators (KPIs) for the buy were ad impressions and video views. The secondary KPIs were click-throughs and click-through rates. The tertiary KPI was engagements, such as social media comments and likes. The ad buy was highly successful at reaching and engaging teens online and exceeded benchmarks across all platforms. In total, the ads appeared about 69 million times. There were over 261,000 clicks on the ads and the overall click-through rate (CTR) was 0.38 percent. There were also 6,084,000 video completions and the video completion rate was 72 percent, well above the industry benchmark of 64 percent.

PERFORMANCE SUMMARY				
MEDIUM	IMPRESSIONS	CLICKS	CTR	INVESTMENT
DISPLAY	58,776,319	234,377	0.40%	\$143,835.99
VIDEO*	8,547,608	12,846	0.15%	\$97,372.80
SOCIAL	1,893,211	14,245	0.75%	\$19,522.89
GRAND TOTAL	69,217,138	261,468	0.38%	\$260,731.68

NOTE: Full performance metrics for the Teen Media Buy can be found in Appendix B.

Banner ads

The digital ads—display, mobile and gaming—were delivered to our audience where they spend their time online, such as through popular online games. We developed two banner ads in five different sizes each. Display advertising secured more than 58.7 million impressions and drove 234,377 clicks to the landing page, resulting in a CTR of 0.43%. Thanks to our media buying relationship, we were able to secure 326,896 value-added banner ad impressions from Pandora.

Google Display Network delivered the largest number of impressions at more than 29 million and also returned the second highest performance with a CTR of 0.37 percent. Google Display Network also drove traffic at the most efficient cost-per-click (CPC): \$0.32. Millennial’s Mobiblock (mobile) placement drove the most clicks from display partners, accounting for 41 percent of clicks and a relatively high CTR of 0.55 percent.



Top performing sites and app placements included Smash Master, Talking Pierre the Parrot, and Block Puzzle Jewel.

DISPLAY PERFORMANCE SUMMARY				
SITE	IMPRESSIONS	CLICKS	CTR	INVESTMENT
MILLENNIAL	17,722,170	97,094	0.55%	\$67,000.00
DOUBLECLICK BID MANAGER	11,322,619	28,698	0.25%	\$42,554.99
GOOGLE DISPLAY NETWORK	29,731,530	108,585	0.37%	\$34,281.00
TOTAL	58,776,319	234,377	0.40%	\$143,835.99

Videos

To keep costs low and avoid talent fees, we used stock assets to create two 15-second videos to reach teens on display and social media. Video is essential to capturing teens’ attention online. Video ads secured more than 8.5 million impressions and resulted in nearly 5.8 million video completions and a video completion rate (VCR) of 72 percent, well above benchmark of 64 percent.



YouTube was the top performing site, with a VCR of 86 percent, while DoubleClick Bid Manager (DBM) secured the most impressions and returned the most video completions at 3.5 million completions.

In-App placements proved to be one of the best drivers of website traffic. The top three apps were all games and three out of four of the top performing websites were gaming-related, confirming that teens spend much of their time gaming on mobile.

VIDEO PERFORMANCE SUMMARY*					
SITE	IMPRESSIONS	CLICKS	CTR	VIDEO COMPLETIONS (%)	INVESTMENT
YOUTUBE	2,374,674	6,784	0.29%	2,042,102 (86.0%)	\$44,000.00
DOUBLECLICK BID MANAGER	5,475,063	4,673	0.09%	3,596,764 (65.7%)	\$46,136.80
PANDORA	697,871	1,389	0.20%	250,586 (74.2%)	\$7,236.00
TOTAL	8,547,608	12,846	0.15%	5,889,452 (71.9%)	\$97,372.80

* There were also 194,808 video completions on Facebook.

Social media advertising



Social media advertising with a compelling message is one of the best ways to reach young people and parents alike. The trick is developing creative that quickly grabs attention and speaks to audiences' core values and concerns. We developed four Facebook image ads, two Facebook video ads and four Instagram ads.

Facebook image ads targeted towards teens have yielded a click-through rate (CTR) of 1.25 percent, above the benchmark of 0.75-1.00 percent, with a cost-efficient cost per click (CPC) of \$0.30. Image Ad 3 was the best performing image ad, driving 3,801 clicks at a CTR of 1.34 percent. Following teen user behavior, mobile ads returned far higher performance with a CTR of 1.36 percent,

compared to desktop ads at 0.91 percent. Image ads earned 532 post reactions, 55 post comments, 22 post shares and 16 page likes.

Facebook video ads secured 259,584 impressions and returned 194,808 video completions for a completion rate of 75 percent. Such a high VCR was a result of the introduction of in-stream video placements—where ads are served mid-roll as users watch video content. Please note that there is not an opportunity for user engagement (e.g., reactions, comments, shares, likes) with in-stream video placements.

Image ads targeted towards teens drove 13,311 clicks with a CTR of 1.25 percent. Ad 1— pictured at right—was the best performing creative on Instagram, with 658 clicks, a CTR of 0.18 percent and a relatively low CPC of \$3.85. (Instagram is a high engagement platform—which is why the CPC is higher than Facebook.) Instagram ads earned 5,466 post reactions, 272 post comments and 188 post shares.

While the Instagram image ads have not driven a large amount of traffic, they are generating far higher engagement rates than Facebook ads.

Social media monitoring: Since serving ads from the main DSHS Facebook Page was not an option, GMMB provided assets to DSHS to create a dedicated Out of the Picture Facebook Page. A social media monitoring policy and draft social responses were developed to facilitate real-time dialogue with teens who engage with the ads by posting a comment.

As expected, one of the main themes among social media comments was that marijuana was replacing alcohol as the favored substance among teens. We used this opportunity to continue to reinforce true social norms around both alcohol and marijuana, and to educate teens about the risks of both substances.

Though we always expect a certain amount of skepticism from teens, we were intrigued by the number of comments that questioned the source data from the 2016 Washington State Healthy Youth Survey, especially when it didn't seem to reflect their perception or personal experience. Despite the campaign posting replies to the teens with information about the validity and reliability of the survey results, teens often persisted in their belief that peers often lie on these surveys, indicating that shifting perceived social norms will take some time.

Toolkit: Partners play a vital role in any successful social marketing campaign by amplifying messaging and ensuring relevance for local communities. To better assist partners in sharing the campaign, we developed an online toolkit that included a backgrounder, talking points, all of the campaign assets, additional social media assets and draft copy, and suggestions and tips for engaging with the campaign.



PARENTS OF HIGH SCHOOL TEENS

The following summarizes key activities and assets developed for the *Out of the Picture* campaign for teens.

Key Activities

Creative Asset Development: GMMB used a social norms frame for the creative campaign aimed at adults, encouraging parents to have conversations about underage drinking with their teens and initiate more bonding activities as protective measures. The Healthy Youth Survey shows most Washington parents disapprove of underage drinking, and teens whose parents set clear rules and consequences about alcohol are less likely to drink.

With the knowledge that parents *are* having these conversations, GMMB conceived and developed the *Looks Can Deceive* campaign, which encourages parents to continue and/or start these conversations by letting them know the facts:

- Teens are less likely to drink when parents are involved in their lives.
- 82% of WA teens whose families talk with them about not using alcohol don't drink.
- 85% of teens say their parents set clear rules on alcohol.

During the development of the campaign, DSHS consulted with Washington Healthy Youth Coalition partners to ensure the creative and tactics were in line with lessons learned from the prevention field and with direct experience.

The following creative assets were developed: (See Appendix A for images.)

- **Two banner ads** in five sizes for mobile and desktop promotion on websites and apps popular with parents
- **Four paid social media ads for Facebook**
- **Images for the Start Talking Now website**
- **Three iterations of creative for the *Seattle Times* website takeovers**
- **One 30-second Spanish-language PSA** in partnership with Univision
- **One three-minute Spanish-language interview** in partnership with Univision
- **One poster** in English and eight other languages
- **One flyer** in English based on the poster
- **Four billboards** featuring the teen images from the digital ads

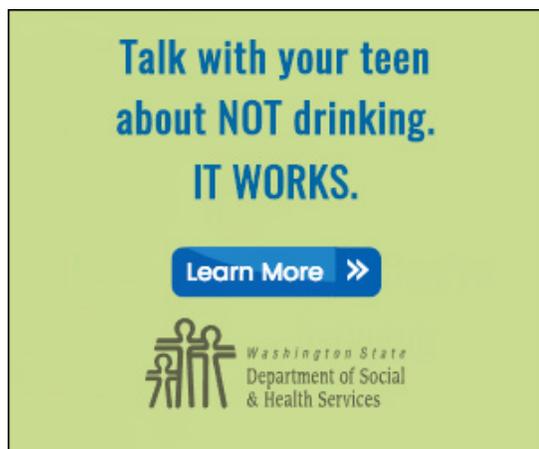
Statewide digital ad buy: Based on the timeline and budget for the campaign, along with research on the media consumption habits of the target audience, we conducted a statewide digital advertising buy that leveraged display, social, mobile and paid search to deliver campaign messaging to parents of high school teens. Buys that lean heavily on digital allow for precise targeting and are relatively quick to implement. The ad buy ran for approximately five weeks, from August 28, 2017 through September 29, 2017.

