The Report on Social Norms

Feature Article: Is Your Campus Ready for a Social Norms Marketing Campaign?

> "The social norms approach is seen by many as a relatively straight-forward technique that requires modest resources, doesn't conflict with current strategies, and that staff can easily adapt to. … There are, however, a number of potential barriers to successful implementation of SNM campaigns that prevention specialists need to be aware of."

As evidence mounts for the effectiveness of social norms marketing (SNM) campaigns, many campuses are considering incorporating social norms into their overall strategy for change. The social norms approach is seen by many as a relatively straight-forward technique that requires modest resources, doesn't conflict with current strategies, and that staff can easily adapt to. Broadcasting norms that most college students are moderate drinkers who infrequently engage in activities that interfere with school success and correcting misperceptions should be simple.

There are, however, a number of potential barriers to successful implementation of SNM campaigns that prevention specialists need to be aware of. They fall into five categories.

1) **Stakeholder issues and campus climate.** Will faculty, administrators, and staff accept a campaign that is not fear based and that is directed at a shift in the community's perception toward alcohol use, rather than one directed only at the behavior of individuals with a problem?

2) **Creating support for social norms.** Can the sponsoring agency create a dialogue about the social norms around substance use that is credible to students?

3) **Policy concerns.** Do current consequence-based policies add to the misperception that most students are problem drinkers? Is the campus ready for policies that are guided by attitudinal norms and positive expectations?

4) **Data collection and analysis.** Will your school support a campus wide survey, opinion polls, and other data collection? Is

expertise available to assist with question development and data analysis so that the norms can be assessed?

5) **Fidelity to the approach -- tools available, staff training, etc.** Are staff adequately trained in the social norms approach and do they have the resources to develop appropriate materials, market test materials, identify appropriate placement and venues for placement, and do they have an adequate budget to conduct an ongoing campaign?

In order to identify potential barriers to success and also discover potential partners for collaboration we recommend that a thorough review of these areas be conducted prior to initiating a SNM campaign. The issues to be considered have been stated in the form of readiness questions and are followed by "rationales" for how each issue relates to SNM campaign implementation. These questions can help identify potential stumbling blocks and may help the practitioner discover potential resources and partnerships not yet considered.

SNM readiness questions are provided in each of the five areas below.

Stakeholder and Campus Climate Issues:

1) Have there been substance abuse related deaths or other tragedies within the last five years and if so, how has the campus community responded?

Rationale: There are three separate issues that should be considered here: 1) The campus and community may find a SNM campaign insensitive and threatening if an alcohol related death or negative experience has received public attention and been the rallying cry for campus action. 2) The way campus administrators, fac-

Recent Research

Preventing Alcohol-Related Problems at the University of Arizona's Homecoming: An Environmental Management Case Study. (2002). Koreen Johannessen, Peggy Glider, Carolyn Collins, Harry Hueston & William DeJong. *American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse,* 27(3):587-597. The University of Arizona's award-winning social norms marketing campaign was combined with a number of other environmental management strategies that successfully reduced high-risk drinking on campus. This article reports on policy initiatives to reduce drinking and drinking problems at the U of A's homecoming. It provides an excellent case study of how policy and implementation efforts can be used to change the culture of a high-visibility campus event that fosters misperceptions about drinking on campus.

Social Norms and the Expression and Suppression of Prejudice: The Struggle for Internalization. (2002). Christian S Crandall, Amy Eshleman & Laurie O'Brien. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,* 82(3):359-378. A series of social-psychological studies demonstrated that individuals express prejudice when they perceive social approval of that expression from peers. Thus, individuals who believe that others share their prejudices are more likely to express them, while individuals who believe that their prejudices are not shared do not express them. The studies did not assess the extent to which prejudicial attitudes are misperceived. However, the findings suggest that if prejudicial attitudes are misperceived, their correction would inhibit the expression of prejudice.

