

A Guide to Implementing a Social Norms Media Campaign for Substance Use Prevention in Secondary Schools



ADAPT

A Division for Advancing
Prevention & Treatment

CULTIVATING PREVENTION

About

The purpose of this guide is to support schools and community partners in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of a social norms media campaign (SNMC) in middle, junior, and high school settings.

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Introduction

The social norms media campaign is an evidence-based communications intervention for substance use prevention. The resource, **A Guide to Implementing a Social Norms Media Campaign for Substance Use Prevention in Secondary Schools**, will support schools and community partners in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of a social norms media campaign (SNMC) in middle, junior, and high school settings. Inspired by the many requests for training and consultation received by the authors on this topic, this guide offers detailed information on how to develop and apply a SNMC as a substance use prevention intervention. This guide will walk you through the careful planning, application, and evaluation of a SNMC that adheres to the core components of this intervention. This resource will be valuable to educators, school administrators, community coalitions, and other prevention professionals who are considering, or are ready to implement, a SNMC in a school setting.

Section Descriptions

This guide is organized into 6 sections. [Section 1: The Social Norms Approach](#) provides theoretical and descriptive background information on the social norms approach (from which the SNMC derives), defines key terms, describes the core components of a SNMC, and provides an overview of the evidence of effectiveness of this approach in preventing substance use. This section also describes how a SNMC fits into a comprehensive school-based prevention system.

[Section 2: Planning for a Social Norms Media Campaign in School Settings](#) covers all considerations to support planning for an effective SNMC. Planning steps include setting goals and objectives; defining the roles and responsibilities of collaborators, the Implementation Team, and school personnel; cost considerations; and guidance on planning all key activities relevant to this intervention. Key activities include the school assessment, media development and dissemination, and monitoring and evaluation. A sample work plan and timeline for an academic-year implementation is provided including templates and samples that may be modified for your use. Taking the time to plan for as many aspects of the campaign as possible will help with setting expectations for everyone involved, understanding the time and resource demands for your team and partners, and ensuring the resources and support needed to successfully implement the campaign are obtained.

[Section 3: Implementing a Social Norms Media Campaign](#) provides considerations to support the implementation of a SNMC. This includes guidance on tracking how well the program is or isn't working, tracking and responding to the feasibility, usability, and acceptability of the campaign within your school and community, and monitoring for the purposes of process evaluation. This section also shares solutions to common challenges to help circumvent challenges during implementation.

[Section 4: Conducting an Outcome Evaluation](#) covers the essentials of evaluating the impact of a SNMC. Multiple considerations are reviewed, including what to measure to demonstrate impact, how to frame your findings based on factors such as how well the program was implemented, and the essentials to include when generating a report of findings for collaborators.

[Section 5: Frequently Asked Questions](#) shares answers to frequently asked questions.

Lastly, [Section 6: Appendices](#) includes a review of the literature on the effectiveness of the social norms approach for substance use prevention, case studies, a table of definitions, and a multitude of resources and templates including a social norms survey template, staff training resources, sample media, and questions to elicit student feedback on media and the campaign.

How to Use this Guide

The [Table of Contents of this digital guide](#) is hyperlinked and allows you to jump to the sections you are most interested in learning about. If you are new to social norms, you may want to start with [Section 1: The Social Norms Approach](#) to learn more about the theoretical background of this approach and how it has been used for substance use prevention. If you are already familiar with the social norms approach and have an idea for a population and project, you may want to jump to [Section 2: Planning for a Social Norms Media Campaign in School Settings](#) for a detailed list of considerations to support the planning process. However you plan to use this guide, keep in mind that your implementation will be most successful if it adheres to the essential components of the intervention. To support you in this, the guide draws attention to these essential ingredients throughout the document. Schools may choose to add or enhance their SNMC in different ways and examples of these enhancements are also shared. Lastly, the end of each section includes a summary of the key messages within that section. This allows for quick access to the essential points and takeaways of the section.

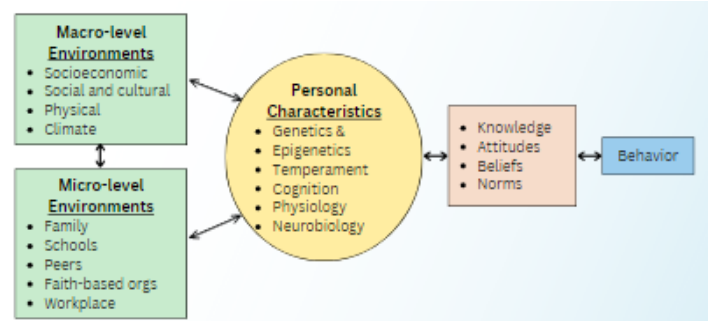
As you embark upon learning more about, planning for, implementing, and evaluating a SNMC, know you have access to the guide developers for additional information or technical assistance. We can be accessed via email at adapt@wb.hidta.org.



The Social Norms Approach

Understanding Social Norms

Human behavior is influenced by many different individual, family, peer, school, and neighborhood factors that start during the prenatal period and continue throughout life.¹ According to the socioecological model, as shown in the figure below, an individual's behaviors are shaped by the interaction of their personal characteristics and a wide range of social and environmental influences. As people are naturally social and group-oriented, we are heavily influenced by social norms, the common standards of behavior within our social group.



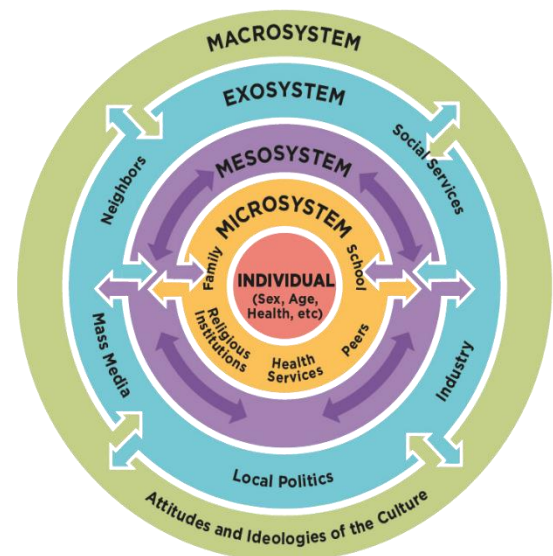
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The role of **social norms** must be considered at two levels when looking at environmental and personal influences. There are **actual norms**—beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that are typically considered acceptable and most frequently exhibited in the behavior within a social group. In other words, actual norms represent what most people within a group actually think or do. Common actual norms in the United States include showing up to work on time, listening when a teacher is speaking, shaking hands when greeting someone, and using phrases such as 'please' and 'thank you'.

Then there are **perceived norms**—perceptions about what most people in a common group do and support. It is the perception of the norm that influences personal beliefs and actions.⁴ Perceived norms are one of the strongest predictors of personal behavior.⁵ However, if a perceived norm is not accurate, it's referred to as a misperceived norm.

Misperceived norms are incorrectly held beliefs about the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of others (i.e., a gap between actual and perceived norms). Typically, misperceptions overestimate the prevalence of risky or problematic attitudes and behaviors and underestimate the prevalence of preventive or protective attitudes and behaviors among peers.⁶⁻⁷ In other words, people tend to believe that risky behaviors are more prevalent than they actually are. This often leads individuals to engage in behaviors they do not approve of as they try to adapt to the perceived (not the actual) norm.⁸⁻⁹

OR



Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of development. Adapted from Bronfenbrenner (1979)³

Social norms can further be categorized into two types of norms depending on whether the norm is a behavior or an attitude. **Descriptive norms** are behavioral (what people do) whereas **injunctive norms** are attitudinal (what people believe someone should or should not do). Descriptive and injunctive norms work together to influence behavior.¹⁰ Lastly, when most people within a given group believe (attitude/injunctive) and do (behavior/descriptive) things that are healthy, positive, or protective, these are described as **protective norms**.¹¹

The norm categories defined here will be used throughout the guide so it may be helpful to mark this page to serve as a reference.

Social Norms Applied to Youth Substance Use Prevention

The vast majority, and a growing percentage, of American youth are **choosing not to use any substances**, especially illicit drugs.¹²⁻¹³ Yet both youth and adults overwhelmingly overestimate the number of 11-18-year-olds who use substances (especially alcohol, nicotine, and marijuana). People tend to believe that substance use and tolerance of substance use are more common than they actually are (e.g., “everyone drinks”, “most parents let their kids drink”, “most peers pressure their friends to use substances”).^{5,14-15} In reality, the most common attitudes and behaviors among youth (and their parents) are typically positive, healthy, and protective.

Thus, perceived norms (i.e., what individuals think their peers and peer’s families do and believe) often do not align with actual peer and parental norms (i.e., what most peers and their parents actually think and do).¹⁶⁻¹⁷ These misperceptions influence how people behave. When people think substance use is the norm, they are more likely to make choices that align with that misperception (i.e., initiation of use, increased use, acceptance, or promotion of use).¹⁷⁻¹⁸ This misalignment between perceptions and reality also makes individuals more likely to hide or diminish their own healthy and protective choices, attitudes, and behaviors, which then become invisible to others. Misperceptions may also make people less likely to speak up when they see others engaging in or tolerating substance use or when they witness a dangerous situation. These misperceptions create a harmful cycle where healthy and protective behaviors are underestimated and made less visible while unhealthy behaviors are over-estimated and made more visible, ultimately leading to more unhealthy behavior.

The presence of misperceived norms and their influence on substance use behavior has been shown across the nation, age levels, and subpopulations of youth.^{16,19} The social norms approach applied to substance use prevention evolved out of this research.

The Social Norms Approach for Substance Use Prevention

The social norms approach aims to increase positive attitudes and behaviors by correcting the 1) overestimation of negative attitudes and behaviors and 2) the under-estimation of positive attitudes and behaviors. Correcting misperceptions occurs by identifying the positive behavioral and attitudinal norms of a group and effectively communicating these norms to that group through social norms marketing or other social norms methods.¹⁹ Research has shown that as misperceptions are corrected, behavior change follows. When youth are exposed to messages that highlight the positive, true norms that most youth make healthy choices and engage in prosocial activities, they are more likely to take part in those positive behaviors.^{8,20-21}

Thus, one short-term outcome we look for when implementing the social norms approach is a correction of misperceptions related to substance use. When social norms marketing is done well, we can expect this misperception correction to be followed by substance use behavior change.

The social norms approach is also commonly referred to as a “social norms intervention”, “norms change”, or “perceived norms correction” strategy. Throughout this guide, we will refer to this strategy simply as the “social norms approach.” The social norms approach (SNA) can be tailored to different audiences and delivered at each of the levels of the social ecology (individual, group, community). Addressing misperceptions at each of these levels fits well within the socioecological framework and these interventions can be done separately or together.

Individual norms correction or personalized normative feedback refers to giving feedback to an individual after they have completed a survey or screening tool about their own substance use behavior and attitudes and their perceptions of the use and attitudes of others. The purpose of the feedback is to point out the discrepancy between what the individual thinks others do and what others actually do and asks them to consider how this may be so and what it means for them. Extensive research has shown that personalized normative feedback is an effective intervention for high-risk substance use and results in reduced use.^{8,22-23}

Similarly, **group normative feedback** (i.e., the group norms challenging approach) can be used in classroom workshops or with groups such as sports teams or social clubs. The goal of this approach is to highlight discrepancies between actual and perceived norms within a group environment. As with individualized normative feedback, the group is asked to consider and explain the reasons for the discrepancy between actual and perceived norms. Discussion and sharing are encouraged, which serves to reveal to the group members the actual healthy norms of the majority, thus confirming the data. This group approach has two benefits: it reinforces the healthy attitudes and behavior of the majority, and it demonstrates to those who hold unhealthy attitudes or engage in unhealthy behavior that their attitudes and/or behavior are not the norm - i.e., are not shared by others to the extent that they believe they are. Early research on group norms interventions suggests this approach is effective in modifying the behavior of group members.^{19,24-28} An additional benefit of this group approach is that it offers a tailored means of intervention adapted to the culture and characteristics of a specific group. When used in a group that exhibits high-risk drinking behaviors where over-estimations of group behavior exist, correcting these can result in reduced use by using the norms of the group itself as feedback. This is effective because even in a group that exhibits high drinking rates, group members overestimate the actual rate of drinking and other risk behaviors among that group. This type of tailored group intervention is best considered as a complement to a universal community-level SNMC.

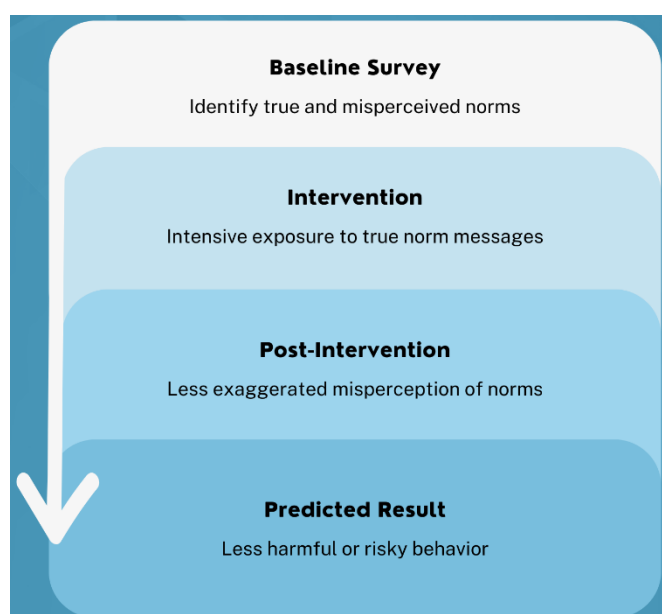
The **social norms media campaign** is a universal community-level social norms intervention. In this approach, members of a school or community take a survey assessing descriptive and injunctive norms and then receive feedback about the actual, collective norm of the group. Usually this is done through a multi-media campaign that disseminates positive norms about the healthy attitudes and behaviors of the majority. Unlike other approaches to substance use

prevention, SNMCs use local data, a positive norms-focused communication campaign, and long-term engagement with the population of interest.

The focus of this guide is the implementation of the community-level SNMC in school settings. SNMCs have been well studied in high school and college-age populations and have shown to be effective at reducing risky behaviors including substance use.²⁹ While fewer studies have been published specifically about social norms interventions for substance use prevention in middle schools, the current research is promising.^{18,30} A review of the literature on the effectiveness of the SNA for substance use prevention is provided in the [Appendix](#).

The Social Norms Media Campaign

The SNMC is designed to correct misperceptions that students have of each other's attitudes and behaviors with respect to substance use by bringing to their attention the true, positive norms that exist among their peers. In doing so, it offers an opportunity to celebrate the successes and healthy behaviors that are normative. As shown in the figure below, the SNMC works by surveying students to identify their actual and perceived/misperceived norms and exposing them to their true positive norms. As students develop more accurate perceptions of their peers' attitudes and behaviors, we can in turn expect to see changes in their actual behaviors, resulting in less use, fewer negative consequences of use, more non-use, and more willingness to step in and help peers in high-risk situations.³¹ Thus, the SNMC typically aims to achieve two outcomes: reducing misperceptions about substance use and preventing substance use behavior.



Source:³²

Social norms media campaigns have been effective in preventing initiation of use and stopping use in those who started using substances. Youth who use substances may do so because they think it's the norm. When presented with the true positive norm and an explanation of why it is true, the response is often a reduction of use, with even heavy users moderating or abandoning prior use.

One of the benefits of applying a SNMC, or any social norms intervention, is that it creates a paradigm shift in how we think of our prevention work and can change the way we relate to our community. Often prevention professionals are seen as 'bearers of bad news' whose job is to tell everyone what's wrong and how bad things are. There is a danger that we ourselves may adopt this mindset. While it is true that 'some things are wrong' (which, of course, is why we do this work), to over-emphasize the problem alienates us from the majority of youth who

are engaging in healthy behavior, and it can also serve to increase the misperception that the problem is more widespread than it really is. This unintended consequence of over-focusing on the negative makes us more 'a part of the problem' than 'a part of the solution.' We must start to think differently about our role, as well as educate others about why we are focusing on the positive attitudes and behavior of the majority - which is not to deny that a problem exists - but to grow the health of our community in order to diminish the problem.

Core Components of a SNMC

The core components of a SNMC also represent a subset of key campaign activities. The core components include social norms data collection, identification of misperceived norms, media development and dissemination, and evaluating impact.

Social Norms Data Collection

The SNMC is a data-driven approach. A core component of this approach is the identification and/or collection of social norms data at baseline, or before starting the campaign. At a minimum, descriptive and injunctive social norms need to be collected to understand the population's:

- Personal behaviors and attitudes about substance use (including protective behaviors)
- Perceptions of peers' typical behaviors and attitudes about substance use

Identification of Misperceived Norms

Collected social norms data is analyzed to find misperceptions that exist in the population and if they are correlated with substance use. For instance, you might find that students overestimate substance use patterns and underestimate abstinence. You may also find that greater misperceptions of use are correlated with more use and less abstinence. This provides confirmation that you are on the right track, and you can begin selecting themes and messages from your data for use in your SNMC.

