

# SOCIAL NORMS MESSAGE CREATION GUIDE



## USE SOCIAL NORMS

Your social norms message should include a descriptive or injunctive norm message.

- **Descriptive Norms:** The behaviors engaged in by a majority of members of an identified group or population.
- **Injunctive Norms:** The beliefs held by a majority of members of an identified group or population.



## USE A MAJORITY MESSAGE

All social norms messages should include a majority norm, meaning greater than 50%.

- **NOT Social Norms:** “30% of X University students approve of drinking to the point of passing out”
- **Social Norms:** “70% of X University students disapprove of drinking to the point of passing out”



## MAKE THE SOCIAL NORMS MESSAGE PROMINENT AND FOCAL

It is easy to get so caught up in creating flashy and attractive designs, that you forget that the whole purpose is to get your social norms message out to your target audience. While you certainly want to catch the attention of your audience using visual features, you want these features to supplement your social norms message rather than the other way around.



## MAKE THE MESSAGE CLEAN AND SIMPLE

If your audience has to work hard to understand the main point of your message whether it's because of the verbiage of the statement, or conflicting design aspects, the message may not be received the way you want it to. Keeping your message clean and simple helps to avoid these problems.



## CITE A CREDIBLE SOURCE

Using a credible source can make or break whether your target audience is accepting of your social norms message. You need to ensure that your source is relevant to the information you're including in your message and used proper research protocol. Additionally, you need to know how to cite your source correctly within your campaign materials.



## USE UCELEBRATE DATA CORRECTLY

Ensuring you're using your data correctly is a key step to producing the results you'd like to see, and being able to evaluate your campaign properly later. In order to properly use survey data to produce a social norms message, you should follow the exact verbiage included in the survey you pulled the data from. Additionally, your message should use *whole numbers*. For example:

- **DO Use:**
  - "80%" or "8/10"
- **Avoid Using:**
  - "79.7%" → You'd want to round this number to "80%"



## AVOID USING PRESCRIPTIVE MESSAGES

It's important that when designing your campaign, you avoid telling people what to do. Using phrases such as "do" and "do not" undermine the power of a social norms message.



## AVOID INCLUDING MULTIPLE MESSAGES

Have you included more than one social norms data point? Displaying a graphic that includes several social norms messages/data points can weaken its effectiveness and make the evaluation of that message in the UCelebrate survey more difficult. Additionally, if your messages are rotated frequently, this could hurt the effectiveness and recall of the message in the long run. For the best results, you should stick to a single social norms message per design.



## ELIMINATE COMPETING INFORMATION

Social norms messaging should be cohesive and synergistic. Always pair a social norms message with related and appropriate information on posters/graphics. For example, if the social norms message talks about students drinking 0-3 drinks but is coupled with information on medical amnesty, it may undermine the social norms message.