Evaluation of a Social Norms Marketing Campaign to Reduce High-Risk Drinking at the University of Mississippi. (2001). Laura Gomberg, Shari Kessel Schneider & William DeJong. *American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse,* 27(2):375-389. A social norms marketing campaign to change perceptions of peer drinking norms was pilot tested on nine campuses by the National Golden Key Honor Society during the 1995-1996 academic year. This article reports findings of the University of Mississippi campaign, in which exposure to the campaign was associated with more accurate perceptions of drinking norms among first year students. Although decreases in alcohol consumption were observed over the course of the school year in which the campaign took place, these changes could not be attributed to the marketing campaign.

The Social Norms Approach: Theory, Research and Annotated Bibliography. (2003). Alan D. Berkowitz. This review is posted on the Higher Education Center Social Norms Website: http://www.edc.org/hec/socialnorms/ and has been revised and updated annually since 2001. This third revision provides a comprehensive overview of research in support of social norms theory, discusses theoretical and implementation issues, reviews successful social norms inter-

Editor's notes

As we learn more from successful social norms interventions our knowledge of the conditions and challenges for success grows proportionately. I believe that there are four critical challenges to program success: readiness, believability, salience, and evaluation. This month's feature article by Koreen Johannessen and Kim Dude draws on their extensive experience directing social norms marketing (SNM) campaigns to explore the issue of "readiness" – i.e., when is a campus ready to implement a campaign? Attention to the components of readiness will ensure that a SNM campaign has a solid foundation. Believability refers to factors that undermine the audience's willingness to take the message seriously such as those previously explored in Working Paper #2. Salience asks the question: which norms are most relevant or "salient" to the group we are hoping to change? And evaluation refers to what changes we look at to decide if a campaign has been successful and what happens when we overlook them. In the coming year *The Report* will feature articles on these topics beginning here with the theme of readiness.

This issue also explores the use of interactive technology to present normative feedback and reports on another success from Montana's Social Norms Project—in this case, preventing smoking onset.

Please make an effort to look at *The Report on Social Norms'* new website: www.socialnormslink.com which contains information on *The Report* and a calendar of events on social norms. If you are presenting at a workshop or a conference we would be delighted to list your event in the calendar.

Best wishes,
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the Gathering Place

Editor's Note: "The Gathering Place" brings together news, announcements, and important developments in the field of social norms.

The Social Norms Approach to Preventing School and College Age Substance Abuse: A Handbook for Educators, Counselors and Clinicians, edited by H. Wesley Perkins and published by Jossey-Bass, is now available from: http://www.josseybass.com/cda/product/0,,078796459X|desc|2548,00.html

Montana Institute for Social Norms Practitioners. From June 19-21, 2003 the staff of Montana State University's "Most of Us" campaign will host an institute for social norms practitioners interested in technical assistance and training that is specific to their needs. Conference faculty will include Jeff Linkenbach and H. Wesley Perkins. For information go to www.mostofus.org, call Stacey Scott (406 994-7155) or e-mail mail@mostofus.org.

Revised DARE Program Includes a Social Norms Component. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has awarded the University of Akron's Institute for Health and Social Policy a 13.7 million dollar grant to improve and revise DARE, which is currently offered in 80% of school districts nationally. DARE has been criticized for lack of effectiveness. The new curriculum pairs teachers and police officers and includes more life-like situations, skills to confront peer pressure, and information on accurate norms. In a trial study of 15,500 seventh graders in six cities, participants were more likely to refuse drugs and had fewer misconceptions about how many of their peers use

drugs, compared to students in a control group. The new curriculum will be piloted in 80 high schools (and their feeder middle schools) to approximately 50,000 students. More information can be found at www.uakron.edu/chsp/dare.htm.

Social Norms Incorporated into Text Books. More and more textbooks in the social sciences, communication, and social marketing are including information and case examples of the social norms approach. A case in point is the textbook *Social Marketing: Improving the Quality of Life* by P Kotler, N Roberto and N Lee (Eds.), Sage Publications, 2002. It includes a brief description of the social norms approach (p. 173) and a much longer case study of the "Most of Us" campaign in Montana focusing on drinking and driving (p. 162-166). In this campaign youth who remembered a social norms message on impaired driving were less likely to drive while impaired (16%) as compared to those youth who could not remember seeing such a message (25%). For more information on this campaign go to www.mostofus.org and also see the related article on tobacco use on page 4 of this issue.