Media Development and Dissemination

A SNMC brings attention to the true positive norms of the student population through media. Messaging is created to amplify the true positive norms that exist which works to correct the identified misperception(s). Variations of true positive norm messages are disseminated over time and through multiple media sources (e.g., posters, table tents, morning announcements). Repeated messaging of positive norms is crucial to correcting misperceptions and is therefore essential to the success of a campaign.^{14,33}

Evaluating Impact

Following a SNMC, you will need to evaluate its effects to see if misperceptions have been reduced, and if any behavior changes have happened. The evaluation resembles the original baseline data collected with additional questions looking at the frequency and reach of your media campaign efforts. Common outcomes to measure include:

- **Perceptions of peers' typical behaviors and attitudes.** We want to measure whether the perceptions of the intended audience became more accurate about their beliefs about peer substance use.

- **Substance use and protective behaviors and attitudes.** An evaluation will determine whether shifts in perception had a measurable impact on actual levels of substance use and/or engagement in protective behaviors.
- **Reductions in negative consequences.** If collected at baseline, re-assess to determine if the intervention led to a reduction of negative consequences related to substance use.

A more detailed description of each of these components can be found in **Section 2: Planning for a SNMC in School Settings.**



KEY MESSAGES:

Humans are group oriented and largely influenced by, and conform to, peer norms. In fact, the perception of the peer norm is one of the strongest predictors of personal behavior.

- Misperceptions of norms almost always overestimate the prevalence of a problem and underestimate the solution.
- Research shows that a growing percentage, and the vast majority, of American youth are choosing not to use any substances. Yet both youth and adults overwhelmingly overestimate the number of youth who use substances, believing substance use is more common than it actually is.
- When people think substance use is the norm, they are more likely to make choices that align with that misperception (e.g., acceptance or promotion of use). They also tend to hide or diminish their own healthy behaviors.
- Misperceptions can be corrected. When youth are exposed to messages that explain the positive, true norms that most youth make healthy choices and engage in prosocial activities, they are more likely to take part in those positive behaviors.
- A social norms media campaign is one strategy for correcting misperceptions and these campaigns have been effective in preventing initiation of use and stopping use in those who have started using substances.

Planning for a Social Norms Media Campaign in School Settings

The planning stages for a SNMC can be condensed into 7 steps, each of which are covered in this section:

- Step 1: Set goals and objectives
- Step 2: Engage collaborators, assemble the Implementation Team, and identify resources
- Step 3: Develop the implementation plan
- Step 4: Collect social norms data
- Step 5: Analyze data to identify misperceived norms
- Step 6: Develop and disseminate media
- Step 7: Monitor and evaluate

Step 1: Set Goals and Objectives

The first step in preparing for a SNMC is to identify clear goals (the outcomes you are aiming to achieve) and measurable objectives (*how* the desired outcome will be achieved). An effective goal will address the behavior or condition that is expected to change and typically, multiple objectives are needed to achieve a single goal.³⁴ These objectives, the steps in achieving the goal, should be SMARTIE – specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bound, inclusive, and equitable.

The SNA has been successfully used to address a range of issues, including academic performance,³⁵⁻³⁶ bullying and school violence, seatbelt usage³⁷⁻³⁸ compliance with policies,³⁹ littering,⁴⁰ green behaviors,⁴¹ prejudice reduction,⁴² and violence and abuse.^{19,43}

In a SNMC designed for substance use prevention, the goal of the campaign is to prevent substance use and/or to reduce use after it has begun. Preventing substance use is typically defined as preventing the onset or escalation of use. To make the goal more specific, it is important to clearly identify the substance use issue to be addressed within your school. Is general substance use prevention the goal or are there specific substances that you want to prevent? Issues are frequently identified through needs assessments and other data (e.g., disciplinary data, substances found on school property) that have been gathered formally or informally by the school or community. Once the issue has been clearly identified, you are ready to formalize your goal. A common goal for a SNMC reads something like this: **Increase the non-use of a substance(s) by X% after a one-year SNMC, and by X% following two years of campaign implementation.**

As reflected in this goal, the proposed campaign timeline needs to be considered when setting realistic outcomes. While some research has shown that SNMCs demonstrate positive behavior change after a one-year intensive campaign implementation^{6,11,15} a two-year implementation is more likely to achieve measurable changes in behavior. This is because it can take repeated exposure over time to shift perceptions, which is critical for observing the desired behavior change.

The SNA is grounded in a theory of human behavior that posits that behavior change happens when misperceptions of the norm are corrected or reduced. In other words, to achieve the goal of substance use prevention, the SNMC must reduce a population's overestimation of the prevalence of substance use and underestimation of healthy, protective behaviors. Therefore, to achieve the goal of substance use prevention, objectives would center on correcting misperceptions of what is the actual norm. Sample objectives include:

- Increase accurate perceptions among students about the percentage of peers who are not using a substance(s) by X% after a one-year SNMC (or, reduce the extent to which individuals hold exaggerated perceptions about normative use).
- Increase accurate perceptions among students about the percentage of students who don't approve of substance use by X% after a one-year SNMC.

Additional objectives can be created around increasing protective bystander behaviors such as an increase in students encouraging non-use or stepping in to intervene or talk their friends out of using substances.

While these sample goals and objectives focus on changing student perceptions and behaviors, staff and parents/caregivers also tend to hold misperceptions around youth substance use. These misconceptions have been shown to increase permissiveness or acceptance of use-related behaviors. A comprehensive approach to a SNMC must include staff and parents/caregivers as part of the campaign intervention.

Step 2: Engage Collaborators, Assemble the Implementation Team, and Identify Resources

Step 2 involves assembling the individuals and resources needed to effectively implement a SNMC. These individuals include a diverse group of key collaborators and an Implementation Team who work together to execute their different responsibilities in ways that are efficient, coordinated, and synergistic.

Engaging Collaborators

One early step in the planning process is to identify key campaign collaborators. Collaborators may include school personnel (administrators, staff, and teachers), students, parents/caregivers, prevention organizations, and the community at large. Given the time and commitment required to implement an effective SNMC, schools are encouraged to engage their local prevention partners, including coalitions and prevention organizations, to build capacity for the intervention. These partners often have expertise in implementing and evaluating substance use prevention activities and can take lead roles in facilitating the SNMC in partnership with the school. As collaborators are identified, consider the role each may take in shaping and supporting the campaign planning, implementation, and evaluation. To be effective campaign supporters, each collaborator involved in the campaign must be oriented to the SNA.

It will be helpful to take time to educate collaborators about your goals for the SNMC, explain how the SNA works to correct misperceptions and prevent substance use, and share how they can provide support for the campaign. Social norms research has documented that school staff, students, parents/caregivers, and the broader community all tend to hold misperceptions about youth substance use^{30,44-45} and benefit from receiving correct

information about actual student behavior and the ways in which attitudes and behavior are misperceived. Thus, sharing and explaining the SNA is an important step in preparing for the campaign. This type of training helps to get collaborators 'on board' so they are less likely to have questions about the campaign or object to it. Disseminating written summaries of these themes can help educate larger collaborator groups.

Collaborators trained in the SNA can help by being prepared to reinforce true positive norms and addressing 'push-back' and skepticism about the data. This is especially important with social norms efforts in which the audience is being told something that most do not believe is true. Patiently taking the time to address concerns and skepticism can result in a vocal critic becoming a strong ally of the campaign.

Common collaborator groups and their respective roles in the SNMC are described below.

School Personnel

School principals, teachers, and staff all have ongoing contact with students and will be relied upon to initiate conversations with students about the content of the social norms messaging being shared. This requires they are trained to understand the theoretical basis for the SNMC and the research supporting its use as a substance use prevention intervention. The results of the school assessment should also be shared with school personnel so they can reflect on and correct their own misperceptions of student attitudes and behavior. Training also helps school leaders prepare to share information about the campaign rationale, data, and positive norm messages with their district leaders, parents/caregivers, and community organizations. The more school personnel are familiar and involved with the SNMC, the more likely they are to promote positive norm messages both in and outside of the school. For example, even a brief mention of positive norms data in a meeting, presentation, or newsletter can serve as an important reinforcer of the campaign messages while also sharing the good news that students are in the healthy majority.

Educating school personnel on the theory of social norms and on the SNMC can be done on teacher training days, in all-staff meetings, and sharing written materials. There should also be plans to update staff about the campaign throughout the process of its development and implementation, and to offer opportunities for them to share their experiences with the campaign and observations of student campaign engagement.

School personnel can also serve in the role of a 'trusted adult'. A **trusted adult** is someone students may turn to for help and who will take them seriously.⁴⁶ A trusted adult is someone youth have independently chosen to trust and is a safe, reliable, and honest figure who listens without judgement, agenda, or expectation and provides support and encouragement.⁴⁷ When planning for a SNMC, ask which school staff students look up to, trust, and connect well with. There are often a few staff who students will identify as a trusted adult. Trusted adults can be trained to serve as a site champion for the SNMC, playing a vital role in disseminating messages, mitigating opposition, and providing feedback about implementation. Guidance on engaging trusted adults is shared in the [Appendix](#).

Students

A proven principle of prevention is that the intervention must be tailored to the audience. This is best accomplished by involving students in the process of message selection and dissemination. The literature offers examples of campaigns that have failed because students were not involved in the development of a campaign and the message or media designs were neither appealing nor relatable to the intended student audience.⁴⁴ Thus, what we think students may like and be responsive to, or what was successful elsewhere, may not work in your school. At the same time, because students are 'in the misperception' we must set boundaries on the feedback we elicit from them. For example, students may opt for attention-getting media that illustrate the extremes of the problem. Media with images highlighting the problem can actually foster the misperception and, if used in the campaign, could serve to undermine it. Providing students parameters that the campaign media should be positive, inclusive, and empowering can help circumvent this particular issue.⁴⁸

Parents and Caregivers

Parents and caregivers also have an important role to play in the SNMC. To start, they can be kept informed about the SNMC in communications from the school so they know what is being implemented and why, and so their questions and concerns can be answered. Guidance can also be provided to parents and caregivers about how to inquire and talk about campaign messages with their children. Parents/caregivers should try to use a neutral tone when talking with their children about alcohol and other substance use at school (without asking them about themselves) followed by asking them to explain how they know that, for instance, 'almost everyone drinks alcohol.' This type of conversation opens the door to talk about how we know what we know, how our perceptions are often based on stereotypes and extreme public behavior, and allows for the introduction of campaign data into the discussion, followed by a discussion of the media (i.e. 'did you see those posters in school about XXX? I am curious what you thought of them?').

Prevention Organizations

Prevention organizations, such as community coalitions and non-profit organizations, can play a vital role in supporting a school's implementation of a SNMC. Prevention professionals are advocates for substance use prevention and can lend their expertise and resources toward campaign planning and implementation support. The authors have found that prevention organizations often seek school partnerships and opportunities to bring substance use prevention interventions into the school and community. Thus, these individuals can serve well in coordinating the campaign in partnership with the school. Prevention partners can also play an important role in educating the larger community about the campaign.

Community at Large

The community at large, while less directly engaged in a school-based SNMC, can also play a role in supporting it. For instance, community leaders and public servants, local media outlets, and even local businesses can help spread the true positive norms of the student body. In one school-based campaign supported by one of the authors of this guide, a local pizza parlor agreed to put campaign data on pizza boxes. In another town, local grocery stores added campaign messaging to shopping carts and displayed yard signs sharing norms data in public spaces. There are many creative ways campaign implementers can engage their community partners to share campaign messages.

Assembling the Implementation Team

It is vital to assemble an Implementation Team committed to the planning, delivery, and evaluation of the SNMC. At a minimum, the Implementation Team should include a coordinating organization and school personnel who can serve as site champions for the SNMC. The identified team will bring together the necessary knowledge, skills, and resources to effectively implement the campaign. In addition, the Implementation Team can ensure prevention efforts within the school are coordinated within and across issues, reduce competition between issues, ensure compatibility of messages and practices, and foster efficient use of resources. For example, in the case of the SNMC, one of the most important tasks is to make sure that other prevention activities are not conducted in a way that relies on fear or shame-based messages or anything else that may serve to increase the misperception. Guidance on the role and training of site champions is provided in the [Appendix](#).

The Coordinating Organization

Best practices in SNMC implementation suggest identifying a coordinating organization or committee, along with a project manager or chair that can assume the following key responsibilities:

- Garnering support for the SNMC among collaborators through meetings, presentations, and consultation
- Orienting collaborators to the theory and science behind the SNA for substance use prevention
- Training collaborators in their respective roles, including how to promote positive norms messages and address skepticism or push-back
- Overseeing Steps 3 - 7 in the SNMC process, to include developing and executing the implementation plan, collection of social norms data, analysis of data, media development and dissemination, and monitoring and evaluation activities
- Ensuring that the campaign is conducted and messages are developed in a way that is relevant to the intended audience and inclusive of its members. This can be done by conducting focus groups with a diverse group of students to obtain feedback from all relevant sectors of the population.
- Monitoring the campaign to address believability and 'push-back.'

Potential coordinating organizations might include community coalitions, non-profit community partners, or school or district-level coordinating units.

School Personnel

Having an infrastructure that is capable of hosting a successful SNMC requires leadership support and well-trained school-based site champions. The following are essential roles that school staff will need to fill:

- A **school administrator 'champion'** will advocate for the SNMC and help the team reach out to collaborators and critics. This person must be in a position of decision-making authority (for example, the principal or assistant principal) who will take on the task of promoting the campaign to their staff as well as to upper-level administrators and community leaders.
- A **school assessment coordinator** will oversee the development and implementation of social norms data collection. This person must: have knowledge of survey research

methods and data analysis (or access to someone who has these skills); know how to develop the consent/assent process including how to be in compliance with state requirements; agree to oversee the process of notifying parents and caregivers about the campaign and data collection processes; be able to schedule baseline and evaluation surveys (including how and where students will take it); inform all parties who are involved in administering it; and attend to all aspects of survey administration.

- **Staff site champions(s)** within the school to work with the coordinating organization to disseminate campaign media, to include: assessing and choosing among media channels (social media, posters, staff buttons, other means of communication for staff, parents/caregivers, and students); communication with parents and caregivers (with help from the assessment coordinator); and other means of message dissemination (such as virtual learning platforms, mobile apps, text alerts, audio and/or visual broadcasts on school-based channels; newspapers and flyers; announcements, posters, and websites). In addition to standard media channels, this individual or group can reach out to teachers to explore the possibility of adding messages to the curriculum, i.e. using data from the survey in classes and incorporating elements of social norms theory into relevant subjects.

External Resources

While the SNMC itself is easy to conceptualize, implementation and evaluation do require a dedicated set of resources that is made easier with the support of external subject matter experts and services. Subject matter experts can guide the Implementation Team through challenges, suggest strategies, and when necessary, consult with critics of the campaign or key administrators who are not fully on-board.

- **Social norms expertise.** Even one hour of expert consultation a month can help schools to anticipate challenges and implementation difficulties and resolve them efficiently when they arise.
- **Evaluation support.** Evaluating a prevention program requires a skill set that most prevention professionals and school staff have not been trained in. Many social norms experts can also provide consultation on how to document and assess changes in student misperceptions and substance use behavior over time.

Resources needed to implement a SNMC include graphic and media design and printing and purchase of media.

- **Graphic and media design.** Schools may have the resources needed to design posters and other media, tasks that can be done with the help of students. In absence of these resources, schools may engage graphic and media design professionals. Whoever is involved in graphic and media design must be oriented to the SNA. This will allow them to adapt their approach to be consistent with social norms theory and present the true positive norm correctly and amplify the positive rather than resorting to commonly used fear-based attention-getting messaging.
- **Printing and purchase of media.** If the school does not have the internal resources to print their own media, funding will be needed to purchase and/or print the media that will be used in the campaign.

Cost Considerations

The cost to implement a SNMC largely depends on the existing resources available to the school. Based on the collective experience of the authors of this guide, a rough estimate of cost for a single-year SNMC is provided below:

- \$1,500-5,000 Social norms expert consultant
- \$3,000-8,000 Evaluation support, to include data analysis and reporting
- \$3,000-8,000 Graphic design support to create new, custom materials for multiple media products
- \$2,000-4,000 Printing of multiple media products

**Note: Cost considerations will depend on a number of factors such as campaign duration, complexity, and the degree that these services will need to be secured external to the school. Typically, costs in the second year of implementation are lower than in the first year when more resources are needed for consultation and evaluation support.*


Schools may want to consider collaborating with other schools in their community or district to simultaneously implement a SNMC. Costs of social norms expert consultation and graphic design costs could be shared among the schools as long as media are tailored to the needs of each school's population.

Schools can also apply for grants to fund a SNMC. Where funding is limited, there are national resources available that can offer guidance and access to templates and other resources to support your campaign work. As previously mentioned, you have access to the guide developers via [ADAPT](#) for additional information and technical assistance. Other organizations that offer consultation include the [National Social Norms Center](#), [Alcohol Education Project](#), [Youth Health and Safety Project](#), and [The Montana Institute](#).