GMMB has executed several media buys targeting parents of high school teens in Washington and we brought lessons learned about top-performing platforms, websites and apps to the implementation of the this buy to start from a place of high placement effectiveness and cost efficiency. In addition, our existing relationships with media vendors and the sheer amount of advertising we place annually meant DSHS was offered the most competitive rates and access to premium inventory.

Banner Ads

To reach our audience, we conducted a statewide digital media buy, utilizing Facebook, *The Seattle Times*, Google paid search and placements on a host of other websites that effectively reach parents in Washington. All ads direct to **StartTalkingNow.org** for more information and tips for having effective conversations about not drinking.

The primary key performance indicators (KPIs) for this buy were ad impressions and video views. The secondary KPIs were click-throughs and the click-through rate and the tertiary KPI was engagements. The ad buy was highly successful at reaching the parents of teens ages 13 to 17 and exceeded benchmarks across all platforms. In total, the ads appeared more than 76 million times during the ad buy and there were over 234,000 clicks on the ads. The overall click-through rate (CTR) was 0.31 percent.



PERFORMANCE SUMMARY				
MEDIUM	IMPRESSIONS	CLICKS	CTR	INVESTMENT
DISPLAY	73,250,066	201,783	0.28%	\$175,458.43
SEARCH	3,947	68	1.72%	\$209.03
SOCIAL	2,787,670	32,257	1.16%	\$16,999.93
GRAND TOTAL	76,041,683	234,108	0.31%	\$192,667.39

NOTE: Full performance metrics for the Parent Media Buy can be found in Appendix C.

Display and mobile digital ads were delivered to our audience where they spend their time online. We developed two banner ads in five different sizes each. Display advertising delivered more than 73.2 million impressions and drove nearly 202,000 clicks to the landing page, resulting in a CTR of 0.28%. Some of the top performing sites included the Weather Channel, CNN and Fox News.

On Google Display Network, the best performing targeting was audience targeting with a CTR of 0.40 percent following by keyword targeting with a CTR of 0.37 percent. Top keywords included “underage drinking” (1.30%) and “teen talk” (1.75%). On DoubleClick, audience targeting was also best performing with a CTR of 0.16 percent.

DISPLAY PERFORMANCE SUMMARY				
SITE	IMPRESSIONS	CLICKS	CTR	INVESTMENT
SEATTLE TIMES HOMEPAGE	2,571,311	9,750	0.38%	\$38,000.00
DOUBLE CLICK BID MANAGER	24,024,455	38,111	0.16%	\$75,366.20
GOOGLE DISPLAY NETWORK	46,654,300	153,922	0.33%	\$62,092.23
TOTAL	73,250,066	201,783	0.28%	\$175,458.43

Seattle Times Takeover

Seattle Times homepage takeovers are one of the most effective ways to create buzz among parent audiences and stakeholders in a high-impact way. GMMB conducted four *Seattle Times* homepage takeovers to increase impressions and drive traffic to StartTalkingNow.org. The *Seattle Times* takeovers delivered more than 2.5 million impressions and 9,750 clicks to the landing page for a high CTR of 0.38 percent—the highest of the campaign.

Among three different messages used for the takeovers, versions that included a statistic showed a higher engagement rate (0.13% CTR) than the third that did not include a stat (0.11% CTR). Here were the messages used:

- 82% of WA teens whose families talk with them about not using alcohol don't drink. (0.13% CTR)
- 85% of WA teens say their parents set clear rules about alcohol use. (0.13% CTR)
- WA Teens are less likely to drink when adults talk to them about alcohol use. (0.11% CTR)

The first *Seattle Times* takeover scheduled for September 12 was paused due to emerging news about Mayor Ed Murray. An additional takeover on September 26 was secured at no additional cost due to the pause, and the campaign ended up with an additional 14 hours of live time on the *Seattle Times* homepage.

Social Media

For the *Looks Can Deceive* campaign, we served ads to parents from the *Start Talking Now* Facebook handle with the intent of getting impressions as our main KPI. Facebook served nearly 2.8 million impressions and 32,257 clicks to the landing page. This resulted in a CTR of 1.16 percent, above the Facebook benchmark of 0.75-1.00 percent. The majority of impressions were served to female parents (68%), but male users have returned better performance with a higher average CTR (1.27% vs 1.11%) and a more efficient CPC (\$0.49 vs \$0.55).

Facebooks ads resulted in 278 post reactions, 27 post comments and 81 post shares. As a secondary KPI, we were pleased to see an increase in traffic driving to StartTalkingNow.org, and an increase in follows to the *Start Talking Now* Facebook page.

FACEBOOK DISPLAY PERFORMANCE					
CREATIVE	IMPRESSIONS	CLICKS	CTR	CPC	INVESTMENT
Ad 1 – African American Boy	833,344	9,248	1.11%	\$0.52	\$4,807.94
Ad 2 – Hispanic Girl	14,453	96	0.66%	\$1.35	\$129.48
Ad 3 – Caucasian Girl	738,518	6,037	0.82%	\$0.76	\$4,584.14
Ad 4 – Hispanic Boy	1,201,355	16,876	1.40%	\$0.44	\$7,478.37
TOTAL	2,787,670	32,257	1.16%	\$0.53	\$16,999.93

Social media monitoring: A social media monitoring policy and draft social responses were developed to facilitate real-time dialogue with parents who engaged with the ads through comments. The most common interactions were likes/follows of the Start Talking Now page, and comments, although minimal, were in general positive and supportive of the campaign.

Univision

Partnering with Univision is an effective way to connect with adult Spanish-speaking audiences in Washington state on a variety of topics. Leveraging Univision’s trusted reputation and large following, we developed content with the news team that delivered underage drinking prevention messages to parents in an authentic way.

The partnership resulted in a 30-second PSA with Univision’s news anchors, a three-minute interview with the Univision news anchors and DSHS’s own Adolfo Capestany, and a social media post. The PSA aired at least 122 times on KUNS (Univision’s Seattle station) and KUNW (Univision’s Yakima/Tri Cities station), with several placements during primetime and during Seattle Sounders soccer games. The interview segment aired twice on the 6pm and 11pm news, and was accompanied by several “tune in” promos. We were also able to secure 50 bonus airings of the 30-second PSA.



Toolkit

We developed a robust toolkit for partners to reach parents of teens, containing tips for communicating the key messages, posters, billboards, flyers and other assets. The poster was translated into eight additional languages and was printed in both English and Spanish.

The toolkit also contains the Univision creative, social media posts, flyer, and the posters that partners can use across diverse populations here in Washington. All of the assets have been made easily accessible on the Athena forum, where partners can download and use them freely.

LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS: TEENS + PARENTS

The following are lessons learned from the campaign and recommendations moving forward.

- **It will take time to correct the perceived social norm.** Throughout the campaign, youth wanted more facts, studies and sources to back up messaging. Despite detailed explanations of the validity and reliability of the Health Youth Survey, teens remained skeptical of the results especially if it didn't align with their own perceptions or personal experience.
- **According to teens, marijuana is in and alcohol is out.** Teens often commented that marijuana is surpassing alcohol in popularity among their peers. Future underage drinking prevention efforts might benefit from coordinating with marijuana prevention efforts to educate about shared risks and increased risks to poly-substance users.
- **Consider testing additional messages to complement social norms messaging.** The campaign did not conduct formative research to test prevention messages. Messaging around the risks and consequence of underage drinking, refusal skills or bystander intervention may hold promise—particularly with those skeptical of survey results.
- **Parent-reported statistics would simplify messaging.** The statistics used in the *Looks Can Deceive* campaign were teen-reported, which impacted the simplicity of campaign messages. Parent-reported statistics would make messages more direct and relevant to the audience. For example, instead of saying that “85% of teens say their parents set clear rules on alcohol,” it’s stronger to say “85% of parents set clear rules on alcohol.”
- **Campaign spokespeople can add legitimacy and deepen the message.** The Univision interview with Adolfo Capestany provided additional context for the advertising messaging from a credible expert. Consider issuing a press release and pitching interviews to news outlets for future campaigns.
- **Using royalty-free images is limiting.** Including a diverse set of images in prevention campaigns is vital to building inclusivity and reflecting the communities in Washington.

Being limited to royalty-free images for use in evergreen materials severely narrowed photography options. Where time and budget allow, consider doing an original photo shoot for campaigns.

COLLEGE STUDENTS

The following summarizes key activities and assets developed to inform future outreach by DSHS and partners to underage college students:

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

Assessment Design

In late August and early September 2017, GMMB worked with Northwest Research Group and Hardwick Research to conduct one-on-one and small group interviews with 54 students enrolled at colleges and universities in Washington. 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.

Key Takeaways

- Participants—all of whom were 18- to 20-year-old college students—saw few negative consequences of drinking, including little to no enforcement of existing laws or campus rules/policies. Moreover, as students get older (approach legal drinking age), they see even fewer issues with drinking.
- Reaching college students early—perhaps at orientation—is important.
- A strict “don’t drink” message is likely to be ineffective. Instead, a message about what could happen if you do drink may be effective.
- 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.
- Research participants chose two prevention messages as the most effective: (1) information about possible severe consequences of drinking (e.g. poor grades, car crashes, etc.) 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- to 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.