Peers Deliver Normative Feedback in Campus Norms Workshops and Activities. A new 3-year alcohol prevention project at Washington University in St. Louis is using peer educators to present three different programs with social norms components. In the first program peer educators conduct a 60-minute psycho-educational group consisting of alcohol information, campus drinking norms, and tips for moderate drinking. In the second program peer educators ask students to complete a drinking survey as they exit one of the dining halls and distribute prizes and a card with drinking facts and national data about college alcohol consumption. The third program uses the Check-up to Go (CHUG), a structured mechanism that provides personalized feedback to stu-

dents on their drinking, identifies specific risk factors, and compares their consumption to campus and national norms. In addition to receiving this personalized feedback in the mail, students will be phoned by a peer educator who will conduct a 5-10 minute follow-up session using strategies drawn from motivational interviewing and brief negotiation.

These three programs are being evaluated to determine the impact of peer-delivered norms interventions. The project is funded by The National Collegiate Athletic Association. For information contact Betsy Foy at Washington University, email: Betsy_Foy@aismail.wustl.edu

Social Norms Noted by American Sociological Association (ASA). A brief article in the professional monthly publication of the ASA, *Footnotes* (December 2002, Vol. 30#9) reviewed three approaches to curbing campus drinking, including the social norms approach, and discussed the controversy on the "binge drinking" term. Information is available at www.asanet.org/footnotes/fn7.html.

Participants in College Alcohol Survey Drink Moderately. The Social Norms Resource Center (www.social-norm.org/harvard/html) features an analysis of data from the College Alcohol Study showing that most student drink moderately, if at all. The four studies conducted by Henry Wechsler in 1993, 1997, 1999 and 2001 consistently reveal that approximately 60% of college students are moderate drinkers or abstainers and that serious consequences of alcohol consumption are uncommon. This is the same data set that Dr. Wechsler has used to sound alarm bells about the prevalence of "binge drinking" on college campuses. Dr. Wechsler's work was discussed and critiqued in a feature article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (Nov. 8, 2002).

"Most of Us Are Tobacco Free" Reduces Tobacco Use

During the 2000-2001 school year the Montana Social Norms Project conducted an 8-month long "Most of Us Are Tobacco Free" social norms marketing campaign targeting youth between the ages of 12 and 17 years in seven western Montana counties. Post-test data revealed that only 10% of teens in the campaign area reported first time cigarette use as compared to 17% of teens in a control sample from the 49 other counties in the state. This represents a 41% difference in the proportion of teens who reported that they initiated smoking in the intervention counties as compared to those in the rest of the state. Funding for this project was provided by The U.S. Centers for Disease Control, Montana Master Tobacco Settlement Fund and the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services.

Pre-test data were gathered in a phone survey conducted prior to the implementation of the social norms campaign in September 2000. Households were randomly selected and initial screening calls were made to parents to obtain permission for the teenagers to have the privacy to participate in the interview. A total of 409 pre-test interviews were conducted in the counties targeted for intervention and 419 were conducted in the rest of the counties in the state that served as the control.

Initial baseline data revealed no significant differences between the intervention (n = 409) and the control (n = 419) samples for gender, age, racial composition, or the percentage of respondents who had tried smoking. Also, baseline data in the intervention and control counties showed no significant difference in perceived norms for tobacco use, with large percentages of the respondents in both the groups erroneously thinking that the majority of their peers were using tobacco.