Step 3: Develop the Implementation Plan

A SNMC follows a systematic approach and consistent resources of personnel, time, and cost. Implementation considerations such as feasibility, usability, acceptability, and adaptability need to be considered during the planning and implementation phases. A school should begin discussions to determine the feasibility of implementing a SNMC and in doing so, attempt to circumvent any resource challenges. After feasibility, consider if the implementation plan will be usable within the context of the school given competing priorities. Also, consider whether the approach is acceptable to decision makers, funders, teachers/staff, and parents/caregivers. If not, seek an opportunity for dialog to reconcile concerns or hesitations. Lastly, be prepared to thoughtfully adapt to any barriers or unforeseen circumstances that may arise.

When planning, consider potential supports and barriers that may affect the campaign timeline such as school calendars, holidays, teacher and staff availability, local and state required testing, and other activities such as homecoming, prom, and other interventions that may be complementary or similar. School schedules including holidays and teacher professional development dates are usually planned a year in advance. Other activities such as spirit and Red Ribbon weeks may occur yearly in schools but may not be listed on the school calendar. Relying on school-based site champions to document and update the activities that may affect the implementation plan is essential. Once the calendar is updated,



the SNMC can be planned with a higher level of assurance that there should be minimal unscheduled changes to the implementation timeline.

A common threat to the effectiveness of a SNMC is the presence of conflicting events or messaging to which youth may be exposed. Schools commonly host several events and distribute various messages to students throughout the year. Messages, discussions, and prevention programs that focus on the consequences of substance use or the prevalence of use, or that use fear-based messaging such as mock car crashes, can make substance use seem more common than it is. Co-occurring events and messaging can, however, be designed to work in tandem with a SNMC. Map out all prevention and substance use-related activities that will occur alongside the social norms campaign. If these activities have the potential to increase the incorrect perceptions surrounding student substance use, consider how the information may be flipped to focus on positive, true high rates of nonuse. Consider using a [3 step information sharing framework](#) to share substance-related information that will complement a social norms campaign.

After school schedules and other events have been identified, it is time to develop the campaign implementation timeline. Key activities are documented below in the sample timeline. This timeline reflects a 26-month period in which the SNMC is implemented for two academic calendar years, with preparatory work initiated in the spring prior to the first full academic year.

Key Activities	Mar-Apr	May	Jun-Jul	Aug	Sep-Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb-Apr	May	Jun-Jul	Aug	Sep-Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb-Apr	May
Step 1: Set goals and objectives																
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generate a goals statement with specific goals and measurable objectives. 	x															
Step 2: Engage collaborators, assemble the Implementation Team, and identify resources																
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify key collaborator groups, the Implementation Team, site champions, and trusted adults 	x															
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train collaborators and the Implementation Team on social norms theory, research, and the SNMC 	x															
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assemble external resources 	x															
Step 3: Develop the Implementation Plan																
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set the campaign implementation timeline 	x															
Step 4: Collect social norms data																
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create or identify a social norms survey to assess current norms 	x															
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administer the social norms survey to collect baseline data 		x														
Step 5: Analyze data to identify misperceived norms																
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze the baseline survey and extra positive norm statistics from this data 		x														
Step 6: Develop and disseminate media																
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop prototype media 			x													
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Test and finalize media 				x			X				x			X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disseminate media, changing media every two to three weeks 					x			X				x			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refine methods and media as needed based on youth feedback 						x	x			x			x	x		
Step 7: Monitor and evaluate																
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor for impact by collecting youth feedback 					X (Nov)							X (Nov)				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administer the social norms evaluation survey 									x							x
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze the evaluation survey to assess impact. 									x							x
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report results 									x							x

Step 4: Collect Social Norms Data

The SNMC is a data-driven intervention that relies upon credible social norms data collected from the intended population. Data can be pulled from existing sources or collected through a survey administered in the school(s) that will be participating in the campaign. The impact of a social norms campaign is heavily influenced by whether youth find the messaging to be credible and relevant to them. Local data that comes from youth in their school or community is more powerful than data pulled from state and national-level databases. The more local the data can be the more credible and relevant it is likely to be perceived. However, easy to access data can be a great starting point. Although existing data is unlikely to have measures on perceived norms - and thus, will not allow you to examine changes in perceptions - they often do provide substance use rates which can be helpful in the early planning phases while you identify the issue and formalize goals and objectives.

In searching for existing descriptive norms about youth substance use, a few common sources of local/regional data include:

- The bi-annual Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) ⁴⁹ which provides estimates of substance use for 9th - 12th grades at national, state, territorial, tribal, and local school district levels.
- The annual Monitoring the Future (MTF) ⁵⁰ survey offers national estimates of substance use and related attitudes among 8th, 10th, and 12th graders.
- Community health assessments (sometimes called community health needs assessment).
- Other data collected by schools, districts, or the community


Developing a Social Norms Survey

Administering a survey at your school is the ideal way to collect social norms data for the campaign. This allows for greater flexibility in what messaging can be created while also making messages more relevant and allowing for more control over evaluation.

Social norms survey data serve three functions: documenting misperceptions, providing content for message development, and measuring impact. The baseline social norms survey is the first survey students will complete. The primary goal of this survey is to collect baseline data on actual and perceived attitudes and behaviors. This baseline data will be transformed into positive norm messages for the campaign and serve as a comparison point when the evaluation survey is given again later. Utilizing different types of attitudinal and behavioral questions can increase the options available for messaging, which can help keep the campaign interesting to youth. Questions that can be used for evaluation are also vital as evaluation helps to demonstrate the impact of the campaign. Demonstrating impact builds buy-in from schools, the community, and other collaborators to continue the intervention.

Social norms survey questions can be categorized as follows:

- Personal behaviors and attitudes with respect to substance use
- Perceptions of peers' typical behaviors and attitudes with respect to substance use
- Personal protective behaviors and attitudes to avoid use
- Exposure to social norm messages (for the evaluation survey only - not to be included in the baseline survey)



In order to measure the extent of misperceptions, questions asking about one's personal attitudes/behaviors and what one believes to be the typical attitudes/behaviors of their peers need to have parallel wording and response structures.

The baseline social norms survey can be enhanced by the inclusion of personal interest questions, such as preferred movie or music genre, food, sport, vacation destination, etc. Students are generally interested in learning about their peers and the inclusion of interest items on media can make them more appealing.

The table on the next page summarizes different types of social norms questions across these categories and describes how they can be used (for messaging, evaluation, or both).

Question Type	Example	Purpose	Used for
Personal behaviors and attitudes with respect to substance use			
Substance use (<i>descriptive norm</i>)	During the past 30 days, on how many days did you use any tobacco or nicotine products (cigarettes, e-cigarettes/vaping, cigars, chew)?	Determine actual positive norms about substances for messages and to assess campaign impact	Documenting misperceived norms, messaging & evaluation
Parent/guardian rules regarding substance use (<i>descriptive norm</i>)	What rules, if any, have your parents/guardians set for you about smoking, vaping, or eating marijuana in some form? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No marijuana use is allowed • Some marijuana use is allowed with family members when a parent/guardian is present • Some marijuana use is allowed with friends if a parent/guardian is present • No rules/Do not know of any rules 	Determine actual positive norms about substances for messages and to assess campaign impact	Documenting misperceived norms, messaging & evaluation
Attitudes about substance use (<i>injunctive norm</i>)	To what extent do you approve or disapprove of fellow students drinking beer or other alcohol (beyond just a few sips in a family or religious gathering)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strongly disapprove • Disapprove • Approve • Strongly approve 	Determine actual positive norms about substances for messages and to assess campaign impact	Documenting misperceived norms, messaging & evaluation
Attitudes and perceptions about being an active bystander (<i>injunctive norm</i>)	How much do you agree or disagree with this statement? If a friend my age was about to drink alcohol, use tobacco/nicotine or marijuana, or take a pill not prescribed or given by their doctor, nurse, or parent/guardian, I think it is right for me to try to talk with and discourage that person from doing so. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strongly agree • Agree • Disagree • Strongly disagree 	Determine actual positive norms about substances for messages and to assess campaign impact	Documenting misperceived norms, messaging & evaluation

Perceptions of peers' typical behaviors and attitudes with respect to substance use

<p>Perceptions of <i>other students'</i> substance use (<i>perceived descriptive norm</i>)</p>	<p>During the past 30 days, what percentage of students in your grade at your school do you think have had at least one drink of alcohol including beer, wine, liquor, and mixed drinks (beyond just a few sips in a family or religious gathering)?</p>	<p>Reveal misperceptions of norms and to assess campaign impact</p>	<p>Documenting misperceived norms & evaluation</p>
<p>Perception of <i>other students'</i> parent/guardian rules regarding substance use (<i>perceived descriptive norm</i>)</p>	<p>What rules, if any, would you say are most typically set by parents/guardians of other students in your grade about smoking, vaping, or eating marijuana in some form?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No marijuana use is allowed • Some marijuana use is allowed with family members when a parent/guardian is present • Some marijuana use is allowed with friends if a parent/guardian is present • No rules/Do not know of any rules 	<p>Reveal misperceptions of norms and to assess campaign impact</p>	<p>Documenting misperceived norms & evaluation</p>
<p>Perception of <i>other students'</i> substance use (<i>perceived injunctive norm</i>)</p>	<p>Which statement below about student use of tobacco or nicotine in any form do you think is the most common attitude among other students in your grade at your school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of tobacco or nicotine is never good • Occasional use is OK but not daily use • Frequent use is OK if that's what the individual wants to do 	<p>Reveal misperceptions of norms and to assess campaign impact</p>	<p>Documenting misperceived norms & evaluation</p>
<p>Perception about <i>other students</i> being an active bystander (<i>perceived injunctive norm</i>)</p>	<p>To what extent do you think most other students in your grade at your school would agree or disagree with this statement: If a friend my age was about to drink alcohol, use tobacco/nicotine or marijuana, or take a pill not prescribed or given by their doctor, nurse, or parent/guardian, I think it is right for me to try to talk with and discourage that person.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strongly agree • Agree • Disagree • Strongly disagree 	<p>Reveal misperceptions of norms and to assess campaign impact</p>	<p>Documenting misperceived norms & evaluation</p>

Personal protective behaviors and attitudes to avoid use

<p>How youth avoid using substances (<i>descriptive norm</i>)</p>	<p>If you never drink alcohol, or if you sometimes choose not to, how do you avoid drinking it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don't go to places where students are drinking • I leave places if students begin drinking • I hang out with students who don't drink • I tell students that I don't want to drink if they ask me • I drink non-alcoholic drinks like water, sports drinks, soda/pop, or juice • Other ways? (Please describe) 	<p>Determine actual positive norms about substances for messages and to assess campaign impact</p>	<p>Messaging & evaluation</p>
<p>Reasons for not using substances (<i>injunctive norm</i>)</p>	<p>When you choose not to use tobacco/nicotine in any form, why do you make this choice?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don't like the taste or smell of tobacco/nicotine • I worry about how it will make me feel • I want to do well in sports • Almost all of my friends avoid using tobacco/nicotine • I promised a family member(s) I would not use tobacco/nicotine • I don't want to get in trouble • I don't like to make poor or unhealthy choices • I want to be a role model for my friends • Other: 	<p>Determine actual positive norms about substances for messages and to assess campaign impact</p>	<p>Messaging & evaluation</p>
<p>Coping strategies (<i>descriptive norm</i>)</p>	<p>When you are feeling down or stressed or bad things happen, how do you get through it? Here is a list of things that some young people do - please tell us which ones you use. (<i>Check all that you use.</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise • Prayer • Talk to someone I trust • Relax/Take a break/Meditation/Yoga 	<p>Determine actual positive norms or messages</p>	<p>Messaging</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hang out with family/friends • Listen to/Make music • Read/Write • Make art/Draw • Gaming • Social media 		
Positive goals (<i>descriptive norm</i>)	What is important to you in this phase in your life? (getting good grades, involvement in extra-curricular and/or sports activities, planning for the future, leading a healthy life, positive relationships with those I care about)?	Determine actual positive norms for messages	Messaging
Important activities (<i>descriptive norm</i>)	How important do you believe it is to.... volunteer in your community, help a friend in need, support a charity, stay physically active, etc.	Determine actual positive norms for messages	Messaging
Other questions			
Interest questions	How do you spend your time after school or on the weekends? What do you like more: hamburgers or hotdogs? Rock or pop?	Other information about students can help to attract/maintain student attention	Messaging
Demographics	What grade are you in? What is your gender? Race and ethnicity?	Ensure responses represent your intended audience	Evaluation
Exposure to social norms messages			
Exposure	Please look at the first set of images of different school posters that may have appeared sometime during this school year. Do you recall seeing any materials like these with your school name on them? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I do not recall seeing any of these items • I may have seen one or two of them at some point during the year. • I have definitely seen some of them a few times during the year. • I have seen most of them several times during the year. 		Evaluation

When designing the survey questions, the order of the questions is important. It is recommended you start with questions that are easier or more interesting to answer (such as interest questions and protective norms not related to substance use), followed by attitudes about substance use, student substance use, parent/guardian rules about substance use, bystander attitudes and behaviors, protective attitudes and behaviors related to substance use, and lastly, student demographics. Sample baseline and evaluation social norms surveys are provided in the [Appendix](#). Both instruments are the same except for additional evaluation questions added into the evaluation survey. From the sample surveys, identify which questions might work for you. For instance, if you are only interested in a social norms campaign on alcohol and nicotine, then you will only choose the alcohol and nicotine questions.

Survey Review

A focus group with students can help generate ideas for survey questions. Consider digging into where misperceptions may stem from - maybe there are misperceptions around student substance use at big events like prom (called 'event-specific' norms), or misperceptions surrounding specific substances. Students can also help to inform what types of information they find interesting and explain how they interpret survey questions. For example, a variety of terms are used to refer to marijuana. When deciding what term to use, it may be helpful to ask youth what term they are most familiar with and would understand. Additionally, students can help inform what type of media to produce, the media channels they like and pay attention to, what they find visually appealing, and whom they look to and trust to give them information.

You will want to have the drafted survey reviewed and approved by any of the necessary parties within the school (e.g., senior administration). It is also a good idea to pilot the survey with a subset of youth to get an estimate of how long the survey takes to complete and address any items the students find unclear or confusing. Timing the survey will help in planning for its administration. General guidance is that a survey should take no more than 20-30 minutes to complete⁵¹, with response rates typically higher with shorter surveys (10 - 20 minutes).⁵²

Implementing the Social Norms Survey

Consent and Assent

In order to survey students in your school, the school will need to obtain permission from parents/guardians. It is important to talk with senior leadership to determine what parental consent requirements apply to your school. Two common types of parental consent are passive and active.

Passive

- *Parents/guardians must return a form if they refuse to allow their child to participate*

Active

- *Parents/guardians must return a form if they allow their child to participate*

Parent consent rates are likely to be higher when passive parental consent is required. Whether passive or active consent is required, the school likely has existing mechanisms by which they collect parental consent that can be used for the purposes of obtaining survey consent.

For students whose parents have consented for them to complete the social norms survey, student assent must also be obtained. This can be done by sharing the purpose and description of the survey with the student, offering them an opportunity to ask questions, and ensuring them their choice to (or not to) participate bears no consequences. Assent is best documented on an assent form or as a response option to a question on an online survey. For example:

- If you do not want to answer a question, you can skip it, and you may stop at any time.
- If you agree to take part in this survey, please click continue.
 - Continue.
 - I do not want to take this survey.

Anonymous vs Confidential

The social norms survey can be either anonymous or confidential. Anonymous means that anyone looking at the responses won't know who answered the survey. Confidential means that it is possible to identify who answered the survey, but the identifying information is protected to limit the ability to match student names with the responses. Obtaining accurate social norms data is critical to the success of the SNMC. In a survey asking students to report their own behaviors related to substance use, the likelihood of their being truthful is higher when they know their responses are anonymous and will not be linked directly to them.⁴⁸ Further, as the social norms campaign is a population-based strategy and pre- and post-responses are not matched for comparison purposes, you do not need to collect identifying information.

If you are unable to keep the survey anonymous, you must tell students how their responses will be kept confidential (e.g., separating identifiers from responses; assigning a random code to each student and each survey is identified via this code). Language at the start of the survey should let students know whether their responses are anonymous or confidential. For example:

Your responses are completely **anonymous**. We will not collect your name or any information that can directly link you with your answers, so be as honest as possible.

Student Sampling

It is best to administer the social norms survey to as many students as possible. This provides the most reliable estimates of the true norms of the student population. When the entire school cannot be surveyed, it is ideal to identify an approach for administering the survey to a representative, random sample of the student body - i.e., similar across demographics (grades, gender, race, etc.). This gives the campaign greater credibility. If survey administration is restricted, prioritize older grades. Messaging from older grades can serve as a prospective norm for younger students, representing the attitudes and behaviors of the older classmates that they may look up to.

Survey Administration

How, where, and when the social norms survey will be administered will need to be determined.

How

These surveys can be administered electronically, via a computer or web-based survey, or with paper and pencil. Given the ideal student sample size will include as many students as possible, electronic administration is ideal. This option allows data to be downloaded directly into a database rather than someone needing to manually enter this information. Schools may have existing processes and software (e.g., Google Forms) that make electronic survey administration possible.