Best-testing Messages (9 total messages tested)

Message	Score 1 = Strongly disagree; 4 = Strongly agree
Information about possible severe consequences of drinking (e.g., poor grades, car crashes, etc.)	3.32
Information about health risks of drinking (e.g., brain damage, alcohol dependency, cirrhosis, etc.)	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

NOTE: Small group interviews report can be found in Appendix D.

Preventing Underage Drinking Among College Students: Environmental Scan of Campaigns

Assessment Design

In September 2017, GMMB examined state and national campaigns conducted by government agencies, colleges and universities, and advocates reaching college students with messages about underage and binge drinking. The scan captured examples of creative concepts and outlined key takeaways and promising practices. The scan allows DSHS and partners to have

perspective beyond Washington on the approaches, messages and tactics that are innovative, memorable and effective.

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 college students like a trusted peer and avoid talking down to them like an authority.

NOTE: Environmental scan can be found in Appendix E.

Considerations for Campaign Development and Implementation

We developed a memo that synthesizes top-level findings from the small group discussions and the environmental scan to help direct 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. The memo was also informed by a conversation with Jason Kilmer, University of Washington Associate Professor Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences.

NOTE: Considerations memo can be found in Appendix F.

APPENDIX A

Assets for all campaigns can be found here:

<https://gmmb.box.com/s/3zaeyig2zugx1dronyxw44qne1ih7n98>

Teen – Banner Ads

Two executions, multiple sizes



Version A



Version B

Teen – Social Media

Facebook, four executions

Out of the Picture
Sponsored · 🌐

Think most Washington teens are drinking?
Think again.

4 out of 5 don't drink.
Keep alcohol #outofthepicture
outofthepicture.org

[Learn More](#)

Ad 1

Out of the Picture
Sponsored · 🌐

Think most Washington teens are drinking?
Think again.

4 out of 5 don't drink.
Keep alcohol #outofthepicture
outofthepicture.org

[Learn More](#)

Ad 2

Out of the Picture
Sponsored · 🌐

Think most Washington teens are drinking?
Think again.

4 out of 5 don't drink.
Keep alcohol #outofthepicture
outofthepicture.org

[Learn More](#)

Ad 3

Out of the Picture
Sponsored · 🌐

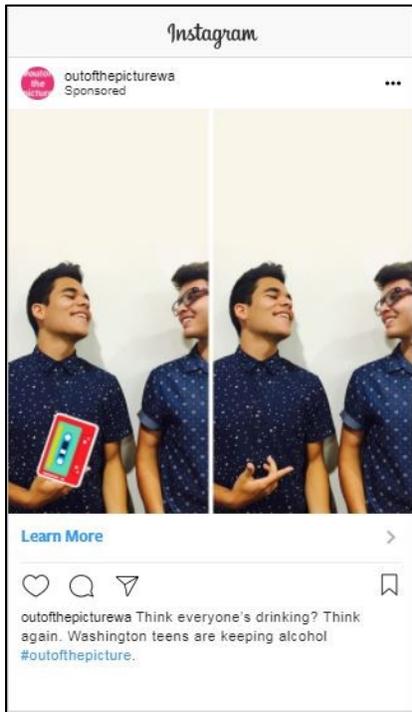
Think most Washington teens are drinking?
Think again.

4 out of 5 don't drink.
Keep alcohol #outofthepicture
outofthepicture.org

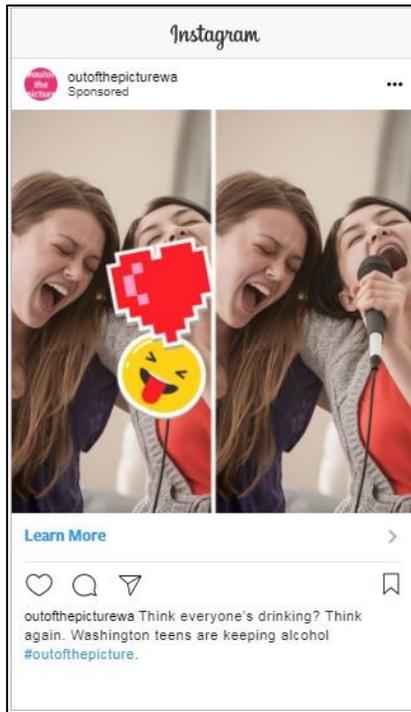
[Learn More](#)

Ad 4

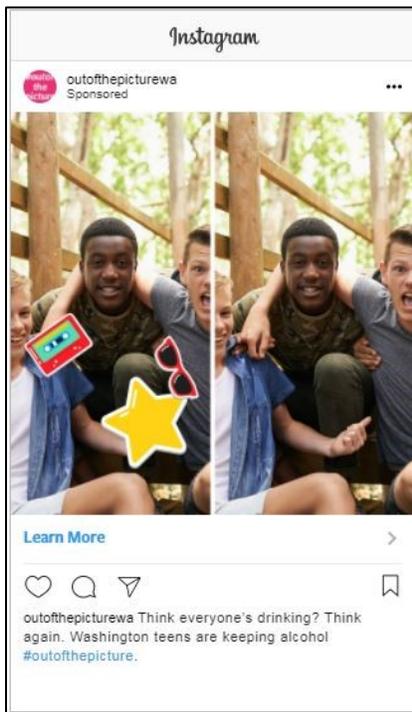
Instagram, four executions



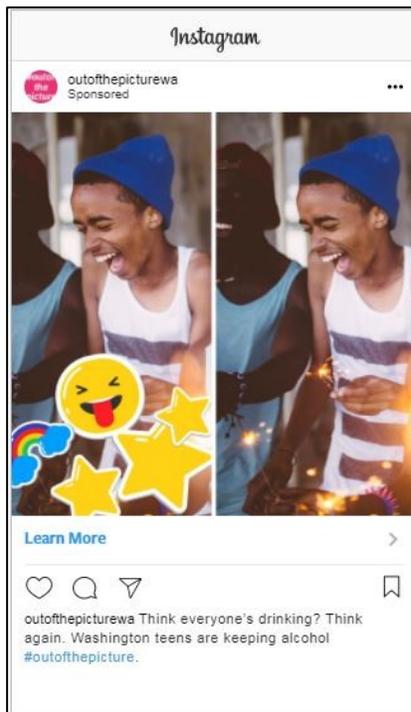
Ad 1



Ad 2



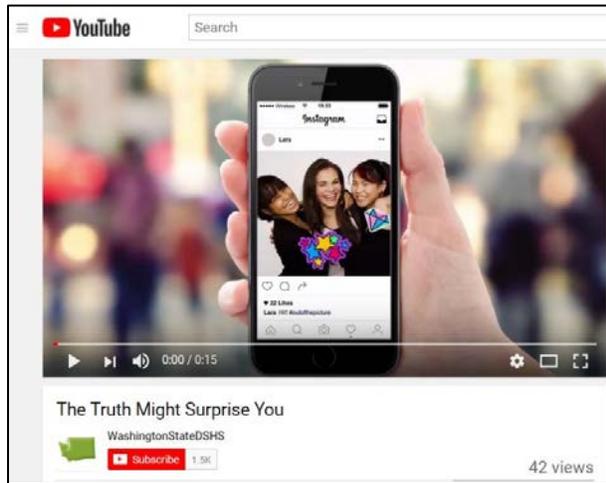
Ad 3



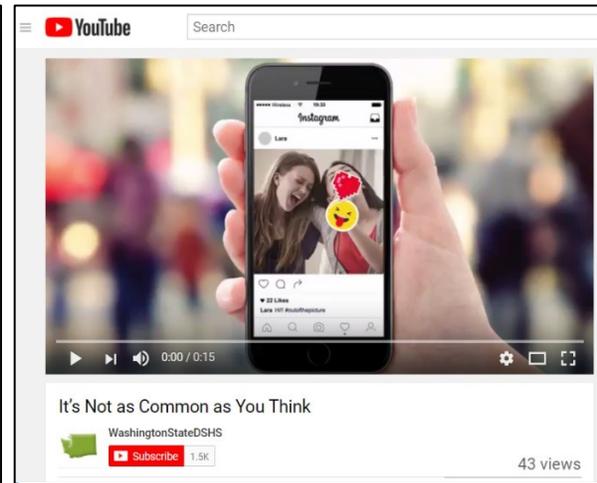
Ad 4

Teen – Videos

Two 15-second videos



Video Ad A



Video Ad B

Teen – Microsite

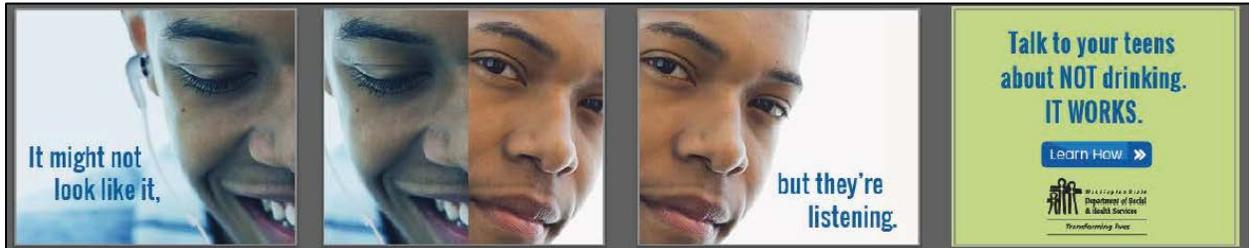


Teen – @OutofthePictureWA Facebook Page and Images



Parent – Banner Ads

Two executions, multiple sizes



Ad A



Ad B

Parent – Social Media

Facebook, four executions



Ad 1



Ad 2

Start Talking Now
Sponsored · 🌐

85% of teens say their parents set clear rules on alcohol
Talk with them about not drinking



It may not look like it,
but they're paying attention.