The primary normative message of the campaign was "MOST of Us (70%) are Tobacco Free." Normative messages were delivered in the seven intervention counties via television (six 30 second ads on both cable and broadcast stations aired during three eight-week media flights) and radio (six 30 second ads aired during three eight-week media flights). In addition, print and promotional items were distributed to schools and theater slides, billboards, local newspaper ads, and other strategies were employed to deliver the campaign's normative message. One of the important factors that contributed to the selection of the intervention counties was the fact that they were located in an isolated media market. Therefore, the campaign's normative messages could be targeted to the teens residing in these counties but not to the teens in the rest of the state.

At the conclusion of the social norms campaign in May 2001, post-test interviews were conducted (in July 2001) with 641 of the original 848 teens. A comparative analysis of post-test interviews included these findings: 1) significantly more teenagers spontaneously recalled exposure to television, radio, and newspaper tobacco prevention messages during the past 30 days in the intervention counties than did in the control counties; 2) when told that the ad stated "Most of Us (70%) of Montana Teens are Tobacco Free," significantly more teenagers in the intervention counties recalled a campaign advertisement than did so in the control counties (this applied to all types of media: television, radio, newspaper, billboard, posters, and Frisbees), and; 3) baseline data showed no statistically significant difference in the perceived 30-day tobacco use norms of the teens in the intervention and control counties, while post-test analysis showed that the percentage of respondents who misperceived the norm was significantly less in the intervention than in the control counties.

Data on smoking initiation among respondents in the intervention and control counties between 2000 and 2001 show a marked and statistically significant difference. In the intervention counties, only 10% of the adolescents who had never used tobacco previously tried smoking during the year. This contrasts with 17% of the adolescents in the control counties who initiated smoking during the year.

This 7-percentage point difference represents a 41% difference in the proportion of teens who initiated smoking in the campaign area as compared to the rest of the state. This finding was also associated with decreases in misperceptions of smokers among youth in the intervention group.

For a detailed report on this project, consult: "Most of Us Are Tobacco Free: An Eight-Month Social Norms Campaign Reducing Youth Initiation of Smoking in Montana" by Jeff Linkenbach and H. Wesley Perkins in: *The Social Norms Approach to Preventing School and College Age Substance Abuse,* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass (2003.) For more information, contact Jeff Linkenbach, EdD at (406) 994-7873 or jwl@montana.edu, or H. Wesley Perkins, PhD at Perkins@hws.edu

The Report on Social Norms is pleased to announce:

www.socialnormslink.com
— a new website featuring information about *The Report on Social Norms*, links to other important websites, and on-line ordering. In addition, a calendar of social norms events and conferences will provide an up-to-date listing of activities on social norms.

from *the* field

Using Interactive Technology to Provide Normative Feedback

Editors Note: Each newsletter of The Report on Social Norms *will feature model programs or interventions that have been successfully implemented in a community setting.*

Providing normative feedback is the critical ingredient of the social norms approach. The Alcohol and Drug Education Programs at Texas A&M University has successfully implemented an interactive technology system as a means of providing norms information in educational programs. Meeting Net software afforded this opportunity using wireless keypads combined with an immediate feedback response system.

Option Technologies Interactive LLC provided the software for testing and demonstration purposes. During a period of two weeks staff members tested and demonstrated the software to more than 250 students. The feedback was very positive and students enthusiastically supported the incorporation of this technology into programming efforts. As a result, funds were raised to purchase a starter kit for approximately $5,000.

The wireless keypad system has been incorporated into educational programs for incoming students as well as for peer counselors. In order to challenge stereotypes that all students drink to excess, a PowerPoint presentation titled "Fish Facts" was integrated with Meeting Net software (new Texas A&M students are referred to as "fish").

Fish Facts was presented to over 80 percent of the incoming freshmen class of 2002 totaling 5,440 students at a series of supplemental orientation summer events known as "Fish Camp." Individual sessions had approximately 350 freshmen at a time. Questions were asked about personal perceptions as well as personal behavior. Answers were anonymous as the keypads were distributed randomly. Audience answers to questions were compared with those from a representative sample of freshmen Texas A&M students. The data collected from audiences matched the survey data with an error of plus or minus three percent. For example, students were asked "How often do you choose to drink?" and 23.9% of the first Fish Camp audience reported that they never drink which parallels the Core Survey data reporting that 22.3% of A&M freshmen never drink. The close comparison continued through questions focused on perceptions as well as behaviors. Students were able to witness the disparity between perception and behavior, challenging assumptions that all students drink or use drugs.