Where

Consider where students will complete the survey. A convenient approach for an electronic survey administration would be within the classroom where students have access to an electronic device and can be seated in a way that does not allow students to view each other's responses. In this situation, determine what students will be surveyed and when. For example, will all students be offered the survey during their homeroom that day? If taking more of a census approach, select a class such as homeroom that ALL students take regardless of grade. To ensure survey administration is feasible, you may need to balance where the survey will be administered with the goal of obtaining a random, representative sample. If you plan to survey a subset of students, select classes carefully so you avoid duplication (the same student completing the survey twice in two different classes).

When

Lastly, consider the best time to administer the survey as the selection of the survey date could influence the results. Factors to consider include:

- Large events such as prom or homecoming may skew the results of questions asking about past 30-day substance use
- Substance use generally increases with age - spring administration may show higher use than fall administration
- Certain weeks may have less students in attendance (end of the year, near holidays, etc.)
- What is reasonable for the school/school staff (avoiding stressful times of year such as standardized testing time)

Administration of the evaluation survey should be timed around the same time of year as the baseline social norms survey was the year prior. This would mean if the baseline survey were conducted in the fall, the evaluation survey should be conducted in the fall of the following year, or two years later. This helps to ensure a comparable sample from each survey. If the baseline survey were conducted at the start of the school year with the evaluation survey conducted at the end of the school year with the exact same set of students, the evaluator would need to account for “perverse maturation” (i.e., that substance use increases with age, so the rates of substance use at the end of the school year are expected to be higher than at the beginning when looking at the same cohort of students).

It is not necessary that the social norms survey be administered annually. Given student turnover, re-administering the social norms survey and evaluating its impact can occur every two years.

Step 5: Analyze Data to Identify Norms

Once the baseline survey is complete, the evaluator for the campaign will analyze the data to identify the misperceptions that exist, and if they are correlated with substance use (the outcome variable). For instance, you might find that students over-estimate use patterns and under-estimate abstinence and that greater misperceptions of use are correlated with more use and less abstinence. This provides confirmation that you are on the right track and that you can begin selecting themes and messages for possible use in your media campaign.

There are a couple of considerations that will aid in interpreting the data:

1. **Response rates & representativeness of the student population.** It is important to determine the student response rate (rate of survey completion among those offered the survey) as well as whether the responses received represent the student population. Schools that take a whole school approach and administer the survey to all students can be confident that their data accurately reflects the norms of the student population as long as response rates are high.
2. **Alignment with social norms theory.** There are three basic predictions of social norms theory:
 - a. Student attitudes and behaviors will reflect student norms opposing substance use.
 - b. Students will misperceive the norm as one that favors substance use.
 - c. Students who misperceive the norm, especially those students with the most errant misperceptions, are at the greatest risk for personally engaging in substance use.

Data that aligns with these predictions provides justification for a SNMC as an appropriate prevention strategy for the school. However, it should be noted that the SNMC could be applied even if there is no misperception of the norm. Whether perceptions are accurate or not, the SNMC can bring attention to the true positive and healthy norms of the students to increase those normative attitudes and behaviors.

At this point, it may be beneficial to review your data with collaborators to engage their support and understanding of the SNA and your plans for your SNMC. A sample social norms data report that summarizes key findings is provided in the [Appendix](#).

Step 6: Develop and Disseminate Media

Once you have identified the true positive norms of your student population, you can begin developing positive data-based norm messages. You will want to approach media development and dissemination in an organized way. Creating a week-by-week media timeline can help the Implementation Team stay on track with what media will be disseminated when, how, and by whom. A sample Social Norms Media Campaign Timeline is provided in the [Appendix](#).

Market Research

Basic market research can inform the development and dissemination of messages and media design. In addition to using survey data to determine actual student norms, student input can help with message development and media design/dissemination. Seeking input from the intended audience is a key element of any successful SNMC. For this reason, consider creating media in batches to allow interim student feedback to be integrated into future campaign materials.

Market research should be used at the message development stage to test sample messages for wording, believability (e.g., is the cited source credible?), data presentation preferences (9 out of 10 vs 90%), etc. At the media design stage, market research is used to test potential designs for readability, eye appeal, colors, font size, content recall, wordiness, impact of graphic elements, positivity in the design and content, etc. Students should be asked to share what they first noticed when they saw the media, what message they think is being communicated, what they like/dislike, what they would change, and after a time-lapse, what they remember.

Market research also informs where and how to disseminate your positive norm messages. Students can be asked about how and where they most like to find information, which may include posters, morning announcements, table tents, stickers, yard signs, bathroom stall flyers, banners, buttons, school web pages, etc. Additionally, students must be asked where in school, when during the semester, and for how long a form of media should be used so as not to become repetitive or ignored.⁴⁸ Previous projects have found that changing out media every 2-3 weeks is a good rule of thumb.

Market research can include interviews with students, in-class discussions, paper or online surveys and polls, and focus groups. As with the baseline social norms data survey, you'll want to get feedback from a representative and random sample of students. If that is not possible,

skew your sample toward the upper classes, as younger students tend to look up to the interests and opinions of their older peers. If running focus groups, aim to keep groups small (8-10) and attempt to assemble 2-3 groups to allow for enough representation of the study population. Sample market research questions using a focus group can be found in the [Appendix](#). These questions can easily be adapted and integrated into other forms of collecting student input (e.g., surveys, polls, etc.).

Message Development

Positive norm messages are generated from the social norms survey or other credible sources identified in Step 4. To be used as part of the SNMC, the message must represent a social norm; that is, an attitude or behavior shared by more than 50% of the population surveyed.

Messages also need to be simple and easy to understand, supported with data, and represent the positive within the population. As you transform your survey questions into a positive norm message, be sure to retain the true essence of the message while simplifying it to make it more readable and understandable. For example, a question that asks, 'Not counting just a few sips in a family or religious gathering, how often have you consumed alcohol in the past 30 days?' might be transformed into a message describing what percentage of youth 'did not drink alcohol in the past 30 days.'

It is also important that the data represent the positive norm. For example, if a survey found that 11% of students say they used marijuana in the last year, the statistic would need to be flipped to read '89% of students did not use marijuana last year.' From this one data point alone, multiple messages can be developed:

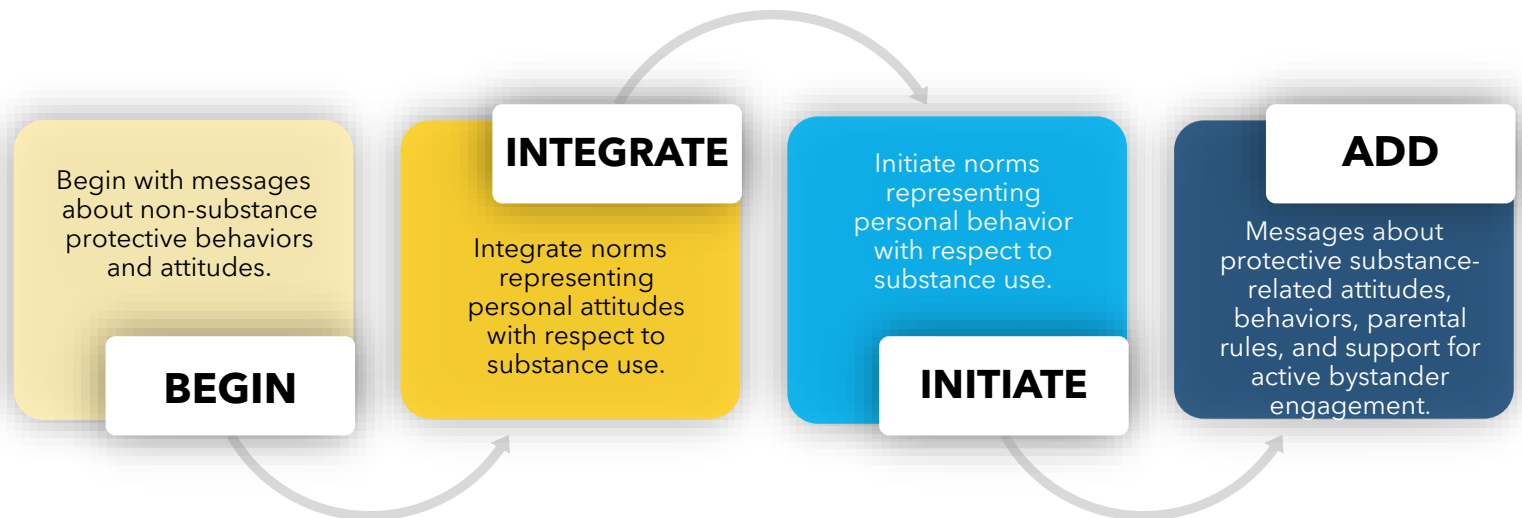
- Almost 90% of ABC middle school students avoid marijuana use!
- 9 out of 10 ABC middle school students do not use marijuana!
- At ABC middle school student, most students choose not to use marijuana.

The source of the positive norm message must be provided alongside the data point. The audience may doubt the accuracy of the positive norm message. By including the source of the information in the message (e.g., 'based on an anonymous student survey at your school, May 2024'), it becomes more believable to the students. Believability can be reinforced through conversations with students, teachers, staff, and parents.



Sequencing of Positive Norms Messages

It is recommended that SNMCs use a mix of descriptive and injunctive norm messages,⁵³ sequenced in a particular order. A suggested 4-step order for presenting types of norm messages is shared below.



Beginning the SNMC with non-substance use protective behaviors and attitudes provides an opportunity to engage students in the media campaign with information that they find interesting and non-threatening. There will likely be substantial disbelief and initial questioning of the results for both types of messages represented in steps 2-3 (personal behaviors and attitudes with respect to substance use) given the pervasive misperceptions of these norms. However, messages about the actual normative attitudes may present less initial rejection in comparison with messages about personal behavior. This is because high-risk use, though not normative, is particularly vivid when observed, recalled easily, and is talked about frequently among peers. As a result, these concrete images and experiences may be more resolutely inflated in students' perceptions. Thus, by beginning with what are actual normative attitudes, students may be slightly less likely to dismiss them without consideration. Then, having been shown what the true attitudes of most students are, it may be easier for students to consider that their misperceptions about peer use could be at least partially untrue. Rounding out norm messaging with protective substance-related behaviors and attitudes reinforce the primary findings about the nonuse of substances being the norm.

In general, it is more important to disseminate a diversity of messages about a single substance or two rather than focusing on many substances and only dedicating a few messages to each individual substance. If your campaign will focus on more than one substance, carefully consider whether you are able to provide adequate dosages of messaging for each substance and offer the full continuum of messaging as described in the 4-step sequence above for each individual substance. You'll also want to ensure adequate resources and space for generating media covering more than one substance. A sample academic-year message timeline for a campaign focusing on alcohol is provided in the [Appendix](#).

Additional Considerations for Message Development

Positive norms messages should be a quick and easy read. Often, the audience only has time for an eye-blink or a sound bite so positive norm messages should be short and easily remembered. It can be helpful to have 4-6 key messages for each half of the academic year and vary these messages across communication channels. The only exception may be when there is a “captive” audience (on a bus, in an elevator, bathroom stall, cafeteria line, lunch table) where the audience has more time to give their eyes and ears to the message. In these circumstances, multiple messages integrated into one media format can work.

Here are some tips to support your message development:

- Using multiple data points (i.e., survey items) unfolded over time and sequenced as described in the section above allows you to have many messages to keep the campaign fresh and interesting.
- One survey item (i.e., data point) can provide information to produce many different messages.
- Different messages may reach different audience segments. Varying your messaging to different student segments, learning styles, etc. will help more of the student population receive the positive norm message.
- Use language preferred by the students (e.g., ‘marijuana’ or ‘cannabis’?)
- Infuse the campaign with messages describing the protective norms of the population.
- Messaging should be [positive, affirming, empowering, inclusive, and supportive](#).
- Messaging should NOT depict a warning, threat, finger wagging, or “should” statements.
- Cite the credible source from which the message derives.

The developmental stage and age of the students receiving the SNMC must always be considered, including differences in use patterns at different grade levels. Because younger students often look to older students to decide how to act, it can be helpful to share with younger students the accurate healthy norms of the oldest students in the school, as these ‘prospective norms’ can be quite influential.¹⁵ For high school, positive norms for use at school-specific events (e.g., prom, homecoming, etc.) and related to driving under the influence can be integrated as long as they were included in the social norms survey. For example,

- Most ABC High School students enjoy dancing and taking photos with friends at prom. 87% choose not to use any alcohol or drugs to enjoy themselves.
- ABC High School students do not drink and drive (descriptive norm) and overwhelmingly disapprove of drinking and driving (injunctive norm).

Design Development

When designing media, remember that the positive norm message, not the graphic design, is the most critical content. If the audience only has time to see/hear one thing from the media, it should be the positive norm message. Thus, the positive norm message should be the largest and clearest element in the media with design features used to facilitate engagement with the media and not distract from it. The design features and images should never include

pictures of the problem behavior (e.g., students using substances, empty beer bottles) as these images are likely to exacerbate the misperceptions the campaign is intending to reduce.

These considerations will support your design development in a way that promotes the goal of the SNMC.

- **Themes and Taglines.** A common thread to the SNMC, such as a theme, tagline, or social media handle, can be integrated into campaign messages. A branding element might help your population more easily identify (and look for) these messages and may help with recall when you are evaluating the campaign via survey later on. Be cautious to avoid over-branding and ensure the positive norm message, not the brand, is the central focus of the media.
- **Logos.** Similar to themes and taglines, logos can be included in media as a minor element in the overall design. The logo should not detract from the positive norm message, and it should have a neutral significance.
- **Text Placement.** The positive norm message is the most important part of the media. Text should be in a readable font. It is helpful to avoid text printed over a graphic element as this can impact readability, and it is important to not overload the media with text. A simple message is easier to remember than a complex one.
- **Graphics.** Graphics that are eye-catching *and* consistent with the positive norm message can be included in media. Graphics that counter the positive norm message (e.g., car crash, hypodermic needles, beer bottles) should not be used.
- **Relatable and Inclusive.** Design elements and graphics should be relatable, culturally sensitive, and inclusive of the audience.
- **Recognizable Content.** Photos of recognizable school sites, events, community icons, and areas that appeal to the audience can increase media engagement if they are compatible with the message. However, using personally identifiable images of students is strongly discouraged. This runs the risk that the recognizable student(s) in the media is perceived as somehow counter to the campaign messaging which could undermine the campaign's believability.

If you engage a graphic design company or designer, the Implementation Team may need to orient them to the SNA to help ensure the designs will align with the goals of the campaign. Lastly, if possible, media design prototypes should be market tested with members of the student audience using the market research methods previously discussed.

Message Dissemination

Getting your norm message to the intended audience is a vital component of a successful SNMC. **Regarding exposure to the media, the Implementation Team will want to ensure that the students see most of the positive norm messages at least several times.** It is best to use as many effective media channels as possible. Market research to determine media channels that are currently used by the students is necessary. Common media channels include posters, morning announcements, table tents, stickers, yard signs, bathroom stall flyers, banners, and buttons. The ideal media channels are those that are frequently used/accessed and are perceived as credible channels for sharing health-related information. New channels for sharing information can be market tested among the student population to determine potential use.

Step 7: Monitor and Evaluate

To study the impact of your SNMC it is important to evaluate both how the campaign was implemented (i.e., monitoring the process) and the impact the intervention had in changing perceptions and behaviors (i.e., the outcome).



Monitoring, or Process, Evaluation

Monitoring, or process, evaluation gives information about how, and how well, the campaign was implemented and any challenges that arise. This type of evaluation includes tracking records of core planning and implementation activities along with other program inputs and outputs.



Outcome Evaluation

Outcome evaluation tells whether the campaign had the intended impact and includes short-term (i.e., perceptions) and long-term (i.e., behavior) outcomes.

Monitoring and evaluation are important to plan for before implementation as they prepare you to be able to make campaign adjustments quickly after an issue has been identified. In addition, documenting what and how much was accomplished (i.e., process) and whether it made any difference (i.e., the outcome) is essential in determining what needs to change to improve or justify continuation of the intervention.

Developing an evaluation plan can help organize what you want to learn from your evaluation and how you will gather the information needed. A simple evaluation plan template is available from the CDC [here](#).

Monitoring the Process

Process evaluation examines how the campaign was created and delivered. This includes what worked well and what was changed, whether there was enough time to meet your stated objectives, whether the appropriate media channels were selected, and whether there were any barriers to completing the planning and implementation processes. Key factors to consider documenting for process evaluation include:

Reach

The proportion of the intended population who received positive norm messages.

Exposure

The number of times positive norm messages were received (e.g., dosage delivered vs. received).

Comprehension

Whether those exposed to positive norm messages understood the message as it was intended.

Contamination

The extent to which outside factors may have influenced the effectiveness of the intervention. This may include simultaneous prevention interventions based on scare messages, pro-substance use media campaigns, or efforts which foster/increase the misperception.

Fidelity

The extent to which the intervention strategy was implemented as planned and in alignment with the core components of the intervention.

Focus groups with students, or a series of interviews with students, can aid in process evaluation. Once the campaign has started and students have had time to receive a few messages (for example, two months after the campaign launches), feedback can be gathered and used to make any needed adjustments. This process can help to understand whether the message is being received, how it is being received, and if the amount or dosage of messages is reasonable and acceptable. Examples of questions to ask include:

- How many of you have seen/heard [media]?
- What was your reaction to them?
- How well did they catch your attention?
- Did you believe the information shared? What made it believable? What would make the information more believable?
- Was there anything you liked or disliked about them and why?
- What stood out the most and why?
- Would you like to see more or less of this information? Did you get tired of seeing it?
- Would you like to see [preferences for language, recognizable school colors, and images, percentages vs. ratios, etc.]?