STARTTALKINGNOW.ORG [Learn More](#)

Ad 3

Start Talking Now
Sponsored · 🌐

Studies show WA teens are less likely to drink when adults talk to them about alcohol use.



It may not look like it,
but they want your guidance.

STARTTALKINGNOW.ORG [Learn More](#)

Ad 4

Parent – Poster

English, Spanish, and 7 other languages

85% of Washington teens say their parents set clear rules on alcohol.

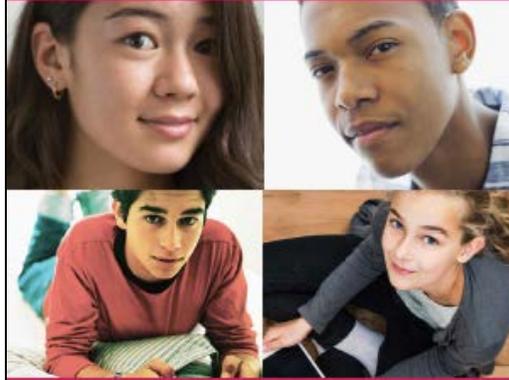


Talk with your teen about NOT drinking. It works.

Learn more at StartTalkingNow.org

 Washington State Department of Social & Health Services
Transforming lives

85% de los adolescentes de Washington dicen que sus padres les marcan reglas claras sobre el alcohol.



Hable con sus hijos adolescentes sobre la importancia de NO beber alcohol. Le dará resultado.

Más información en StartTalkingNow.org

 Washington State Department of Social & Health Services
Transforming lives

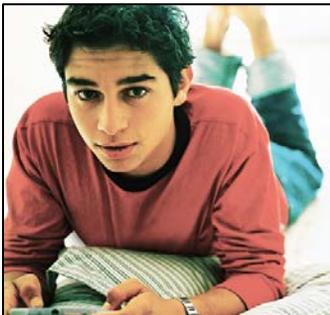
Parent – Billboard

Four executions



Talk with your teen about
not drinking.
They're listening.

StartTalkingNow.org



Talk with your teen about
not drinking.
They're listening.

StartTalkingNow.org



Talk with your teen about
not drinking.
They're listening.

StartTalkingNow.org



Talk with your teen about
not drinking.
They're listening.

StartTalkingNow.org



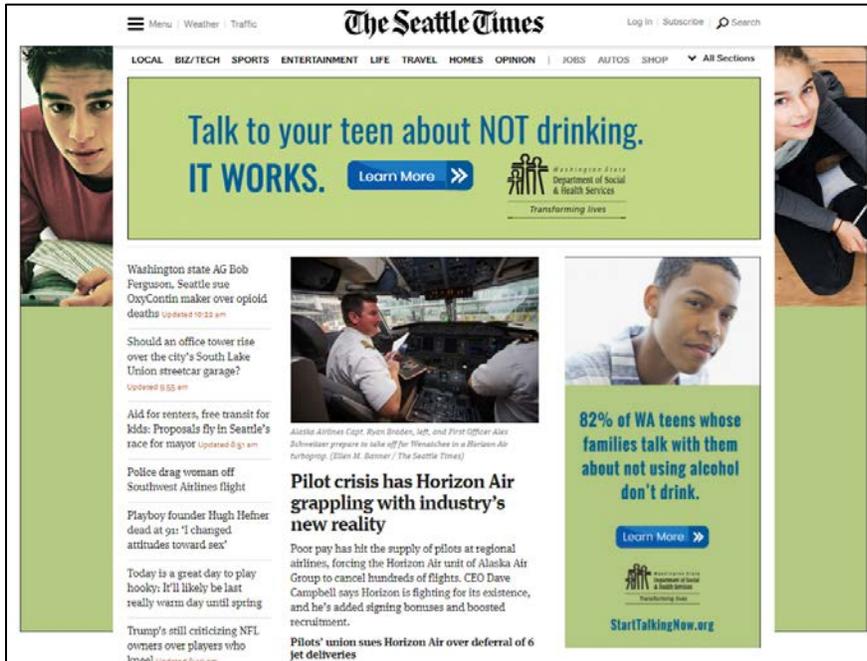
Parent – Flyer

8.5"x11"



Parent – Seattle Times Takeover

Three executions (one of which is pictured below)

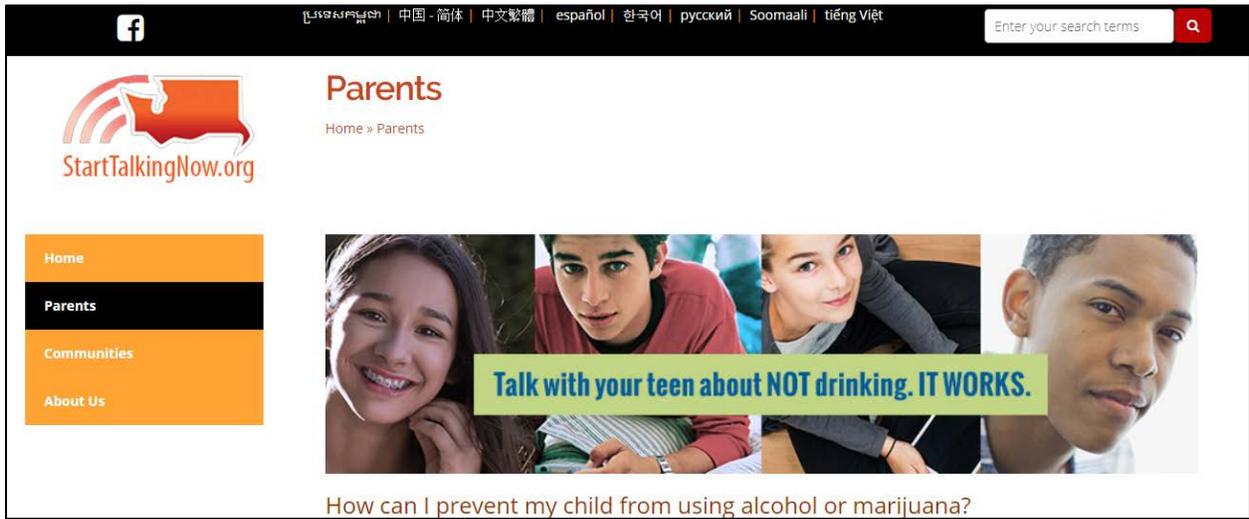


Parent – Univision

One 30-second PSA, and one 3-minute interview



Parent – Image for StartTalkingNow.org



APPENDIX B: WA DSHS Teen 2017 Campaign Performance

Reporting Period: August 28 – September 29, 2017

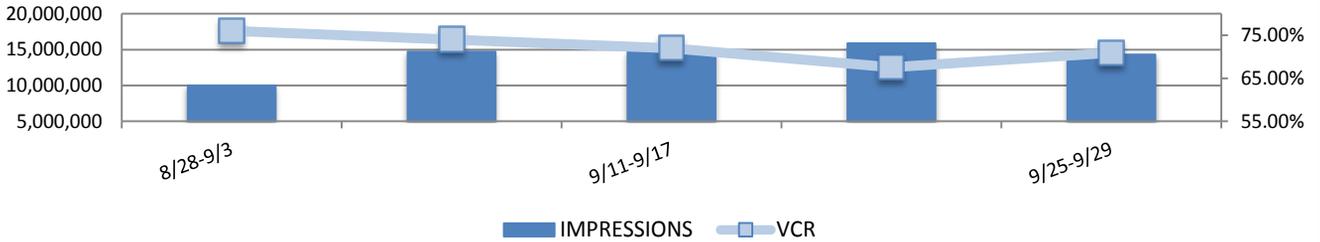


Campaign Objective: Drive awareness among teens ages 13-17 of the social norm around underage drinking

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs): Primary KPIs are impressions and video views; Secondary KPIs are clicks and click-through rate (CTR); tertiary KPI is engagements

IMPRESSIONS	CLICKS	CLICK THROUGH RATE	VIDEO COMPLETIONS
69,217,138	261,468	0.38%	6,084,260

WEEK TO WEEK PERFORMANCE (IMPRESSIONS, VIDEO COMPLETION RATE)



CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

- By the end of September the campaign secured more than 69 million impressions and drove 261,468 clicks to the microsite, for an overall click-through rate (CTR) of 0.38%.
- Display platforms served over 58 million impressions, driving clicks at an average cost per click (CPC) of \$0.60 while video ads were completed over 6 million times during the campaign.
- Both Display (with a 0.40% CTR) and Video (with a 71.9% VCR) are performed *significantly* above benchmark*.
- Facebook image ads, with a CTR of 1.25% also performed above benchmark while Instagram image ads have generated more engagement (5,927 likes, comments and other engagements) despite driving fewer clicks to the landing page.
- Across pre-roll video partners, Video A showed slightly higher performance. On Facebook, Video B was best performing.