Students responded positively to the presentation on program evaluations, indicating that their favorite part of the program was learning alcohol and drug statistics. Thus students were able to benefit from social norms education in an interactive manner that may increase the information retained through this positive experience.

As a result of the success of Fish Facts and the positive response to Meeting Net, all educational presentations have been adapted to utilize the software and keypad system for student groups ranging from 10 to 150. Meeting Net use facilitates discussion at educational presentations as students immediately respond with disbelief or comments as the audience answers parallel the survey data. Students begin to internalize the normalcy of their behavior (or lack thereof) and learn about the campus community in its entirety. Student comments from evaluations include "leaves a big impression and makes statistics more realistic" as well as "the interaction makes it seem more real." Prior to incorporation of Meeting Net software, students commonly challenged the validity of the Core Survey data with cynicism and doubt. Meeting Net has allowed students to express their opinions and behaviors about campus Core Survey data and thus reduce skepticism.

An additional benefit of the Meeting Net software is the ability to adapt each presentation to the needs of the target audience. Groups that have benefited from Meeting Net presentations include: fraternities and sororities, orientation leaders, supplemental orientation camps for first year and transfer students, residence advisors, residence hall students, peer educators, off campus students, and a variety of student organizations.

By allowing students to answer questions interactively with immediate feedback, Meeting Net increases the level of interaction and facilitates conversation, two important components of a successful program.

In summary, interactive technology offers social norms educators an innovative and exciting means of providing normative feedback to students.

For more information regarding Meeting Net and Option Technologies Interactive LLC contact Jason Adcock at 888 684-6389, ext 3014.

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ulty, public affairs and student affairs professionals respond to a tragedy can send a message about student norms. Sometimes administrators are counseled to handle off-campus alcohol related crashes and overdoses as if they had little to do with campus life. When students see those in authority avoiding public comment about alcohol related injury it appears that student tragedies are acceptable and the norm. 3) Sometimes student groups are moved to stage a fear-based campaign or organize anti-alcohol activities to try and prevent another tragedy and to honor the memory of a lost friend. These activities may also work against a SNM campaign.

2) Have senior administrators and other key stakeholders been prepared for a SNM campaign? If not, how will you inform them and win their confidence?

   Rationale: Social norms is not an intuitive strategy. Most key stakeholders, including faculty, senior administrators, and student affairs colleagues, are more familiar with fear-based strategies that direct students to self-assess the dangers of drinking and other drug use as a deterrent. A social norms approach may seem irresponsible if they do not understand the rationale and are not aware of successful programs and outcomes at other schools. Faculty in particular will want to see the empirical evidence that social norms has been effective on other campuses and that alcohol related misperceptions are the norm for their students.

Support for Social Norms:

1) What campus offices are likely to be supportive of the project?

   Rationale: Can you identify administrators, faculty or other colleagues on campus who share a concern for this issue? For example, will residence hall or Greek life staff benefit if you are successful? Do others have overlapping substance abuse prevention goals? Do others have financial and staff resources to put toward the project?

2) Can you identify colleagues on campus or members of the surrounding community who might want to collaborate?

   Rationale: Are faculty interested in research collaboration? Does the President see the value to the campus in investing in a successful substance abuse prevention campaign? Are there other members of the community who would benefit; for example, police, or neighbors? You may be able to organize those with a common concern into a campus or campus/community task force and increase key stakeholder buy-in for the project. If you already have a campus/community task force in place, you will want them to understand the approach in order to win their support. Members of the community are less likely to use local ordinances and state laws to the fullest if they believe problem drinking is the norm – they may not hold individuals, tavern owners or promoters accountable if they believe heavy drinking is pervasive and a "collegiate rite of passage."