Sometimes students are more forthcoming about their doubts if they are asked 'what would your friends think about this message?'

A sample focus group protocol with questions can be found in the [Appendix](#).

Process evaluation also supports continuous quality improvement. It may help uncover potential barriers such as lack of buy-in, limited staff time, or logistical challenges. For example, cleaning staff may dislike a certain type of media on cafeteria tables or floors because it increases their time spent cleaning after school. Process evaluation may also uncover opportunities such as engagement between school staff and parents/caregivers. For example, the campaign may encourage conversations at PTA meetings about the positive behaviors of students. Questions the Implementation Team can ask to support campaign improvement include:

- How well is the implementation plan being followed?
- Where are there deviations from fidelity to the SNA?
- How is the process affecting the intended audience(s)?
- Where are there opportunities to enhance messaging opportunities in new and creative ways?

Outcome Evaluation

Outcome evaluation examines the impact the campaign had in changing perceptions attitudes, and behaviors. In a SNMC, success is typically determined by looking at the following outcomes:

- Perceptions of peers' typical behaviors and attitudes
 - Measure whether the perceptions of the intended audience became more accurate regarding beliefs about peer substance use
- Substance use and protective behaviors and attitudes
 - Determine whether any intended shifts toward more accurate perceptions were accompanied by lowered actual levels of substance use and fewer students needing help for substance-related problems and injuries
- Reductions in negative consequences
 - If collected at baseline, re-assess to determine if the intervention led to a reduction of negative consequences related to substance use

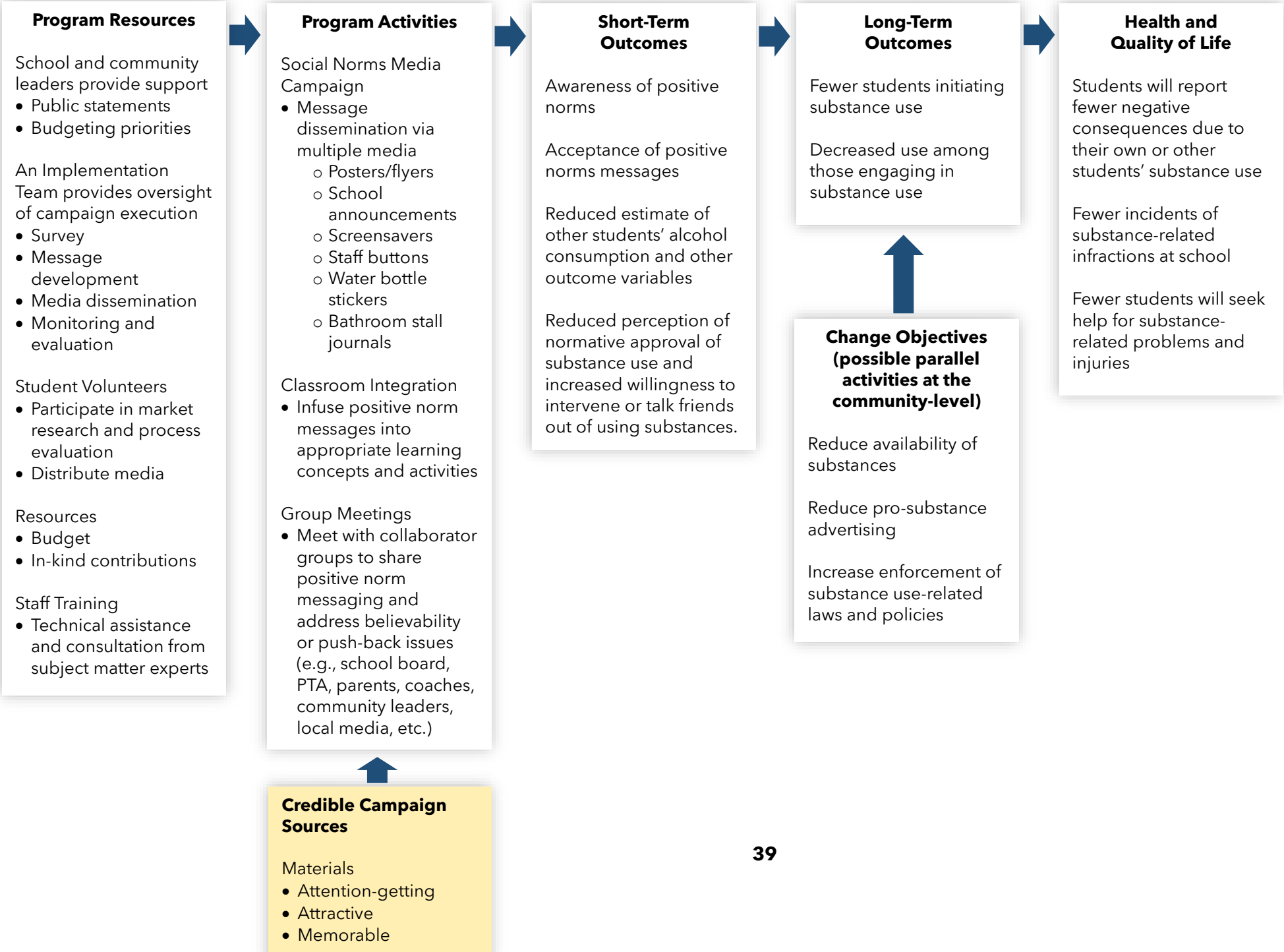
The timing of your outcome evaluation will naturally influence your results. Perceptions take time to shift, and behavior change follows changes in perception. Thus, the ideal timeline for evaluating a SNMC would be to evaluate short-term outcomes at one-year post baseline, and long-term outcomes at two years post baseline. Short and long-term outcomes include:

- Short-term outcomes: reduced misperceptions/increased accurate perceptions of norms such as increasing the correct perception that most youth do not use substances
- Long-term outcomes: positive behavior change such as reduced substance use among the student population

Beyond these outcomes, think about what other outcomes (if any) might be important and meaningful to report to you. Questions to help you consider additional outcomes are below:

- What key concerns exist in the community/schools, and across collaborator groups?
- What results are funders interested in, that would build support for sustaining the campaign?
- What other positive attitudes and behaviors are important to uncover and bring attention to?

Planning Model: SNMC ²⁰





KEY MESSAGES:

- In order to achieve the goal of substance use prevention, the SNMC must first reduce a population's overestimation of the prevalence of substance use and underestimation of healthy, protective behaviors.
- It is vital to engage collaborators and assemble an Implementation Team committed to the planning, delivery, and evaluation of the SNMC. School and community partner champions can work with subject matter experts to create an effective campaign.
- A SNMC requires a thoughtful approach and consistent resources of personnel, time, and cost. It is important to be aware of co-occurring school-based activities related to substance use prevention and work with the individual(s) overseeing those activities to ensure there is common shared messaging related to the positive norms of the student population.
- Data that comes from youth directly is more powerful than data pulled from other sources such as state and national-level databases. The more local the data can be the more credible and relevant it is likely to be perceived. Data to collect includes:
 - Personal behaviors and attitudes with respect to substance use
 - Perceptions of peers' typical behaviors and attitudes with respect to substance use
 - Personal protective behaviors and attitudes to avoid us
- Engage in market research to inform the development and dissemination of messages and media design.
- Plan to evaluate both how the campaign was created and delivered (i.e., monitoring the process) and the impact the intervention had in changing perceptions and behaviors (i.e., the outcome)



Implementing a Social Norms Media Campaign

The implementation phase is when you will develop and disseminate media while monitoring campaign implementation. During this phase, the student population (along with school personnel) will be exposed to positive norm messaging on a mass scale. As you launch the SNMC, you will want to track and assess implementation (process evaluation) to make sure the campaign stays on track. The Implementation Team may find it helpful to designate one person to track aspects of implementation. Having a single point of contact reduces the likelihood that pieces of implementation will be missed or not captured.

What to Track

Use your work plan and social norms media timeline as references of what must be completed and when. Check activities off as they are achieved and document variances that may contribute to or hinder campaign outcomes. You may also track other process measures as described above, such as Implementation Team meetings and co-occurring substance-related activities (e.g., Red Ribbon Week, drug presentations by other groups). Tracking implementation fidelity makes it easier to make mid-course corrections if there are unexpected barriers such as inclement weather days that force schools to close or delay implementation for a significant period. If changes to the work plan need to be made, feasibility, usability, acceptability, and adaptability need to be revisited to ensure the campaign can move forward with the right modifications.

Student exposure to positive norm messages can also be tracked. It's recommended that you create a log of what media were disseminated when, where, and to what degree (e.g., how many posters were put up during each batch of posters). This detailed record of media dissemination will aid in evaluation and inform communication channel and media needs as the campaign continues. As previously described, it will be important to track student response and reaction to the campaign messaging, such as exposure, perceived credibility of message source, etc.

Campaign Outreach

As your SNMC is being implemented, the Implementation Team may decide to share information about the campaign with parents/caregivers, local media, decision makers, and other key collaborators to highlight the campaign for those who are not part of daily school activities. Feedback on campaign implementation from the Implementation Team, students, staff, teachers, and others could be shared.

Engaging the local community could provide opportunities to enhance implementation. As community members learn about the campaign, they may choose to support the campaign activities in different ways. For example, in one community where a middle school implemented a SNMC, members of the community were asked to include positive norm messaging throughout the community (e.g., yard signs, on shopping carts). Other ways the local community can be engaged is through reinforcing the positive norm messaging within their reach (as parents, leaders, newscasters, etc.) and securing financial support from funding organizations.

Addressing Skepticism or Push Back

A SNMC, by definition, introduces cognitive dissonance because it informs students (as well as teachers, staff, and parents/caregivers) that what they think about youth substance use is not true. Historically, these populations have seen and heard only information that states or implies that youth substance use is a problem. Yet, every credible source of information about youth substance use shows that only a small minority use substances.⁴⁹⁻⁵⁰ Introducing cognitive dissonance by sharing positive norm messages may result in students, parents/caregivers, and school staff reacting to the campaign data with skepticism and disbelief, and they may in turn try to find reasons to discredit the data. When this happens, common reactions include statements suggesting that most students did not tell the truth when they took the survey, that the sample was biased, or that something about the time and place of the administration compromised the validity of the data.

It is important that we take these questions and doubts seriously and engage in constructive dialogue about the survey results. Ask those who are skeptical why they have come to these conclusions. Then provide a response that informs them of the measures taken to ensure accuracy of the data. Some examples of how SNMCs in middle and high schools have addressed these concerns are shared below.

Concern: Students did not tell the truth.

Research has demonstrated that when a survey is confidential (i.e. no one's responses can be identified) people tend to be honest. This can be explained to those expressing this concern and the confidentiality of the survey methods described. In some cases, schools choose to include a question at the end of the survey asking respondents if they told the truth. It is the experience of the authors that this question will elicit responses in the high 90% range. Share this data in response to this concern. Even if people can object that this 'honesty' question has not been answered truthfully, it provides more data to support the accuracy of the data. In classroom discussions, teachers can ask their students how many answered honestly and if the overwhelming majority raise their hands, this can lessen any doubt. Asking this question in a classroom can also be done anonymously using blank slips of paper or electronic "clickers" to get the group's immediate response.

Concern: The survey sample was not representative of the intended audience.

Students and school staff may come up with interesting reasons to explain that the survey sample was biased. For example, in one high school the survey was administered during gym class. The student rumor mill was buzzing with the idea that the students who do the most drugs or drink the most alcohol tend to skip gym, and therefore weren't responding to the survey. To evaluate this concern, administrators were asked for the number of students who had an unexcused absence from gym on the day of the survey. When this number was provided, bogus survey responses demonstrating extremely high use were generated and put into the data set representing absentees consistent with the claim that those who did not take the survey were high-risk users. When this was done it was found that the overall numbers did not change that much. For example, if 87% had used only once or not at all in the past month, the number shifted down to 85% when the bogus high-use gym skipper's surveys were included. This demonstrated to the students that their claim would not produce the anticipated results even if it were true.

Concern: The survey was not appropriately administered

Some people may question the administration of the social norms survey. In one high school, the surveys were handed out in class and then returned to the teacher who put them in an envelope and brought it to the principal's office. This procedure generated the claim that students were not being honest because they feared that the teacher might look at their surveys. This concern was addressed the following year by having the teachers leave the room for the survey administration. Surveys were distributed by trained student leaders, who then placed all the completed surveys in an envelope, sealed the envelope in front of the students, and brought it to the principal's office before the teacher returned. As a result, the confidentiality concerns were resolved.

Questions and concerns about your SNMC should be taken seriously and patiently addressed. In these examples of skepticism, the Implementation Team took time to address and alleviate concerns. In addition, it is important to explain to students (and others) the reasons for the misperception, so that they can understand why the data is accurate. These reasons include:

- **Extreme behavior is more visible.** For example, students are more likely to be noticed at a party if they engage in more extreme behavior.
- **Public conversation focuses on extreme behavior.** Acknowledge how the misperception of party behavior is spread by how people talk about the party, i.e. who did what rather than who didn't. This spreads the misperception to others who were not there.
- **Media and news organizations focus on the negative.** It is rare to see a newspaper article documenting that most students do not smoke, drink, or use drugs. Problem events are typically considered as 'news.' While there is no reason to ignore problem events, they must be contextualized and explained accurately.
- **Leaders may unintentionally spread the misperception.** As adults serving in leadership roles such as teachers, administrators, and public leaders, we too are at risk of focusing on the negative and overlooking the positive.

We can see from the above examples that spreading true positive norms is only the first step in implementing a SNMC, not the final one. Once media dissemination has begun, it is important to generate 'public conversation' about the positive norm messages reflected in the media and solicit concerns and doubts so that they may be addressed.

Responding to Co-Occurring Substance-Related Events and Activities

In the ideal situation, a school-based SNMC would represent one activity within a larger set of activities informed by a school or community-based prevention strategy. Co-occurring activities supported by the best available evidence in substance use prevention can work together to achieve shared outcomes. It is important to recognize, however, that there continues to be misconceptions about the effectiveness of several frequently used strategies aimed at substance use prevention.

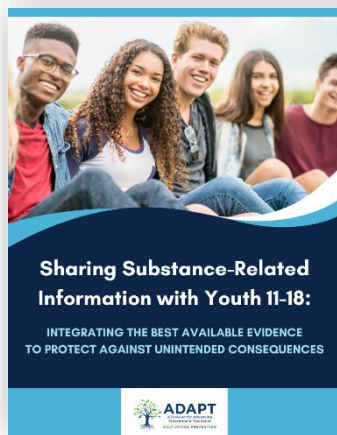
Activities such as personal testimonials, fear-based messaging and scare tactics, and sharing information focused only on negative consequences of substance use have overwhelmingly been shown to be ineffective at preventing substance use, and in some cases, potentially harmful.⁵⁴ Yet these activities still occur. From a social norms perspective, any event, program,

or guest speaker that makes comments or displays information that focuses on the problem without acknowledging the fact that student use is not the norm threatens the effectiveness of the SNMC.

For this reason, the Implementation Team needs to track co-occurring school-based activities related to substance use prevention, and work with the individual(s) overseeing those activities to ensure there is common shared messaging related to the positive norms of the student population. For example:

- Red Ribbon Week activities can promote positive behavioral norms that most students do not use and share other relevant information, such as the many reasons students list for avoiding substances.
- Law enforcement officer visits and presentations focused on sharing information about substance use can cushion this information by speaking first about the school's positive norm messages and describing how safe the community is and how the police make very few youth arrests in the community.
- A guest speaker assembly can transform presentations on the harms of substance use to instead focus on congratulating students on their positive choices and sharing the many alternatives students describe to relieve anxiety or boredom without using substances.

At the core of these examples is a paradigm shift away from focusing on the negative and toward promoting the positive that exists within the student population. These suggestions also recognize that there is value in sharing substance-related information and resources. It is important to acknowledge the problems that do exist and to contextualize them appropriately. The opportunity to do this lies in sharing this type of information in a way that is consistent with the SNA.



Interested in Learning More?

[Sharing Substance-Related Information with Youth 11-18](#) is one resource to support you in applying the social norms framework to sharing of substance-related information.

[Explore the Report >](#)

Responding to Substance-Related Tragedies

Another common threat to a SNMC occurs when there is an unfortunate tragedy in the community such as an overdose death, a car crash, or major violation or arrest. The media and public conversation that accompanies these events almost always focus on the problem

and exaggerates the prevalence of use. This over-attention to substance use seems to directly challenge the social norms media that states most do not use.

To help reduce the potential threat of these situations on the SNMC, the Implementation Team can work with local media, law enforcement, health professionals, and others by encouraging them to reframe their approach around sharing this information. In communications, this reframing is called “bridging”. The speaker “bridges” from the tragedy to the norm message. First, there is acknowledgement of the reality of the tragedy followed by a “bridge” to the norm message--youth use is not the norm.

Example: There was a terrible overdose death in our community this week. Fortunately, such tragedies are rare because most youth choose to avoid substance use and find it important to support their friends in seeking help.