OPTIMIZATIONS

- Budget was shifted to Facebook video from DoubleClick to take advantage of high video completion rates.
- Across Display, Video and Social, creative executions showing better performance were weighted to be served more often.

*Standard display benchmark - 0.05-0.08%; Video completion benchmark - 64%; Facebook CTW benchmark - 0.75-1.00%; Facebook video completion benchmark - 1-3%;

PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

MEDIUM	IMPRESSIONS	CLICKS	CTR	INVESTMENT
DISPLAY	58,776,319	234,377	0.40%	\$143,835.99
VIDEO*	8,547,608	12,846	0.15%	\$97,372.80
SOCIAL	1,893,211	14,245	0.75%	\$19,522.89
GRAND TOTAL	69,217,138	261,468	0.38%	\$260,731.68

*The main KPI for Video is completions.

**Cost per completed video view

WA DSHS Teen 2017 Campaign Performance

Reporting Period: August 28 – September 29, 2017



DISPLAY AND VIDEO PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

DISPLAY

- Overall, Display advertising served over 58.7 million impressions and drove 234,377 clicks to the landing page, resulting in a CTR of 0.40%
 - Google Display Network** has served the largest number of impressions at over 29 million and has also returned the second highest performance with a CTR of 0.37%. It is also driving traffic at the most efficient cost-per-click (CPC) at \$0.32.
 - Millennial's** Mobiblock (mobile) placement delivered over 17 million impressions and 97,094 clicks for a relatively high CTR of 0.55%.
 - Top performing sites and app placements included Smash Master, Talking Pierre the Parrot, and Block Puzzle Jewel.
 - On **DoubleClick**, site targeting methods have returned the best performance with a CTR of 0.27%.
- The best performing creative size was 300x600 with a CTR of 0.64% but was limited by inventory resulting in fewer impressions. The mobile 320x50 size has resulted in the majority of impressions (32,979,358) and has the second highest CTR at 0.46%.
- In terms of creative, both versions of Display ads performed about the same with both versions returning a CTR of 0.32%.

VIDEO

- Video served over 8.5 million impressions resulting in nearly 6 million video completions and a VCR of 71.9%, above benchmark of 64%.
- YouTube was the top performing site, with a VCR of 86.0% while DBM has served the most impressions and returned the most video completions at 3,596,764.
 - Other top performing sites included younghollywood.com, zone.msn.com, tunein.com, and panzoid.com.
- Within DBM, in-game targeting has proven to be the most effective returning a completion rate of 91.5%. In-game targeting serves video ads on browser-based gaming sites.
- In terms of creative, both videos performed about the same, with Video A having a slightly higher completion rate of 72.3% compared to 71.5%.

DISPLAY PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

SITE	IMPRESSIONS	CLICKS	CTR	INVESTMENT
MILLENNIAL	17,722,170	97,094	0.55%	\$67,000.00
DOUBLECLICK BID MANAGER	11,322,619	28,698	0.25%	\$42,554.99
GOOGLE DISPLAY NETWORK	29,731,530	108,585	0.37%	\$34,281.00
TOTAL	58,776,319	234,377	0.40%	\$143,835.99

VIDEO PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

SITE	IMPRESSIONS	CLICKS	CTR	VIDEO COMPLETIONS (%)	INVESTMENT
YOUTUBE	2,374,674	6,784	0.29%	2,042,102 (86.0%)	\$44,000.00
DOUBLECLICK BID MANAGER	5,475,063	4,673	0.09%	3,596,764 (65.7%)	\$46,136.80
PANDORA	697,871	1,389	0.20%	250,586 (74.2%)	\$7,236.00
TOTAL	8,547,608	12,846	0.15%	5,889,452 (71.9%)	\$97,372.80

*Reported Pandora video metrics include companion banner impressions and clicks

WA DSHS Teen 2017 Campaign Performance

Reporting Period: August 28 – September 29, 2017



CREATIVE SIZE PERFORMANCE			
SIZE	IMPRESSIONS	CLICKS	CTR
300x250	17,043,029	41,936	0.25%
300x600	1,452,648	9,309	0.64%
728x90	6,221,935	27,357	0.44%
300x50	1,439,632	5,693	0.40%
320x50	32,979,358	150,888	0.46%

DISPLAY CREATIVE VERSION PERFORMANCE			
CREATIVE	IMPRESSIONS	CLICKS	CTR
VERSION A	12,315,812	38,824	0.32%
VERSION B	12,401,801	39,778	0.32%
MOBILE CREATIVE	34,418,984	156,581	0.45%

VIDEO CREATIVE VERSION PERFORMANCE				
CREATIVE	IMPRESSIONS	CLICKS	CTR	VIDEO COMPLETIONS (%)
VIDEO A	4,187,798	6,234	0.15%	3,028,203 (72.3%)
VIDEO B	3,999,510	5,806	0.15%	2,861,249 (71.5%)

DISPLAY CREATIVE



Version A

Washington teens
are keeping alcohol
#outofthepicture

LEARN MORE 



Washington State
Department of Social
& Health Services



Version B

Washington teens
are keeping alcohol
#outofthepicture

LEARN MORE 



Washington State
Department of Social
& Health Services

4 out of 5 teens
DON'T DRINK.

LEARN MORE 

Mobile 300x50

4 out of 5 teens are keeping alcohol
#outofthepicture

LEARN MORE 

Mobile 320x50



Video Version A



Video Version B

WA DSHS Teen 2017 Campaign Performance

Reporting Period: August 28 – September 29, 2017



SOCIAL PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

Facebook

- Facebook Image ads targeted towards teens served over 1.06 million impressions and yielded a CTR of 1.25% and a cost-efficient CPC of \$0.30, above benchmark of 0.75-1.00% CTR.
- Image Ad 3 was the best performing image ad, driving 3,801 clicks at a CTR of 1.34%.
- Following teen user behavior, mobile ads have returned far higher performance with a CTR of 1.36% compared to desktop ads at 0.91%.
- Facebook video ads have served 259,584 impressions and returned 194,808 video completions for a completion rate of 75.1%.
 - High VCR was a result of the introduction of in-stream video placements -- where ads are served mid-roll as users watch video content.
 - In-stream video placements prevent user engagement. (Image ads have earned 532 post reactions, 55 post comments, 22 post shares, and 16 page likes.)
- Video B returned higher performance with a completion rate of 82.1%.

Instagram

- Image ads targeted towards teens yielded a CTR of 0.16%, driving 934 clicks.
- Ad 1 was the best performing creative on Instagram, with a CTR of 0.18%, 658 clicks and over 3,491 reactions.
- Instagram ads have earned a total of 5,467 post reactions, 272 post comments, and 188 post shares.
 - While the Instagram image ads were relatively inefficient at driving traffic, they generated far higher engagement rates than Facebook ads.

Optimizations

- Desktop placements were excluded from Facebook as it was not driving traffic and running up overall CPC.
- Instagram ad 3 was paused to allow better performing creative to serve more often.

*Post reactions include the like, love, haha, wow, sad and angry icons

SOCIAL CHANNEL PERFORMANCE

CHANNEL	IMPRESSIONS	CLICKS	CTR	CPC	VIDEO COMPLETES (%)	INVESTMENT
FACEBOOK IMAGE	1,065,557	13,311	1.25%	\$0.30	---	\$3,999.98
FACEBOOK VIDEO	259,584	---	---	---	194,808 (75.1%)	\$11,522.94
INSTAGRAM	568,070	934	0.16%	\$4.28	---	\$3,999.97
TOTAL	1,893,211	14,245	0.75%	\$1.37	194,808 (75.1%)	\$19,522.89

FACEBOOK IMAGE AD PERFORMANCE

CREATIVE	IMPRESSIONS	CLICKS	CTR	CPC	INVESTMENT
AD 1	282,957	3,351	1.18%	\$0.29	\$963.34
AD 2	224,821	2,687	1.20%	\$0.34	\$915.42
AD 3	284,019	3,801	1.34%	\$0.31	\$1,177.74
Ad 4	273,760	3,472	1.27%	\$0.27	\$943.48
TOTAL	1,065,557	13,311	1.25%	\$0.30	\$3,999.98

FACEBOOK VIDEO AD PERFORMANCE

CREATIVE	IMPRESSIONS	VIDEO COMPLETES	CLICKS	VCR	CPCV	INVESTMENT
Video A	115,044	76,168	506	66.2%	\$0.06	\$6,593.03
Video B	144,540	118,640	169	82.1%	\$0.03	\$4,929.91
TOTAL	259,584	194,808	675	75.1%	\$0.04	\$11,522.94