Data Collection and Analysis:

1) Do you have expertise on your staff for data analysis or will you be hiring this service outside of your department? Will you be partnering with faculty for this program component?

   Rationale: A SNM campaign should feed back to students accurate campus-specific data on the healthy norms for alcohol related behaviors and attitudes. Data gathering, data analysis, and data interpretation are a key component in the credibility of a SNM campaign. Your campaign will need to have access to someone who understands data and reliability issues in order to adequately address student skepticism and questions.

2) What data gathering mechanisms are available to you on campus?

Will you be gathering your own data and choosing or developing your own survey to determine the norms?

   Rationale: The Core Campus Survey of Alcohol and Other Drug Norms (college alcohol and other drug use, perceptions, and attitudes), the National Health Assessment (college alcohol and other drug use, perceptions, protective behaviors, and general health and wellness), and the Core Alcohol and Other Drug Survey (college alcohol and other drug use), provide information about student alcohol and drug use but you may want to add supplemental questions to these standardized instruments. You may also want to identify other campus sources for gathering information, including data about student values and student life. You may also have particular research questions to address and if so, may need to design your own instrument. Survey development is a fairly lengthy and intensive process and should be done by someone with a strong background in this area.

Policy Concerns:

1) What alcohol and other drug policies are in place on your campus and how are students made aware of these policies? Are there different rules for different groups?

   Rationale: Are policies in sync with the norms? Do policies imply that students are heavy drinkers and drug users and that unruly behavior, academic failure and missed classes related to alcohol use are expected and will be accommodated? Sometimes policies (or more often the way policies are communicated to students) are implemented with ultimatums and threats, sending a message to the campus that there is a bigger problem with substance abuse than is accurate. Sometimes policies are visibly ignored, sending students the message that minor infractions and even the most outlandish behavior of some individuals

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should be tolerated because it is a "rite of passage." Are policies in effect that discourage assignment deadlines and test taking on Thursdays, Fridays and Mondays? Do faculty falsely anticipate that most students will be too hung over to take the test or may need to reschedule an assignment due date because of their alcohol use?

2) Do resident assistants and campus police consistently enforce alcohol and other drug policy and laws?

Rationale: When those who are supposed to enforce the rules look the other way or selectively enforce policies and the law, the message to students is "our school is not serious about alcohol policies. Everyone is drinking or using drugs."

3) Have there been well publicized "crack down measures" by campus administrators?

Rationale: A SNM campaign may feel less credible to students if administrators treat the entire student body as if they are potential abusers. Students who drink are in the majority and most are responsible drinkers and citizens. A majority of students recognize the need for rules and respect them if rules are consistently applied.

4) Do you have celebration events on or related to campus that involve heavy and high-risk drinking?

Rationale: Celebration events are often among the most visible on campus and in the community. Policies and practices governing celebration events that allow the use of alcohol, for example Homecoming or Fraternity Bid Night, should be updated so that messages about the moderate use of the majority are not compromised by media images of rowdy drunken students at a celebration event. Changes to policy – shortening drinking time, requiring a bartender, mandatory police attendance at all parties serving alcohol, for example – can impact alcohol availability, alcohol promotion and service and can avoid media images encouraging the misperception that most students are high-risk drinkers.

5) Is alcohol sold in the athletic stadium? Is alcohol central to tailgating at football games or other sports events? Is alcohol in the stadium or associated with tailgating a problem for police and school authorities?

Rationale: Students recognize the hypocrisy of campus rules when rules related to alcohol use are different for them than for patrons at sporting events. The message to students is that both college officials and members of the community expect a free flow of alcohol at sports events and that heavy drinking is traditional on the college campus.

Fidelity to the Approach:

1) What are the significant demographics of your school? For example; how many students are enrolled; how many are in residence; how many commute; what percentage of students are members of social fraternities or sororities; how many participate in intercollegiate athletics or club sports; how many are undergraduates; how many are underage?