KEY MESSAGES:

- Track and assess implementation to ensure the campaign stays on track and the desired level of student exposure to messaging is achieved.
- A SNMC, by definition, introduces cognitive dissonance because it informs students (as well as teachers, staff, and parents/caregivers) that what they think is not true. Be prepared to address skepticism or doubts about the accuracy of positive norm messages.
- Engage the community as a tool for spreading true positive norms and addressing concerns and events that may arise related to youth substance use engagement.

Evaluating a Social Norms Media Campaign

Evaluation of the SNMC is highly beneficial. If this is the first time introducing a SNMC in a school, local school officials, community members, and funding agencies will likely want to see evidence of a positive effect to sustain an ongoing program over several years. Ongoing evaluation over subsequent years ensures the campaign continues to be implemented with fidelity and is achieving the desired outcomes.

A comprehensive evaluation of a SNMC requires background and experience in SNA and program evaluation. In some instances, there may not be someone on the Implementation Team or part of the school staff who has the skills in research methodology and quantitative analysis needed to conduct an adequate evaluation. If schools are going to use their own internal or external resources to secure an evaluator, it is essential the evaluator understand the SNA to prevention. An evaluation expert who understands the basic principles of the SNA will understand the nuances within the data and draw more accurate conclusions about the campaign's impact. For example, a more detailed evaluation will be important in helping uncover what went wrong or potentially what could have been done better to achieve the goals of the intervention. The fundamental theory and logic of the approach should not be in question, given the substantial research that already exists supporting the basic claims about students' tendency to misperceive peer substance use norms and the negative influence of those misperceived norms along with reports of projects obtaining a positive result. An intervention may "fail" or appear to be less effective than expected, however, for a variety of reasons unrelated to the basic theoretical logic of the intervention.

Fundamentally, for the SNMC to work, it must have some initial impact on students' perceptions of peer norms, specifically reducing students' perceptions of the extent of peer permissiveness about substance use and perceptions of the extent of peer's actual use. In some instances, if the intervention period has been short and the intensity of the campaign has been limited, you may notice limited change in perception has occurred, but with little time to sink in through public conversation, it has not yet had notable impact on personal behavior. More often, if no change in personal attitudes and behaviors has occurred, this simply reflects the fact that perceptions were not altered at all by the intervention. One cannot expect an impact of the campaign on personal attitudes and behaviors if the critical factor targeted by the intervention—perceived norms—has not been significantly shifted toward more accurate, positive norms. Thus, a project assessment evaluating whether and to what extent a positive impact was achieved, must consider not only the ultimate goal (reducing or preventing personal substance use), but also the intermediate objective (reducing misperceptions of the norm) in a SNMC.

If reductions in (mis)perceived norms regarding substance use were not accomplished during the campaign, this lack of result might be attributable to one or more problems that may be identified in an evaluation of the intervention. First, there might have been an incident (tragic overdose, local drug arrests or other police action, a local newspaper story about the community problem, etc.) or a simultaneous competing campaign or initiative being conducted in the school or local community during the intervention period that served to heighten the misperception while the campaign was working in the opposite direction to reduce misperceptions. Second, the campaign messages or images themselves could have been confusing or counterproductive (as cautioned against in earlier portions of this guide). Third, the campaign simply may not have achieved enough message exposure to generate

the level of message recall and public conversation about the messages that is needed to make an impact.

This third point about campaign exposure is, perhaps, the most common factor leading to a determination of “failure” for campaigns that do not produce reductions in misperception of the norm and personal substance use. While there is no magic number or empirically verified amount of message exposure that can absolutely predict or assure the success of a SNMC, there are some guidelines that have been casually suggested by people working on projects that have achieved success. These guidelines must consider both individual engagement with the messages and aggregate population characteristics. For example, it has been suggested as a general principle of individual recall that someone may need to read or hear something as many as 7 to 10 times before they can accurately and quickly recall it when asked to do so. Thus, if students see or hear a campaign message about the peer norm only two or three times over the course of an academic year, this message may be easily crowded out of one’s recall about characteristics of their peers. Furthermore, if changing the public conversation about student life to reflect accurate norms is a crucial element for correcting perceptions of peer norm, then getting a significant majority of the student body brought into the conversation—not just a minority of students talking about the messages that appear in the campaign—is also essential.

Thus, adequate exposure in this regard may mean having a large majority of the population acknowledging having seen or heard the messages frequently. Finally, another potentially key element of adequate exposure may refer to when students are confronted with messages about actual norms delivered by multiple diverse forms of communication. Not all students get their information and find the information credible from the same source. Hearing or reading the same message from multiple sources may have a cooperative and more convincing effect over time. Thus, a thorough evaluation analysis will include measures of the frequency of individuals seeing or hearing messages of the actual peer norm, measures of how pervasive this frequent exposure is throughout the population, and measures of the range of communication forms delivering messages to students through multiple venues. Ideally, the survey used for evaluation purposes might also include both questions measuring recall of messages that do not prompt students with examples and then introduce subsequent questions at a later point in the survey that ask about recall of messages using specific examples of language and imagery used in the campaign to measure prompted recall. The evaluation (post-test) survey example provided in this guide includes all the types of questions indicated here that might be used for impact assessment.

Many other methodological concerns arise in the discussion of evaluation techniques in general and specifically regarding social norms interventions. While not all the methodological issues surrounding an outcome evaluation of a SNMC can be covered in this brief overview, some of the most common topics are noted below for consideration. While some methodological strategies have obvious advantages for evaluation purposes, most strategies have both strengths and weaknesses that make practical choices among options a balancing act between what is the ideal approach in the local school situation and what is possible in practice at the school.

Methodological Considerations

Sampling Frame

It is usually best to conduct both the pre-test (baseline survey) and post-test (evaluation survey) with the entire secondary school population if possible. That way the data collected for both messaging and for assessment will most likely be comprehensive and representative of the school population, assuming high response rates can be achieved, and assuming the pre-post comparison will potentially be the most straightforward procedure. This approach is most feasible and recommended in small school populations. In very large school populations, it may not be practical or possible to survey the entire school population due to limited resources or time frame constraints. In these situations, a random sample (meaning random selection without any bias) from the list of students or list of classes might be chosen as the sampling frame to survey.

Schools that take a whole school approach and administer the survey to all students can be confident that their data accurately reflects the norms of the student population as long as response rates are high. Convenience samples (e.g., selecting students who are available on a free period used for clubs or other student activities or selecting elective classes where a teacher might have an interest in the topic or that might reflect only certain demographic characteristics or academic levels) should be avoided due to inherent biases introduced through this type of selection. If a particular type of class(es) is chosen for the sampling frame as a convenience sample, it is essential that the classes be ones that all students in each grade are required to take during the year (e.g. English, Physical Education, Math, etc.) so that the most representative sample of students can be attained. Representativeness can be determined by whether those completing the survey are different demographically from those who do not. When a representative sample cannot be obtained, data can be weighted to the true population.

Response Rates

Whether a whole school (i.e., census) or sampling method was used, the response rate for the social norms survey is an important consideration when interpreting the data. The lower the response rate, the greater the chance that some bias in sample characteristics may be introduced that affects the representativeness of the sample. Such bias can call into question the validity of the messages or the accuracy of the impact of the intervention. Ideally, researchers like to see response rates above 70% though in practice response rates at 60% or higher are seen as good. When response rates fall below 50% this may be a concern because the responding sample is, by definition, not normative. This concern with a lower response rate, however, may be mitigated if the sample is truly representative and random.

Irrespective of response rates in the baseline and evaluation surveys, the social and demographic characteristics of students within each sample should be compared. If pre- and post-test samples are similar or essentially the same in terms of social and demographic characteristics, this will provide greater confidence that any difference found in perceived norms or personal use of substances between the two time points is not just a reflection of different sample characteristics. If differences exist, statistical procedures might be introduced in the evaluation to control for any differences in the basic profile of the pre- and post-test samples.

Timing of Pre- and Post-Test Surveys

Several factors must be considered when scheduling the survey time frames. First, it is important to avoid certain times for both the baseline and evaluation surveys when alcohol and substance use may have been notably lower or higher than is usually the case (e.g., during exam or testing periods, immediately after holidays associated with drinking, or after prom or other big fall or spring social events). In general, these times may inflate or deflate estimates of typical use in general and could be disruptive to an accurate pre/post comparison of use for assessing campaign impact.

Another consideration for timing the surveys has to do with the problem of “perverse maturation.” As students grow older, they inherently encounter more opportunities for risk-taking, and specifically, for substance use. Over the course of nine months one can expect some level of increase in substance use in a population of youth as the cohort grows older. Thus, an intervention may have some degree of positive effect decreasing use, but the increase of risk due to growing older may also move the needle in the opposite direction leaving the appearance of no change overall in the population (even though use would have been higher without the intervention). Corrections for this ‘perverse maturation’ can be accounted for by those conducting the evaluation based on typical increases expected in the local population, but the evaluation becomes more complex in so doing.

If funding and institutional commitment to a SNMC allow for a two-year intervention in a local school setting, the project will benefit from this somewhat longer time frame for the intervention (and greater opportunity for impact) and the evaluation survey can be conducted at the same time in the following academic year as the time for the baseline survey in the previous year. Thus, the problem of ‘perverse maturation’ might be eliminated in this circumstance because the age of the cohorts in the baseline and evaluation surveys may be essentially the same with the two samples being drawn at the same time of year. The complication in this instance, however, is that the demographic characteristics of the students in the following or subsequent academic year of the campaign may have shifted as new cohorts move into the younger grades and the oldest cohorts have moved out. Thus, once again, an evaluator will need to pay close attention to and potentially control for any variation in baseline and evaluation surveys that are conducted across academic years.

Another option for evaluations of campaigns that involve multiple academic years is to compare, for example, the responses of 7th graders in the first-year baseline survey with their responses as 8th graders in the second-year evaluation survey. This will assure a better comparison of impact for the same group of students over time, but one is then again confronted with the need to take ‘perverse maturation’ into account when looking at the differences between one year and the next.

How to Approach the SNMC Outcome Evaluation

As described thus far in this section, there are several important factors to consider when evaluating the impact of a SNMC. A thorough impact evaluation will necessitate a skilled evaluator familiar with the SNA. To reiterate, there are several critical questions to ask when evaluating the impact of the SNMC ⁴⁸:

- Was there significant exposure to the campaign’s positive norm messages?

- Did student perceptions change?
- Did student attitudes and/or behaviors change?
- Has there been a reduction in negative consequences associated with substance use?

A few steps in the process of getting answers to these questions include:

1. Clean the data. Scan the data for inconsistent patterns of responding (e.g., zero lifetime use but used 30 times in the past month), random responding (e.g., each item has a response option of 1), and largely incomplete responses. Omit them from the database.
2. Gather descriptive statistics to compare baseline and evaluation samples on demographic characteristics (e.g., percent male vs female, grade level).
3. Examine the campaign exposure questions from the evaluation (post-test) survey. Overall, does the sample report low (2-3 times), medium (4-6 times), or high (7-10 times) degrees of exposure? The higher the exposure, the more confident you can be that your campaign provided adequate dosage.
4. Compare perceived peer attitudes/behaviors with actual attitudes/behaviors to calculate the degree of misperception on substance use attitudes and behaviors.
5. Run inferential statistics such as logistic regression to assess rate of change over time for attitudinal and behavioral norms.

To simply look at two data points (e.g., 60% at pre-test and 50% at post-test) does not allow for conclusions about change to be drawn. Inferential statistics are required to draw conclusions about change over time by controlling for error in the data and determining whether change is real or due to random chance.



KEY MESSAGES:

- For the SNMC to work, it must have some initial impact on students' perceptions of peer norms, specifically reducing students' perceptions of the extent of peer permissiveness about substance use and perceptions of the extent of peer's actual use. Consider the duration and exposure of the campaign to contextualize changes in perceptions and behaviors over time.
- As students grow older, they inherently encounter more opportunities for risk-taking, and specifically, for substance use. Corrections for this 'perverse maturation' can be accounted for by whomever is conducting the evaluation based on typical increases expected in the local population.
- Inferential statistics are essential for measuring change over time.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do we develop messaging if our social norms survey data show that most students do use substances?

It is highly unlikely in a middle or high school that all substance use items asked about in the survey will yield a majority positive (50+%) response, especially if survey items use time frames more circumscribed than “ever in your lifetime.” However, in a few instances among students in higher grade levels, it may be the case for a subset of items. If more than 50% report using a substance, the SNMC cannot claim, “most students choose not to use that substance.” There are a couple of solutions to this issue.

- Develop positive norm messages for any other substances in which the majority reported non-use and for other positive norms identified (e.g., not engaging in high-risk use, caring about others, wanting to intervene, etc.)
- Positive norm messages may still be crafted for substances where the majority use if data show a majority disapprove of student use of the substance in question. When a majority indicates approval or disapproval of a behavior that constitutes an injunctive norm. Injunctive norms are often held by greater percentages of the population than descriptive norms.
- Consider re-wording survey questions in future survey administrations. As noted above, the most likely scenario in which a school may have many students reporting use of a substance would be on questions of lifetime use. Focusing on more recent (and more relevant) use by asking about past year and past 30-day use may circumvent this issue while also providing accurate and relevant norm data to share in your campaign.

How do we avoid making students who do use substances feel different than, or marginalized, from the larger student population?

In some cases, a student or parent or caregiver of a student who uses substances may feel that the positive norm messages marginalize those who do engage in substance use. Positive norm messages describe the “norm” of a population. This may lead to a sense of being excluded or different from one’s peers when hearing/reading that most students do not use and do not approve of youth substance use. One strategy for circumventing this challenge is to include, in a subset of campaign media, messaging aimed at students who engage in substance use. This could include a statement describing how to access resources or support to help in making changes to limit or abstain from substance use.

Samples of these types of statements include:

- “Most ABC High School students would talk with and support a friend who wanted to get treatment for substance use. Reach out to someone you trust to talk about your situation or visit our counseling office for more information and to get started.”
- “Most students approve of not drinking alcohol. At the same time, students care for each other and want to be resources to help prevent others from using or getting hurt. In fact, most ABC High School students said they would actively intervene to reduce harm and protect their peers from potentially dangerous situations.”

How can we reach specific audiences or special populations within the SNMC?

SNMCs are generally described as a “universal prevention” strategy, meaning they seek mass population change by exposing whole populations (audiences) to normative data through media. When populations at higher risk or with special needs are selected for a prevention effort, these programs are described as “selective or indicated prevention.”

If a social norm project decides to address a special population with media efforts, it is important that the media be seen/heard only by the selected audience. For example, if the entire student population sees media describing a select group as heavier users with media focused on harm reduction strategies, the broader student population may see substance use as normative or perceive those in the selected audience as deviant. In a school setting, it can be difficult to reach different segments of the population. Thus, it is advised that the school focus on a universal SNMC. Studies indicate that successful SNMCs have a positive impact in preventing substance use as well as decreasing use when it has already been initiated.²⁰ That said, a secondary message could be added to a primary universal message that states, ‘If you are among the X% who use...’ Another way to reach the selected audience with more harm reduction normative messages (e.g., most students who drink do not drink and drive), if that data has been collected, would be to do so via personal or written communications that will only be received by the intended audience.

How do we ensure the SNMC is seen as inclusive and relevant to our diverse student groups?

One strategy to address this is to ensure your media is **positive, inclusive, and empowering**.

- **Positive:** Media, messages, and interactions with students should be stated/described in an affirming and positive manner. It is difficult to model and teach the absence of behavior. Thus the campaign, where possible, should describe the positive and healthy behaviors the typical student does rather than what students do not do.
- **Inclusive:** Media, messages, and interactions with students should be stated/described in multiple languages when a large percentage of students use a second language. Variations of the same message using different media (i.e., separate posters) can also be created to tailor the message or design to students with different interests and identities (e.g., a sports image on one example, music and arts on another, etc.).
- **Empowering:** The campaign should make every effort to provide students with the power to succeed. Media, messages, and interactions with students should be stated/described in a manner that highlights and focuses on student assets and abilities. An empowering campaign seeks to identify attitudes and behaviors already being used by students at the school to successfully navigate their environment without using substances. The campaign then incorporates these protective behaviors and attitudes into the media.

When testing your media with students, access students from diverse groups and ask questions about what would make the media more positive, inclusive, and empowering.

How do we adapt our approach across grades?

This guide is designed to provide key considerations for implementing a SNMC in middle, junior and high school settings. Within these settings, student ages range from approximately 9 to 18 years old. There are significant developmental differences between this age range that need to be considered. For example, the age of the intended audience should be taken into consideration when designing media, creating the wording of messages, addressing pushback and believability issues, and choosing what data to present. Media that may appeal to younger students may not appeal to older students.

Another issue to consider is the pattern of use within a particular age group. Although almost all schools will have a majority of students who do not use substances, with increasing age a greater percentage will engage in substance use and may even begin to suffer negative outcomes associated with use. Thus, the messages promoted in the campaign may be different as patterns of use increase with age.

Developmental considerations can be addressed by conducting focus groups and with students before and during the campaign to determine what appeals to a particular age group and to document what concerns they may have about the campaign itself. School staff of different grade levels are an important resource and will be knowledgeable about developmental issues and how to tailor the campaign to a particular age group. Throughout the guide, developmental considerations in the planning, implementation, and evaluation processes are explicitly drawn out.