FACEBOOK CREATIVE



Ad 1



Ad 2



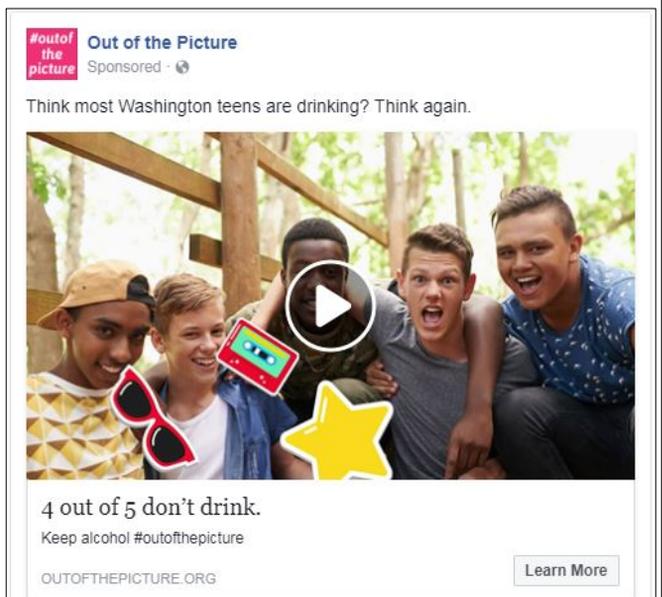
Ad 3



Ad 4



Video Ad A



Video Ad B

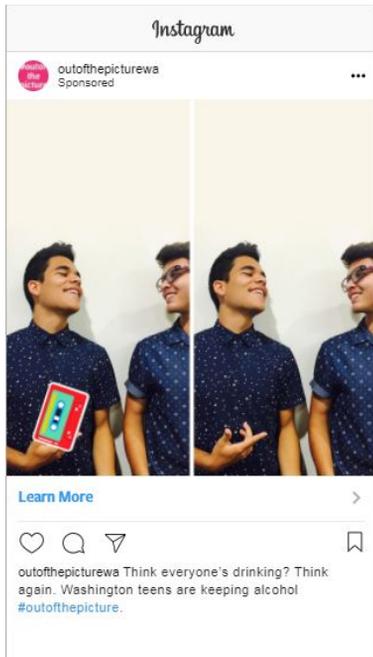
WA DSHS Teen 2017 Campaign Performance

Reporting Period: August 28 – September 29, 2017

INSTAGRAM IMAGE PERFORMANCE

CREATIVE	IMPRESSIONS	CLICKS	CTR	REACTIONS	CPC	INVESTMENT
AD 1	361,491	658	0.18%	3,491	\$3.85	\$2,535.59
AD 2	88,048	122	0.14%	509	\$5.13	\$625.54
AD 3	43,177	54	0.13%	836	\$5.07	\$273.90
AD 4	75,354	100	0.13%	630	\$5.65	\$564.94
TOTAL	568,070	934	0.16%	5,466	\$4.28	\$3,999.97

INSTAGRAM CREATIVE



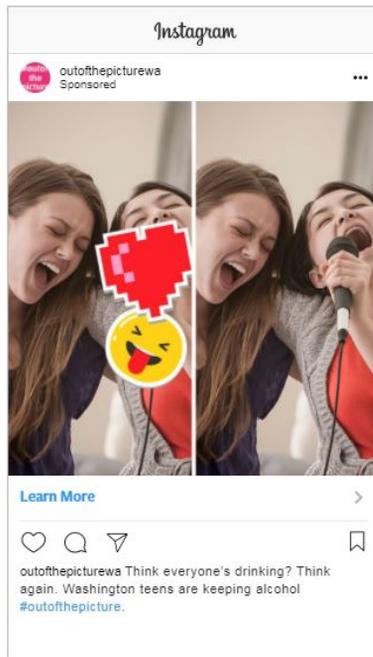
Instagram

outofthepicturewa Sponsored

Learn More

outofthepicturewa Think everyone's drinking? Think again. Washington teens are keeping alcohol #outofthepicture.

Ad 1



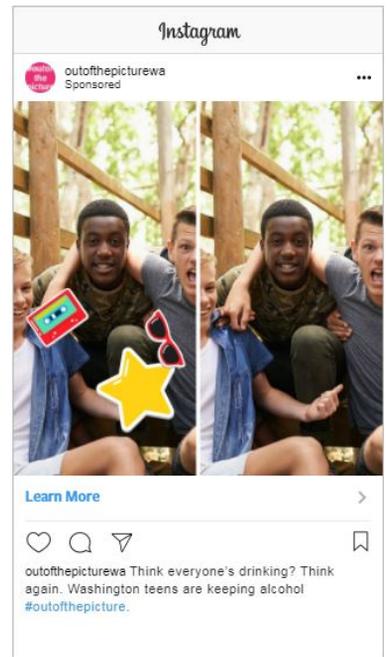
Instagram

outofthepicturewa Sponsored

Learn More

outofthepicturewa Think everyone's drinking? Think again. Washington teens are keeping alcohol #outofthepicture.

Ad 2



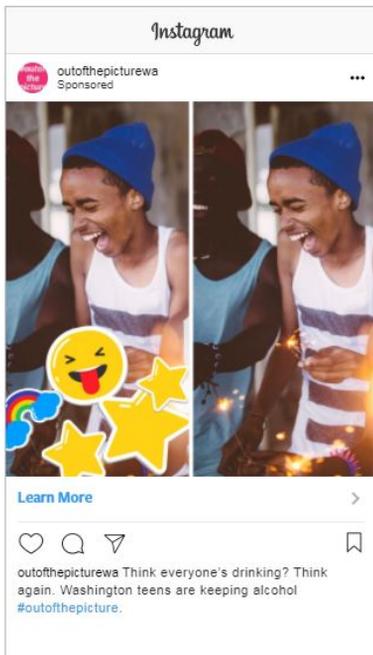
Instagram

outofthepicturewa Sponsored

Learn More

outofthepicturewa Think everyone's drinking? Think again. Washington teens are keeping alcohol #outofthepicture.

Ad 3



Instagram

outofthepicturewa Sponsored

Learn More

outofthepicturewa Think everyone's drinking? Think again. Washington teens are keeping alcohol #outofthepicture.

Ad 4

APPENDIX C: WA DSHS Parent 2017 Campaign Performance

Reporting Period: August 28 – September 29, 2017



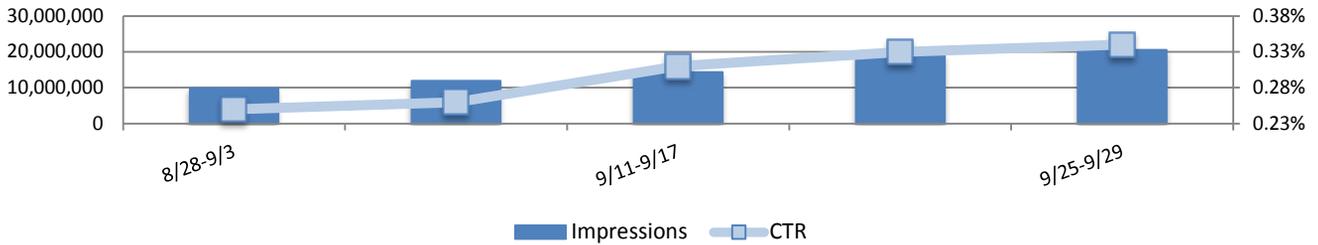
Campaign Objective: Drive awareness among parents of high school teens about the efficacy of being involved in their teens' lives.
Key Performance Indicator: Primary KPIs are impressions and video views; Secondary KPIs are clicks and click-through rate (CTR); tertiary KPI is engagements.

IMPRESSIONS
76,041,683

CLICKS
234,108

CLICK THROUGH RATE
0.31%

WEEK TO WEEK PERFORMANCE (IMPRESSIONS, CTR)



CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

- The campaign at its conclusion secured more than 76 million impressions and generated 234,108 clicks to the website, for an overall click-through rate of 0.31%.
- Social platforms returned high performance for the campaign, delivering traffic to the landing page at a CPC of \$0.53 and 1.16% CTR, exceeding Facebook's CTR benchmark* of 0.75-1.00% CTR.
- Search delivered 68 clicks on 3,947 impressions, resulting in a CTR within benchmark at 1.72% but was significantly limited by search volume.
- Display ads with an overall click rate of 0.28% are also performing above benchmark, driven by Seattle Times takeovers returning an average CTR of 0.39%.

OPTIMIZATIONS

- On DoubleClick Bid Manager, sites and targeting methods absorbing a large number of impressions without delivering an efficient CTR have been excluded.
- Across Display and Social, creative showing better performance will be weighted to be served more often.