Rationale: Some student groups are at higher risk for substance abuse than others. You may want to target certain subpopulations. You will need to decide who your target group is and how they are most likely to be exposed to your message.

2) Who will staff the project and are they trained in a social norms approach? Are they new or existing staff? Do you have enough staff to successfully conduct a SNM campaign? Will you be adding to existing staff duties or changing their duties? How will staff be likely to respond to such a change?

Rationale: 1) Fidelity to the approach is key to a successful outcome. Staff should be familiar with social norms theory and practice literature and will require training. Few substance abuse/student affairs professionals have experience in social marketing techniques and strategies. 2) Bringing on new staff for a new project can have benefits – new energy, skills, enthusiasm – and drawbacks – resources may need to be redirected, new team members need to have time to get to know one another to successfully work together. 3) Staff theoretical models of prevention and styles can clash and should be addressed. 4) It is not possible for one person alone to conduct a SNM campaign, nor is it possible for the substance abuse counselor to also implement a SNM campaign alone. 5) Some activities may need to be discontinued in order to add a SNM campaign.

3) What on-campus or off-campus organizations will sponsor the project? Who will be advertised as the sponsoring organization for the media campaign? How will you choose this organization?

Rationale: The perceived motivation of the sponsoring agency/department can have a critical influence on the believability of the norms information you are broadcasting. It varies from campus to campus which office or organization has the most credibility for health messages. It may be Student Health or your campus AOD office or a student substance abuse advocacy group, for example. You will have to determine which sponsors will be perceived as the most credible to students. Students can provide this information for you during your data-gathering phase of activity.

4) Where do students regularly get health information and information about campus life? How will you expose them to the norms information? What kind of activities can serve as reinforcers of the norm?

Rationale: To successfully implement a SNM campaign you will have to

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determine the best and most regular ways for your audience to access norms information. For some schools the most efficient venue may be the campus newspaper, for others advertisements in the campus bus and for still others posters or newsletters or direct mail materials. You will need to determine where and how often students get information and which sources are found to be most credible. You will also want to consider ways in which you can reinforce the message. At some schools students are trained to approach fellow students with a small reward for a correct response to pop questions about the messages featured in the media campaign. Faculty, coaches, advisors and orientation leaders are often enlisted to reinforce the norms through classroom discussion, assignments, lectures, tours and other interactions.

5) Do students have access to campus computer labs and other public access networks? Are computers networked? Do you have the capacity to conduct an online survey?

Rationale: Data collection and social norms feedback may be conducted via campus computer networks if students have access and if students utilize these networks. On many large campuses computer networks are decentralized and permission to use these networks is not easily granted. On smaller campuses network access may be more readily obtained and utilization more comprehensive.

6) Are you prepared to respond to student and key stakeholder skepticism?

Rationale: Social norms information is never immediately accepted as accurate. You will want to have a plan for how, when and through what medium you will respond if your credibility is questioned. You will want to anticipate this common occurrence (especially during the first year of a SNM campaign) and develop relationships with student editors, local press, and your own public relations office so that you can respond quickly if your data and your approach are called into question.

In summary, we recommend that campus, community and staff readiness be assessed before adopting a SNM campaign, especially because the social norms approach is so visible. The success of a SNM campaign is contingent on several key factors that can be anticipated and planned for. It will be enhanced by: the accuracy and ability to interpret positive norms data; the ability to deliver messages to students that are credible; the ability to provide an adequate exposure to norms information over time; the impact of campus climate, policy issues and timing of the campaign; the support of key stakeholders and colleagues in providing the capacity for a campaign to reach its audience, and the integrity of staff to deliver a campaign that is professional, sensitive and demonstrates fidelity to the approach.

Much has been learned about the characteristics and components of a successful social norms intervention. We hope that this article will help you assess your campus or community's readiness for a SNM campaign so that your efforts can be built on a strong foundation.

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Recent Research

ventions at all three levels of prevention, and makes recommendations for development of the field. Included is a greatly expanded annotated bibliography of important publications and articles on the social norms approach.