How do we work to mitigate any opposition (disbelief) or critics of the campaign?

Some pushback or skepticism in response to true positive norm messaging is to be expected from the intended audience (e.g., the youth), associated populations (e.g., adults who interact with the youth), and others who may be involved in prevention programming. Actions to address pushback and minimize skepticism include:

- Train implementers to view pushback and skepticism as a helpful response because it means that the messages were viewed and that people are grappling with the information.
- Provide messaging reinforcements over time (repeated exposures with a variety of true positive norms messaging).
- Ensure the data presented in the positive norm messaging are accurate and come from a credible source.
- Conduct small group discussions with the intended audience about their (mis)perceptions, actual positive norms, their own behavior, and the links between them.
- If you have a large enough group, try techniques in the moment to demonstrate misperceptions such as real-time anonymous data collection about perceived norms and personal behavior. Providing immediate feedback about the collected data (especially those showing misperceived norms) helps people believe the positive norm messaging.
- Intentionally disseminate messaging to affiliated adults (e.g., parents, caregivers, teachers, etc.) so that a broader population is grappling with the messages and prevention is not only directed at the youth.
- Offer small group discussions with affiliated adults about how misperceived norms arise, why they matter, where data in the positive norms messaging come from, and how to find and frame positive norm messaging.



Appendix

WHAT'S INSIDE:

- Key definitions
- Review of the effectiveness of the Social Norms Approach
- Case Studies
- Sample Resources
 - Implementation Plan
 - Notification to parents/caregivers about the campaign and social norms survey
 - Orientation to and informational video on the SNMC
 - Parent/Caregiver
 - School Personnel
 - Guidance on the role and training of site champions
 - Recruiting and training trusted adults
 - Baseline social norms survey
 - Social norms survey report
 - Social norms survey summary report for collaborators
 - Social norms media timeline: Academic Year 1
 - Sample academic-year messaging
 - Focus group protocol: media and message development
 - Focus group protocol: process evaluation
 - Evaluation survey
- References

Key Definitions

Social norms	The standards that define what beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors are considered acceptable within a social group. ⁵⁵
Descriptive norms	Behavioral norms that represent how people in a group actually behave. ⁵⁶
Injunctive norms	Attitudinal norms that represent beliefs about what others approve of or how they expect someone ought to behave. ⁵⁷
Actual norms	What most people within a reference group actually think and do, typically based on aggregated self-reports or observations. ⁵⁸
Perceived norms	Individuals' perceptions about what most people in a given group do and support. ⁵⁸
Misperceived norms	Incorrectly held beliefs about the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of others (i.e., a gap between actual and perceived norms). ⁵⁸⁻⁵⁹
Protective norms	What most people within a reference group believe (attitude) and do (behavior) that is healthy, positive, or protective. ¹¹
Collective group norms	What group members in the aggregate think each other believe and do. ⁵⁶
Collective community norms	What community members collectively think each other believe and do. ⁵⁶
Social Norms Approach	Aims to increase positive attitudes and behaviors by correcting the overestimation of negative attitudes and behaviors and the underestimation of positive attitudes and behaviors. ³²
Social norms media campaign	An intervention designed to correct misperceptions an intended audience has of each other's attitudes and behaviors with respect to substance use by bringing their attention to the true, positive norms that exist among them through a multimedia campaign. ^{48,60}
Individual norms correction	The provision of normative feedback to an individual after that person has completed a survey or screening tool about their own substance use behavior and attitudes and their perceptions of the use and attitudes of others; also referred to as personalized normative feedback. ⁶¹
Group normative feedback	Provision of normative feedback by highlighting discrepancies between actual and perceived norms within a group environment; also referred to as the group norms challenging approach. ²⁴
Evidence-based	Demonstrated to have the intended effect. Registries of evidence-based strategies can be found at the Prevention Intervention Resource Center .

Review of Effectiveness

Social norms are the perceived standards that define what beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors are considered acceptable within a social group.⁵⁵ Norms are very powerful in shaping how individuals think and behave. In fact, the perception of the social norm is one of the strongest predictors of personal behavior.^{21,62} Yet perceived norms (i.e., what individuals think their peers do and believe) often do not align with actual peer norms (i.e., what most peers actually think and do).^{17,21}

For example, the vast majority, and a growing number, of American youth are **choosing not to use any substances**, especially illicit drugs.¹² Yet both youth and adults overwhelmingly overestimate the number of 11–18-year-olds who use substances (especially alcohol, nicotine, and marijuana). People tend to believe that substance use and tolerance of substance use are more common than they actually are (e.g., “everyone drinks”, “most parents let their kids drink”, “most peers don’t try to prevent friends’ substance use.”^{15,5} In reality, the most common attitudes and behaviors among youth (and their parents) are positive, healthy, and protective.

The SNMC aims to increase positive attitudes and behaviors by correcting the overestimation of negative attitudes and behaviors and the underestimation of positive attitudes and behaviors. Correcting misperceptions occurs by identifying the positive behavioral and attitudinal norms of a group and effectively communicating those norms to the population of interest through social norms marketing.^{12,63} Research has shown that as misperceptions are corrected, behavior change follows. So, when youth are exposed to messages that explain the positive, true norms that most youth make healthy choices and engage in prosocial activities, they are more likely to take part in those positive behaviors.¹¹

The social norms approach has been well studied in high school and college age populations and the literature on middle school-aged youth is growing. This research shows that social norms have consistently been found to influence adolescent risky behaviors, such as substance use.²⁹ In addition, middle and high school-aged youth overestimate the number of their peers who engage in substance use.^{5,15} These findings have been replicated across substances, grades, large and small schools, and geographical regions.¹⁵

A review of the literature suggests that the social norms approach is an appropriate strategy for youth substance use prevention. Early work found that normative education significantly reduced alcohol, marijuana, and cigarette smoking among junior high students.⁶⁴ More recent research has demonstrated the effectiveness of SNMCs more broadly in youth populations. For example, several studies in both community and school-based settings have found that SNMCs were effective at correcting youth misperceptions related to substance use and ultimately leading to decreased substance use.^{11,15,45}

Factors related to campaign effectiveness have also been studied. One study found that levels of social norms messaging exposure, recall, and satisfaction were associated with higher preventive effect.⁶¹ Specifically, youth exposed to social norms messages were less likely to overestimate peer alcohol use and less likely to report alcohol-related harms.⁶¹ In conclusion, as a universal prevention strategy, the SNMC can be used to prevent the onset and escalation of substance use in youth.

Case Studies

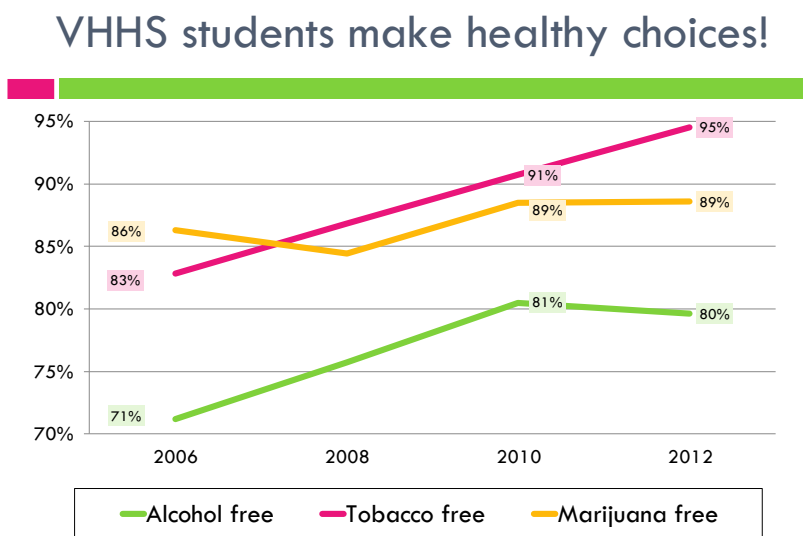
Case Study 1: Vernon Hills High School, Vernon Hills, IL, 2006-2012

Vernon Hills High School is a suburban school in Vernon Hills IL, located north of metropolitan Chicago. In collaboration with the Lake County Health Department, a grant was applied for from the State of Illinois Department of Human Services to conduct a social norms media campaign to address alcohol and other drug use in the school. The campaign was evaluated by the Health Department staff.

Outcomes reported in the evaluation at the end of the four-year campaign included:

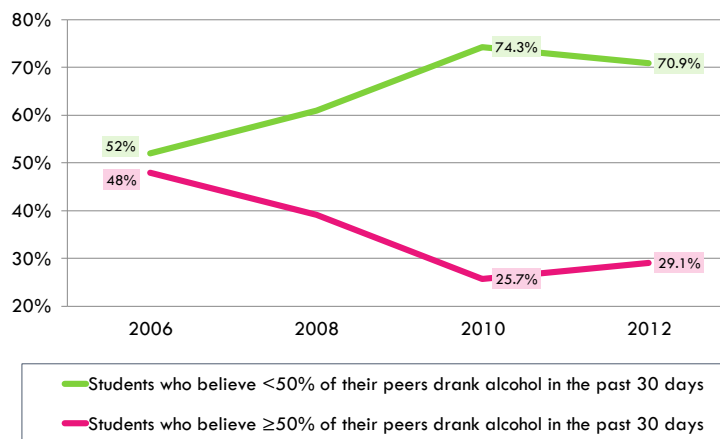
- **Increases in alcohol abstinence:** In 2006 before the campaign the percent of students who had not used alcohol in the past 30-days was 71%, increasing to 80% at the end of the campaign in 2012. There were differences in the impact of the campaign by grade, with the percentage of students who did not use alcohol in the past 30 days increasing for all four grades as follows: from 83-91% (freshmen), from 78-89% (sophomores), from 65-78% (juniors), and from 58-61% (seniors). Thus, we can see that the campaign was impactful for all grades, but less so for seniors.
- **Increases in marijuana and cigarette abstinence:** Both non-use of marijuana and of cigarettes also increased during the campaign, with marijuana non-use increasing from 86-89% and cigarettes from 85-95%.

The table below illustrates the changes recorded from 2006-2012. Note the innovative way in which the data is presented, with the focus on non-use rather than use, i.e. percentages of non-users are shown to increase rather than the traditional form of data presentation in which the focus is on use decreasing:



The campaign also documented that increased non-use was associated with greater exposure to the campaign (i.e. students who drank less reported seeing more posters). The campaign also had a positive impact in decreasing misperceptions of peer alcohol use.

What do they *think* is going on?



The campaign, supported by monthly consultation with a social norms subject matter expert, included all of the core components of a social norms media campaign as well as a number of innovative elements including the following:

- The Implementation Team wanted to feature posters that illustrated positive reasons for non-drinking, but the standard state and national surveys that were in use assessed only negative consequences of drinking. To remedy this, new questions were created to assess positive reasons for non-use, including playing sports, wanting to succeed in school, and the need to foster a positive relationship with parents.
- Over the course of the campaign, how the survey was administered was changed to address student perceptions that the handling of the surveys did not ensure confidentiality. Even though this was not the case, it was felt that addressing these concerns by changing aspects of survey administration would improve campaign credibility.
- Faculty and staff were involved through 'lunch and learn' workshops offered by the expert consultant, an all-day training at teacher training day, and through creation of a group titled 'Friends of Social Norms' in which faculty and staff agreed to be advocates for the campaign.
- Teachers of health classes and driver's education incorporated relevant data from the campaign into classroom activities.
- A humorous video focusing on normal everyday events at the school (i.e. 'the norm' such as the buses arriving in the AM) was created to teach students about social norms concepts and the campaign.
- Student Ambassadors were selected to learn about the SNA and be advocates for the campaign and conduct lunch-time intercept surveys and other campaign activities.
- A 'guess the statistics' mini campaign was integrated into the overall SNMC.
- Annual presentations were made to the school board.
- When individuals expressed skepticism about the campaign which staff felt they could not address or resolve, the individual(s) was invited to attend the monthly meeting with the expert consultant to present their concerns and have them addressed.

Examples of posters from the campaign:



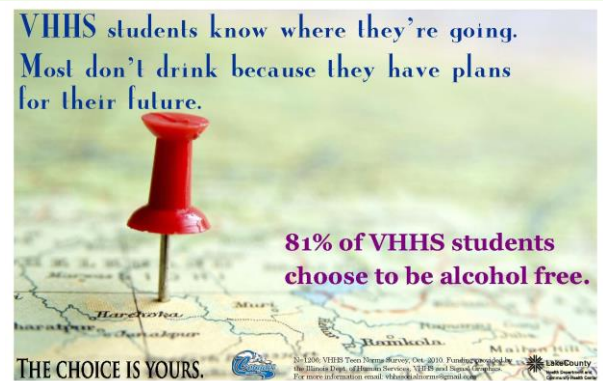
Fall 2011



Spring 2012



Spring 2012



Case Study 2: DeWitt Middle School, Ithaca NY, 2005-2007

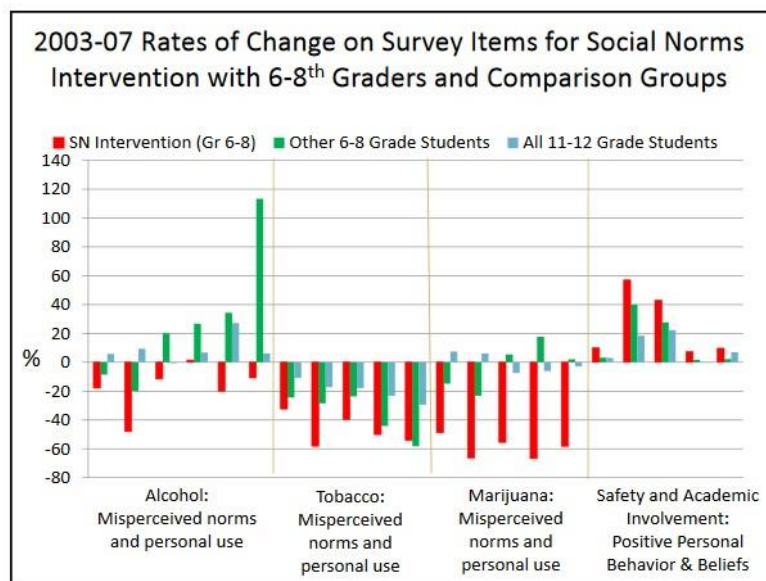
DeWitt Middle School is in the university town of Ithaca, N.Y. In 2004, the Ithaca Community Coalition for Healthy Youth initiated the process of planning for a SNMC to reduce student substance use and improve school climate. The coalition engaged subject matter experts in social norms to support both implementation and evaluation.

The evaluation was done using the two other middle schools in the community as a control group. The evaluation found that after two years of campaign implementation, from 2005-2006 and 2006-2007, misperceptions and the use of alcohol and other drugs decreased as predicted by the social norms model. Outcomes included:

- **Alcohol use.**
 - Past 30 days alcohol use for DeWitt students decreased 22% along with a corresponding decrease of 37% in how many students perceived that most other students in their school use alcohol monthly or more. In 2007, the misperception was gone, with perceived and actual rates almost equal.
 - For the control schools, 30-day alcohol use decreased minimally with a 6% rate of change. Perception of monthly use by other students in their school decreased 23%.
- **Marijuana use.**
 - Recent use by DeWitt students decreased 51% and perception of use by others decreased over 50%, substantially shrinking the gap between actual and perceived use.
 - By comparison, other middle schoolers' marijuana use exhibited a smaller decrease of 19% and the perceived use by others in their school decreased only 15%.

Other measures also demonstrated positive improvements, including willingness to intervene, positive measures of school climate, and engagement with academics among others.

The table below illustrates the changes recorded in the experimental and control schools from 2005-2007.