*Standard display benchmark - 0.05-0.08%; Facebook CTW benchmark - 0.75-1.00%; Paid Search benchmark - 1-2%

PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

MEDIUM	IMPRESSIONS	CLICKS	CTR	INVESTMENT
DISPLAY	73,250,066	201,783	0.28%	\$175,458.43
SEARCH	3,947	68	1.72%	\$209.03
SOCIAL	2,787,670	32,257	1.16%	\$16,999.93
GRAND TOTAL	76,041,683	234,108	0.31%	\$192,667.39

WA DSHS Parent 2017 Campaign Performance

Reporting Period: August 28 – September 29, 2017



DISPLAY PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

- The Display portion of the campaign served over 73 million impressions and returned 201,783 clicks for an overall CTR of 0.28%.
- On Google Display Network, best performing targeting was audience targeting with a CTR of 0.40% following by site targeting with a CTR of 0.37% with top sites including patch.com (1.02%) and webmd.com (0.85%).
 - Other top performing sites included The Weather Channel, CNN, and Fox News.
- On DoubleClick, audience targeting was also best performing with a CTR of 0.20%.
- The 300x250 and 320x50 sizes have been responsible for the majority of impressions and clicks and the 300x250 size delivering the highest CTR of 0.32%.
 - These sizes are most common on mobile devices which made up 85% of impressions served.
 - Top performing mobile apps included Word With Friends 2, theScore (Sports and Scores app), and Podcast Addict.
- In terms of Display creative, version B returned a slightly higher CTR than version A at 0.31% compared to 0.30%.
- Seattle Times takeovers returned over 2.5 million impressions and 9,750 clicks to the landing page for a high CTR of 0.38%.
 - Among the 300x600 sized creatives used for the takeovers, versions that included a numeric fact (82%, 85%) showed a higher engagement rate than creatives that did not include a numeric fact with CTRs of 0.13% compared to 0.11%.
- The first Seattle Times takeover scheduled for September 12 was paused due to emerging news about Mayor Ed Murray. An additional takeover on September 26 was secured at not additional cost due to the pause.

Optimizations

- Budget was shifted from DoubleClick to Google Display Network to take advantage of higher performance.
- Creative serving weight was adjusted so that better performing creative serves more often.

DISPLAY PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

SITE	IMPRESSIONS	CLICKS	CTR	INVESTMENT
SEATTLE TIMES HOMEPAGE	2,571,311	9,750	0.38%	\$38,000.00
DOUBLE CLICK BID MANAGER	24,024,455	38,111	0.16%	\$75,366.20
GOOGLE DISPLAY NETWORK	46,654,300	153,922	0.33%	\$62,092.23
TOTAL	73,250,066	201,783	0.28%	\$175,458.43

CREATIVE SIZE PERFORMANCE

SIZE	IMPRESSIONS	CLICKS	CTR
300x250	32,504,767	103,077	0.32%
300x600	2,378,817	7,316	0.31%
728x90	3,623,422	5,213	0.14%
300x50	574,603	458	0.08%
320x50	33,304,080	77,563	0.23%

DISPLAY CREATIVE VERSION PERFORMANCE

CREATIVE	IMPRESSIONS	CLICKS	CTR
VERSION A	18,496,331	56,365	0.30%
VERSION B	18,500,281	57,776	0.31%

DISPLAY CREATIVE



Ad A

Talk with your teen
about NOT drinking.
IT WORKS.

Learn More >>



Ad B

Talk with your teen
about NOT drinking.
IT WORKS.

Learn More >>



WA DSHS Parent 2017 Campaign Performance

Reporting Period: August 28 – September 29, 2017

SOCIAL PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

- Facebook served over 2.7 million impressions and 32,257 clicks to the landing page, resulting in a CTR of 1.16%, above Facebook benchmark of 0.75-1.00% CTR and a 5.4% increase from last reporting.
- The majority of impressions served to female parents (68%) but male users returned better performance with a higher average CTR (1.27% vs 1.11%) and a more efficient CPC (\$0.49 vs \$0.55).
- Ad 4 showed best performance, returned the highest CTR at 1.40% and the most efficient CPC at \$0.44.
- Facebooks ads also resulted in 278 post reactions, 27 post comments and 81 post shares.

OPTIMIZATIONS

- Ad 2 was paused due to high CPC to allow better performing creative versions to serve more often.

*Post reactions include the like, love, haha, wow, sad and angry icons

FACEBOOK DISPLAY PERFORMANCE

CREATIVE	IMPRESSIONS	CLICKS	CTR	CPC	INVESTMENT
AD 1	833,344	9,248	1.11%	\$0.52	\$4,807.94
AD 2	14,453	96	0.66%	\$1.35	\$129.48
AD 3	738,518	6,037	0.82%	\$0.76	\$4,584.14
Ad 4	1,201,355	16,876	1.40%	\$0.44	\$7,478.37
TOTAL	2,787,670	32,257	1.16%	\$0.53	\$16,999.93

FACEBOOK CREATIVE

 **Start Talking Now**
Sponsored ·  Like Page

Teens are less likely to drink when parents are involved in their lives.



It may not look like it,
but your teen is listening.

STARTTALKINGNOW.ORG [Learn More](#)

Ad 1

 **Start Talking Now**
Sponsored ·  Like Page

82% of WA teens whose families talk with them about not using alcohol don't drink.



It may not look like it,
but they care what you think.

STARTTALKINGNOW.ORG [Learn More](#)

Ad 2

 **Start Talking Now**
Sponsored ·  Like Page

85% of teens say their parents set clear rules on alcohol
Talk with them about not drinking



It may not look like it,
but they're paying attention.

STARTTALKINGNOW.ORG [Learn More](#)

Ad 3

 **Start Talking Now**
Sponsored ·  Like Page

Studies show WA teens are less likely to drink when adults talk to them
about alcohol use.



It may not look like it,
but they want your guidance.

STARTTALKINGNOW.ORG [Learn More](#)

Ad 4

WA DSHS Parent 2017 Campaign Performance

Reporting Period: August 28 – September 29, 2017



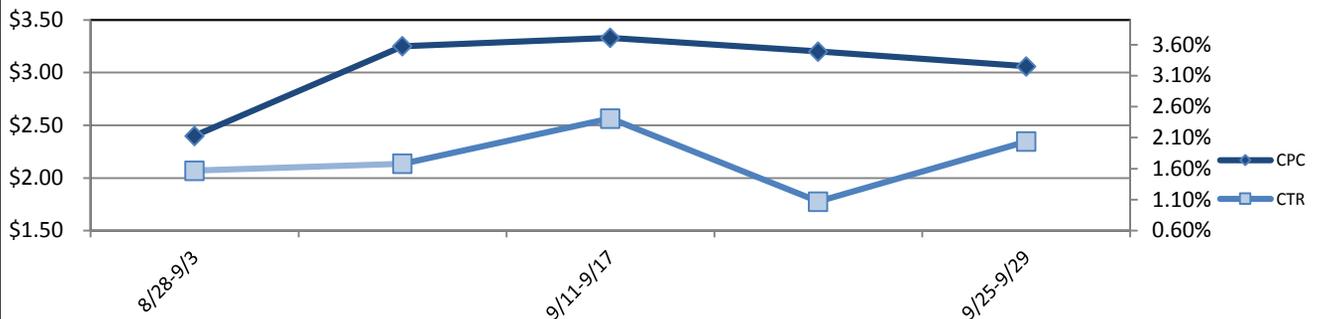
SEARCH ENGINE PERFORMANCE

SEARCH ENGINE	IMPRESSIONS	CLICKS	CTR	AVG. CPC	INVESTMENT
GOOGLE	3,348	55	1.64%	\$3.23	\$177.63
BING	599	13	2.17%	\$2.42	\$31.40
GRAND TOTAL	3,947	68	1.72%	\$3.07	\$209.03

Performance Summary

- Paid search drove 68 clicks to the landing page from 3,947 impressions, resulting in an overall click-through rate (CTR) of 1.72% and an average cost-per-click (CPC) of \$3.07.
- Consistent with past campaigns, Bing performed more efficiently than Google. However, low search volume on both search engines restricted the ability to optimize between engines.
- Across both search engines, the “Drunk Driving” ad group drove the most impressions and the most clicks on Google.
 - On Google, the keyword “drunk driving” generated more than a third of clicks and impressions (22 clicks and 1,404 impressions). However, avg. CPC was higher than campaign average (\$3.64), with competition being driven by “mucklestone.com” and “instantcheckmate.com,” who are also bidding on the term.
 - For the term “drunk driving,” ad copy that included “You have the greatest influence on your children’s decisions” showed better performance than “Learn about alcohol’s risks to teens and what you can do as a parent.”

