



National Social Norms Center
at MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

U Celebrate and the Social Norms Approach

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Outline

- The Social Norms Approach
- A-B and NSNC/I History
- Goals
- Progress
- Tools provided
- Future directions

nsnc

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The Social Norms Approach

Health Communication Campaigns from a Social Norms Approach (SNA)

Determine that there is a problem

To harness the power of the social norms approach:

- Do formative research and assess whether misperception of norms is at play
- Create and put campaign in field
- Do ongoing assessment
- Feed back results into modified campaign in a cyclical manner

SOCIAL NORMS APPROACH (SNA) THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Social Norms

A social standard which acts as a guide to behaviors in a social groups

Why People Follow Social Norms?

- When they want to be socially accepted
- When they need a guide for their behaviors

Social norms are not explicitly stated

- Possible to misinterpret



The Social Norms Approach

- People often have distorted perceptions of true norms for behaviors.
- People try to live up to norms that they perceive as operative in their reference groups.
- Students who perceive alcohol consumption to be higher than it actually is... should consume less alcohol when this misperception is corrected via campaign messages.

The Social Norms Approach . . . looks to Correct Misperceptions of those Norms

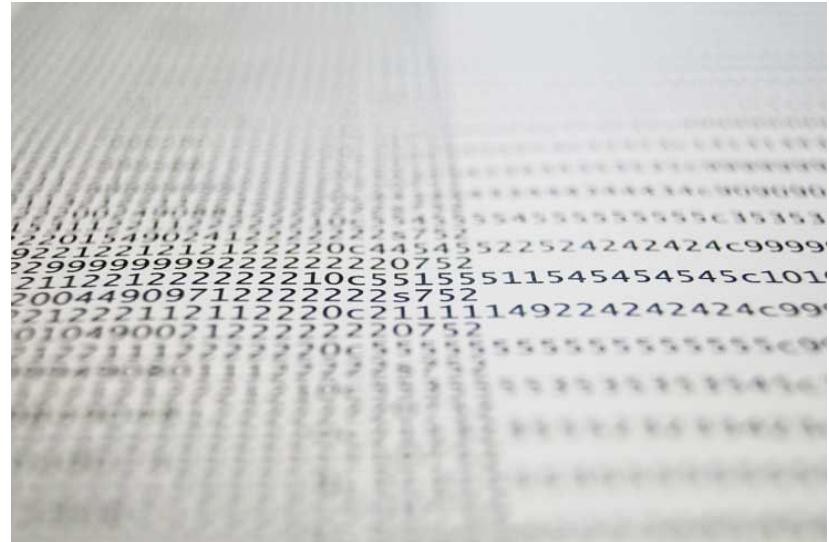
- Descriptive Norms: What most people actually do – Berkowitz, 2004
- Perceived Descriptive Norms: Individuals' beliefs about how widespread a particular behavior is among their referent others – Rimal & Real, 2003
- Injunctive Norms: What most people believe is acceptable, appropriate, right, desirable, approved, etc.
- Perceived Injunctive Norms: Individuals' beliefs about how widespread a particular behavior is considered acceptable, appropriate, right, desirable, approved, etc.

The Social Norms Approach . . . looks to Correct Misperceptions of those Norms

- People often have distorted perceptions of true norms for behaviors and attitudes.
- People try to live up to norms that they perceive as operative in their reference groups.
- The Social Norms Approach tries to improve health/outcomes by correcting over-estimates of the prevalence of unhealthy behaviors or approval of unhealthy behaviors
- Therefore, Students who perceive alcohol consumption to be higher than it actually is... should consume less alcohol when this misperception is corrected via campaign messages.

The Social Norms Approach is Data Dependent

- Data needed regarding perceived prevalence of behaviors and attitudes
- Data needed regarding ACTUAL prevalence of behaviors and attitudes
- Data needed to determine if attitudes and behaviors change so messages can be updated
- Data needed to determine if messages are reaching target audience, are believable, at sufficient dosage



Perkins' 2003 Social Norms Model