PAID SEARCH WEEK TO WEEK PERFORMANCE



GOOGLE – TOP PERFORMING AD GROUPS

AD GROUP	IMPRESSIONS	CLICKS	CTR	AVG. CPC	INVESTMENT
Drunk Driving	1,467	22	1.50%	\$3.64	\$80.09
Underage Drinking	407	7	1.72%	\$2.72	\$19.05
Drinking Under	199	6	3.02%	\$3.36	\$20.15
While Driving	231	6	2.60%	\$2.84	\$17.07
Teen Talk	343	5	1.46%	\$2.32	\$11.61
Teenage Drinking	229	5	2.18%	\$2.85	\$14.23
Influence Driving	192	3	1.56%	\$3.86	\$11.57

WA DSHS Parent 2017 Campaign Performance

Reporting Period: August 28 – September 29, 2017



BING – TOP PERFORMING AD GROUPS					
AD GROUP	IMPRESSIONS	CLICKS	CTR	AVG. CPC	INVESTMENT
Teen Alcohol	12	3	25.00%	\$1.73	\$5.19
Drunk Driving	334	3	0.90%	\$3.35	\$10.05
Driving Consequences	4	2	50.00%	\$4.05	\$8.10
Teen Driving	4	2	50.00%	\$1.52	\$3.04
Underage Drinking	97	1	1.03%	\$0.62	\$0.62
While Driving	55	1	1.82%	\$3.73	\$3.73
Teen Talk	32	1	3.13%	\$0.67	\$0.67

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)
Gender	
Male	31
Female	23
Age	
18	14
19	20
20	20
Race / Ethnicity	
White	40
Asian	7
Black	4
Hispanic	2
Mixed Race	1
School Type	
4-Year College/ University	41
Community College	13
Class	
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
<i>Mean rating is based on 4-point scale where “1” means “strongly” and “4” means “strongly agree” message would discourage underage drinking.</i>					

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:

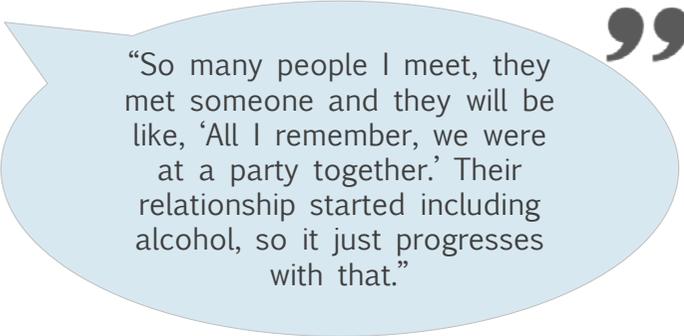
- The high number of calories in alcohol and the weight gain
- How alcoholism is not entirely an inherited disease and can happen to anyone

“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

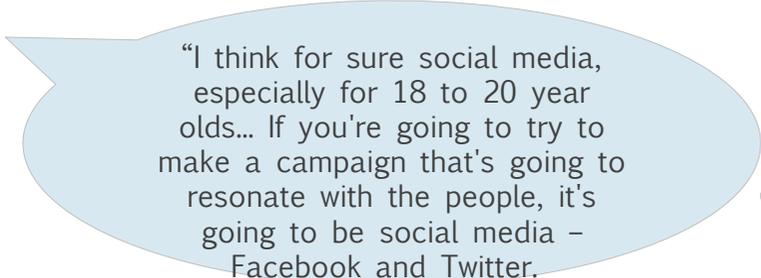
- Participants shared a variety of ways to share anti-drinking messages with them. These include:
 - Communication from their college/university.
 - Email
 - Texts
 - Social Media.
 - Potentially via Facebook and Twitter
 - Preferably through Instagram and Snapchat
 - Posters.
 - Orientation for college/university.
 - 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.”

”

Preventing Underage Drinking Among College Students

Environmental Scan

September 2017

APPENDIX E

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 drink¹
- + 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 SERVICES
 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

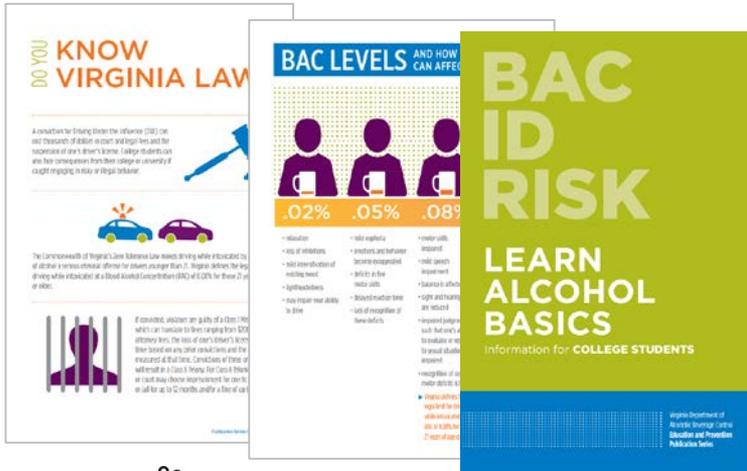
Creative Approach:

- + 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

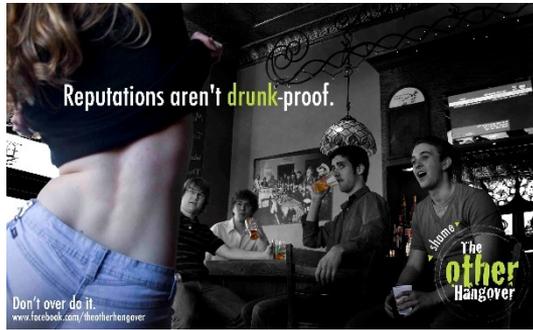
Creative Approach:

- + 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

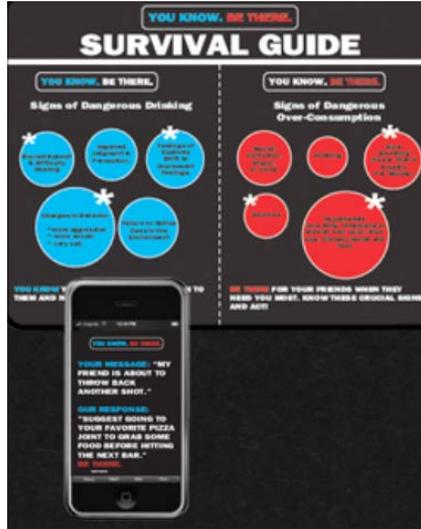
Creative Approach:

- + 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

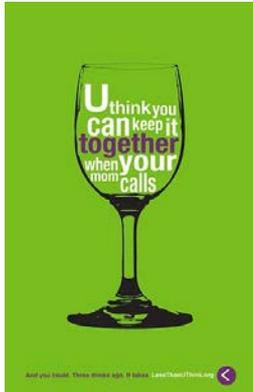
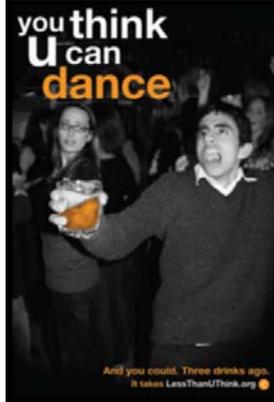
Creative Approach:

- + 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 its 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

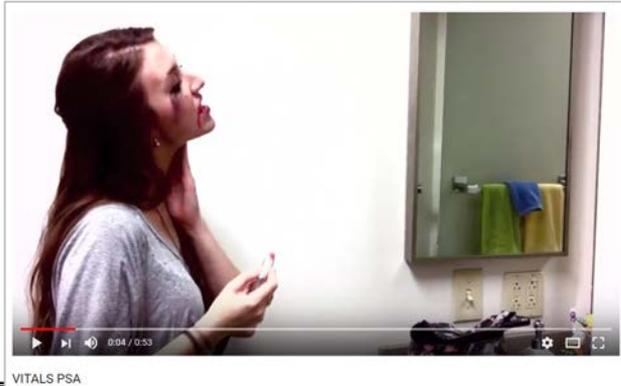
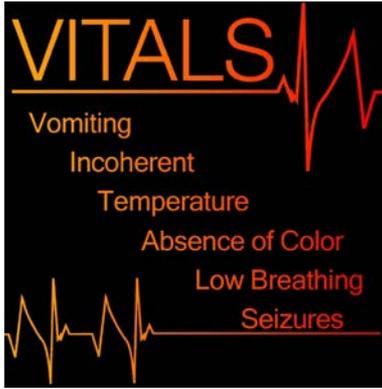
Creative Approach:

- + 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)



VITALS PSA
Department of Social
& Health Services
Transforming lives

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)

Find help: 877-846-7269

49%

of high school seniors in NY have consumed alcohol in the past 30 days – that's more than 100,000 seniors.

You can keep kids safe from alcohol and drugs. Learn how: www.Talk2Prevent.NY.gov

NEW YORK STATE Talk 2 Prevent

PARENTS, DID YOU KNOW?

Most kids who consume alcohol do so in their own home or in the home of a friend.

You can keep kids safe from alcohol and drugs. Learn how: www.Talk2Prevent.NY.gov

NEW YORK STATE Talk 2 Prevent

Talk to your kids about the consequences of alcohol and drug use.

The #1 reason kids Don't DRINK or use DRUGS...

Parents are the #1 Influence

NEW YORK STATE Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services

talk2prevent.ny.gov
Facebook.com/Talk-2-Prevent

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 1st 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

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

Reaching College Students

September 2017



Transforming lives

Considerations for Campaign Development and Implementation

Reaching College Students

Reaching College Students

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

Reaching College Students

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.

Reaching College Students

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).

Reaching College Students

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.

Reaching College Students

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.

Reaching College Students

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.