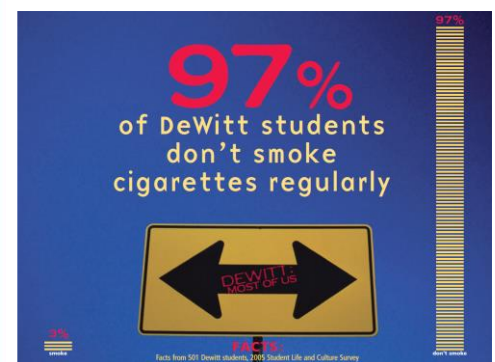
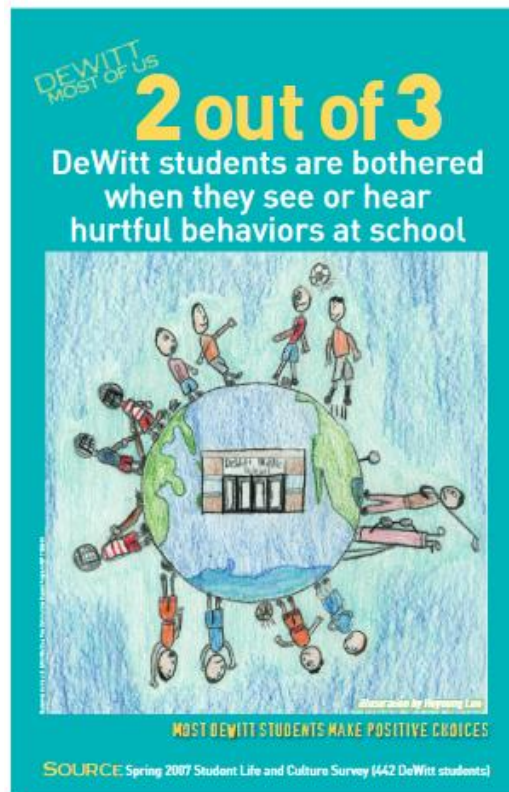
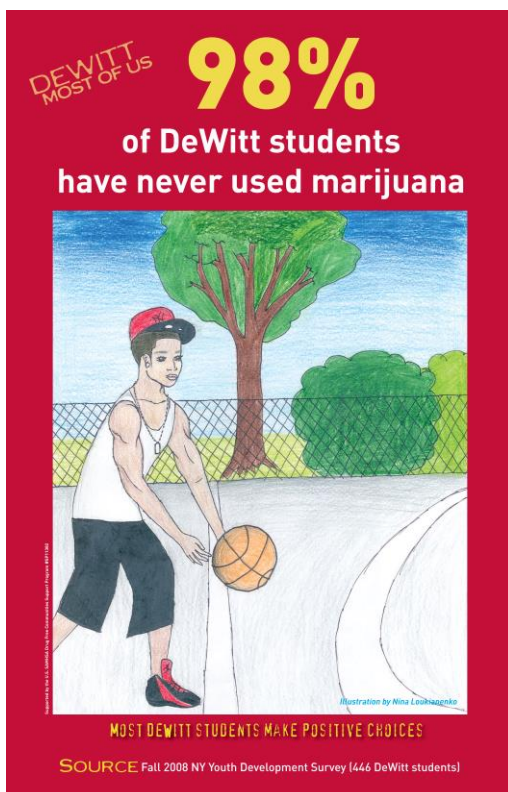


The longer red bars for each of the variables indicate greater positive changes for DeWitt for both perceptions and behaviors in comparison with the control schools, with the only exception being cigarette use.

This campaign included all the standard elements of a social norms campaign, as well as a several innovative elements including:

- Inviting health classes to help choose messages and having art classes conduct a contest for choosing posters. In the first year of the campaign posters were designed by students with support to ensure consistency with the SNA.
- Integrating data from the campaign into health and math classes. For instance, math lessons were designed to use data from the campaign to teach key concepts, such as mean, median, mode, etc.
- Extensive outreach to teachers to educate them about the theory of social norms, present and explain the data, and offer guidance regarding how to talk about posters and data in classrooms.
- Homeroom prizes for classes guessing correct positive norm statistics.
- Intercept interviews to assess believability, with recommendations incorporated into the campaign.
- Regular meetings, presentations and outreach to school staff and parents with the expert consultant.
- Outreach to parents in the form of newsletters, newspaper articles, and communications from the principal.

Examples of posters from this successful middle school SNMC:



Implementation Plan

Key Activities	Academic Year 1										Academic Year 2					
	Mar-Apr	May	Jun-Jul	Aug	Sep-Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb-Apr	May	Jun-Jul	Aug	Sep-Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb-Apr	May
Step 1: Set goals and objectives																
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generate a goals statement with specific goals and measurable objectives. 	x															
Step 2: Engage collaborators, assemble the Implementation Team, and identify resources																
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify key collaborator groups, the Implementation Team, site champions, and trusted adults 	x															
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train key collaborators and the Implementation Team on social norms theory, research, and the SNMC 	x															
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assemble external resources 	x															
Step 3: Develop the Implementation Plan																
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set the campaign implementation timeline 	x															
Step 4: Collect social norms data																
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create or identify a social norms survey to assess current norms 	x															
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administer the social norms survey to collect baseline data 		x														
Step 5: Analyze data to identify misperceived norms																
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze the baseline survey and extra positive norm statistics from this data 		x														
Step 6: Develop and disseminate media																
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop prototype media 			x													
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Test and finalize media 				x			X				x			X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disseminate media, changing media every two to three weeks 					x			X				x			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refine methods and media as needed based on youth feedback 						x	x			x			x	x		
Step 7: Monitor and evaluate																
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor for impact by collecting youth feedback 					X (Nov)							X (Nov)				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administer the social norms evaluation survey 									x							x
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze the evaluation survey to assess impact. 									x							x
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report results 									x							x

Notification to Parents/Caregivers about the Campaign and Social Norms Survey

English Letter

Dear Parents/Caregivers,

We would like to share with you an exciting initiative [School Name] is using to prevent youth substance use.

Research shows that a growing number, and the vast majority, of youth in the U.S. do not use any substances. Yet both youth and adults overwhelmingly overestimate the number of 12-18-year-olds who use substances (especially alcohol, nicotine, and marijuana). They believe that substance use is more common than it actually is (e.g., everyone drinks, most parents let their kids drink). Although substance use is without doubt a serious problem for some youth and can have quite harmful consequences, the truth is that most youth make healthy choices and do not use substances.

When youth are exposed to messages that explain the positive, true norms that most of their peers make healthy choices and engage in prosocial activities, they are more likely to take part in those positive behaviors.

Exposing youth to true norms, also called social norms interventions, has been effective in preventing the start of substance use and stopping use in those who are experimenting. Youth who use substances experimentally often do so because they think it is the norm among peers. Therefore, when presented with the true positive norm, they respond towards reduction of use. Even heavy users tend to moderate or abandon their prior use upon learning the actual positive peer norms

[School Name] is implementing an evidence-based communication campaign for substance use prevention that is grounded in presenting youth with the true substance use norms of the school.

During Spring 20XX, [School Name] will administer a survey to students to collect information on their knowledge, perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors related to substance use to gather baseline information to inform the communications intervention. All survey responses will be collected anonymously.

During Fall 20XX [Your School] will work with prevention experts and youth to create and deliver messages reflecting the substance use norms of their school youth through various communication channels.

A follow-up survey will be given to students at the end of 20XX to assess any changes in their knowledge, perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors related to substance use. All survey responses will be anonymous.

We are excited about this opportunity to promote healthy development and prevent substance-related problems among our students by adding the social norms intervention into our overall approach to support positive student development.

Typical opt-out language may include:

"If you wish to opt your child out of the Social Norms Survey, please complete this form and return it to your child's social studies teacher prior to the survey on [Date]."

OR

"If you wish to opt your child out of the Social Norms Survey, please email your child's social studies teacher prior to the survey on [Date]."

Spanish Letter

Estimados padres/cuidadores,

Nos gustaría compartir con ustedes una iniciativa emocionante en la que [Nuestra Escuela] está participando con escuelas intermedias de todo el país para prevenir el uso de sustancias entre los jóvenes.


La investigación muestra que un porcentaje creciente, y la gran mayoría, de los jóvenes en los EE.UU. No use ninguna sustancia. Sin embargo, tanto los jóvenes como los adultos sobreestiman abrumadoramente el número de jóvenes de 12 a 18 años que usan sustancias (especialmente alcohol, nicotina y marihuana). Creen que el uso de sustancias es más común de lo que realmente es (por ejemplo, todos beben, la mayoría de los cuidadores dejan que sus hijos beban). La verdad es que la mayoría de los jóvenes toman decisiones saludables y no usan sustancias.

Cuando los jóvenes están expuestos a mensajes que explican las normas positivas y verdaderas de que la mayoría de los jóvenes toman decisiones saludables y participan en actividades prosociales, es más probable que participen en esos comportamientos positivos.

Exponer a los jóvenes a normas verdaderas, también llamadas intervenciones de normas sociales, han sido efectivas para prevenir el inicio del uso de sustancias y detener el uso en aquellos que están experimentando. Los jóvenes que usan sustancias experimentalmente a menudo lo hacen porque piensan que es la norma. Por lo tanto, cuando se les presenta la verdadera norma positiva, responden hacia la reducción del uso. Incluso los usuarios pesados tienden a moderar o abandonar su uso anterior.

[Nombre de la escuela] está implementando una campaña de comunicación basada en la evidencia para el uso de sustancias y la prevención de sobredosis que se basa en presentar a los jóvenes las verdaderas normas de uso de sustancias de la escuela.

Durante la primavera de 2023, [Su escuela] administrará una encuesta a los estudiantes para recopilar información sobre sus conocimientos, percepciones,



actitudes y comportamientos relacionados con el uso de sustancias para recopilar información de referencia para informar la intervención de comunicaciones. Todas las respuestas de la encuesta serán anónimas.

Durante el otoño de 2023, [su escuela] trabajará con expertos en prevención y jóvenes para crear y entregar mensajes que reflejen las normas de uso de sustancias de sus jóvenes de escuela intermedia a través de varios canales de comunicación.

Se realizará una encuesta de seguimiento a los estudiantes a fines de 2023 para evaluar cualquier cambio en sus conocimientos, percepciones, actitudes y comportamientos relacionados con el uso de sustancias. Todas las respuestas de la encuesta serán anónimas.

Estamos entusiasmados con esta oportunidad de promover el desarrollo saludable y prevenir problemas relacionados con sustancias entre nuestros estudiantes al agregar la intervención de normas sociales en nuestro enfoque general para apoyar el desarrollo positivo de los estudiantes.

Typical opt-out language may include:

“Si desea excluir a su hijo de la encuesta sobre normas sociales, envíe un correo electrónico al maestro de estudios sociales de su hijo antes de la encuesta el [Fecha].”

OR

“Si no desea que su niño/a participe en la Encuesta sobre normas sociales, por favor, envíe un correo electrónico al/a la profesora de estudios sociales de su niño/a antes de la encuesta el [Fecha].”

Orientation to and Informational Video on the SNMC

An informational video describing the SNMC can be a helpful resource to share with parents/caregivers as well as school personnel. Below are two sample emails, along with video links, that could go out to these groups to introduce them to the concept of the SNMC. Please note that the videos in both email templates are the same - one video is in English, and one is in Spanish.

Email to Parents/Caregivers

Greetings Parents and Caregivers!

We wanted to make you aware of a new information campaign that will soon be implemented at [School Name]. This campaign will use posters and other media to highlight and celebrate the healthy choices and good behaviors most youth make. We are implementing this campaign because research shows that sharing this information increases healthy behaviors and decreases substance use. Learn more about the campaign in this short 5-minute video in English or Spanish.

English language video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RrHpLa_c1fE

Spanish language video: <https://youtu.be/FI5yKUDm1kU>

Research also shows that you as parents and caregivers are a very believable source of information for your child. This is especially true for drug and alcohol use. What you share with your child and their friends is very powerful.

Join us in talking with your child and their friends to reinforce and support the message that most students have positive attitudes and make healthy choices NOT to use drugs and alcohol.


Email to School Personnel

Greetings Teachers and Staff!

We wanted to make you aware of a new information campaign that will soon be implemented here at [School Name]. This campaign will use posters and other media to highlight and celebrate the healthy choices and good behaviors our students make. We are implementing this campaign because research shows that sharing this information increases healthy behaviors and decreases substance use that does exist. Please take time to watch this short 5-minute video and learn more about the campaign in English or Spanish.

English language video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RrHpLa_c1fE

Spanish language video: <https://youtu.be/FI5yKUDm1kU>



Research also shows that you are a very believable source of information for students. This is especially true for drug and alcohol use. What you share with our students is very powerful. Help us share the good news that *“Most students here at [School Name] have positive attitudes and make healthy choices NOT to use any drugs or alcohol!”*

Resources are available to support you in sharing specific outcomes from the survey we administered in the spring in relevant ways within your class. Please let me know and I will connect you with a member of the Implementation Team.

Guidance on the Role and Training of Site Champions

A site champion is someone who will be dedicated, enthusiastic, and engaged with the SNMC. Site champions should include at least one school employee and may include other dedicated individuals, such as local coalition or prevention organization staff. The school site champion will likely be a member of the Implementation Team, although additional site champions who are not members of the Implementation Team may be recruited for this role. At least one school site champion should be someone who is able to make decisions within their school or has direct access to the authority figure within their school. This can include a principal, assistant principal, counselor, or many others.


Site champions can set the SNMC up for success by paving the way for successful implementation. In their roles, they fulfill essential responsibilities including:

- Removing obstacles related to implementation
- Regularly conveying to other staff the importance of the SNMC
- Speaking with community members about the campaign
- Encouraging other community members to participate and support the campaign
- Working to mitigate any opposition (disbelief) or critics of the campaign
- Being knowledgeable about the key elements of the social norms approach:
 - Substance use by youth is overestimated by youth and adults.
 - Youth want to behave in the way they perceive the norm.
 - Exposure to positive social norms increases healthy behaviors and decreases substance use.
 - Understand the data for their school.
 - Use positive norms messaging (e.g., 92% of youth at our school do not think vaping is a good thing to do) to reinforcing the true norm that most middle school students do not use any pills, tobacco, alcohol, or other substances.
- Supporting the Implementation Team with message dissemination
- Offering suggestions for improvement

Site Champion Training

The following resources and activities may help prepare site champions for their role.

- Introduction letter describing the role of the site champion, as described above.
- Orientation to the campaign
 - Informational video on the social norms campaign
 - Overview of the social norms approach
 - Examples of campaign materials
- A copy of this implementation guide
- Site champion preparation meeting to cover:
 - The importance of site champions
 - Their role
 - Sample scenarios representing any disbelief, pushback, etc., and responses
 - List of positive norm messages from the social norms survey that they can be equipped to share. For example:

- 
- Students at XYZ school disapprove of using substances.
 - Many students at XYZ school incorrectly assume most other students are using substances.
 - Students at XYZ school who incorrectly assume other students are using, are at greatest risk for using substances.
- Q&A

Recruiting and Training Trusted Adults

A trusted adult is someone youth may turn to for help and will take them seriously.⁴⁶ A trusted adult is someone youth have independently chosen to trust and is a safe, reliable, and honest figure who listens without judgement, agenda, or expectation and provides support and encouragement.⁴⁷ In early conversations with students, ask which school staff students look up to, trust, and connect well with. There are often a few staff members who students will identify as a trusted adult. Trusted adults can be trained to serve as a site champion for the SNMC, playing a vital role in disseminating messages, mitigating opposition, and providing feedback regarding implementation.

Orientation Letter to Recruit Trusted Adults

Dear [Name of trusted adult],


Your school recently took part in a youth discussion group where youth independently identified you as a trusted adult. In other words, students at your school see you as a trusted source of information. As such, we would like to personally invite you to be involved in a new health promotion initiative at [School Name].

National surveys show that a growing number, and the vast majority, of youth in the U.S. do not use any substances. Yet both youth and adults overwhelmingly overestimate the number of 12-18-year-olds who use substances (especially alcohol, nicotine, and marijuana). They believe that substance use is more common than it actually is (e.g., everyone drinks, most parents let their kids drink) and they underestimate the healthy choices made by youth. The truth is that most youth make healthy choices and do not use substances.

As part of this initiative, [School Name] will use posters and other media to highlight and celebrate the healthy choices and behaviors most youth make -- their true positive norms. Research shows that exposure to such information increases healthy behaviors and decreases substance use. This approach is called a social norms media campaign (SNMC) and it is grounded in the science of the Social Norms Approach, which has been shown to work to prevent substance use. SNMCs have been used successfully with students and adults in the U.S. and other countries.

An Implementation Team has been assembled to oversee this initiative, including developing and disseminating multimedia throughout the school year to highlight positive student norms (e.g., Most [School Name] students make healthy choices NOT to use substances). As a trusted adult, students have identified you as a believable source of information. The comments and information you share with students can be very powerful.

We ask that you join our team and work with us to reinforce the true positive norms that the overwhelming majority of [middle/high] school students do not use any tobacco, alcohol, pills, or other substances. It is our pleasure to invite you to view this



brief orientation video, which will provide greater details on the science behind the approach. It can be viewed [here](#).

Additionally, we will be holding an orientation session with trusted adults from our school on [date]. This meeting will provide greater guidance on how you can be involved in the campaign to help encourage the healthy behaviors of our students.

Trusted Adult Training

The following resources and activities may help trusted adults prepare for their role.

1. Introduction letter describing the role of the trusted adult (see above).
 - a. Identifies them as a trusted adult
 - b. Briefly introduces the campaign and their potential role
2. Orientation to the campaign
 - a. Informational video on the social norms campaign
 - b. Overview of the social norms approach
 - c. Examples of campaign materials
3. A copy of this implementation guide
4. Site champion preparation meeting to cover:
 - a. Their selection as a trusted adult (e.g., Your school recently took part in a youth discussion group where students independently identified you as a trusted adult. Students at your school see you as a trusted source of information).
 - a. The importance and role of the trusted adult
 - b. Sample scenarios representing and disbelief, pushback, etc., and responses
 - c. Ideas for incorporating messages into their daily activities and conversations
 - d. List of positive norm messages from the social norms survey that they can be equipped to share. For example:
 - i. Students at XYZ school disapprove of using substances.
 - ii. Many students at XYZ school incorrectly assume most other students are using substances.
 - iii. Students at XYZ school who incorrectly assume other students are using, are at greatest risk for using substances.
 - e. Q&A

Baseline Social Norms Survey

A sample social norms survey is shared below. Please note that this survey has been designed to be inclusive of four primary substance categories: tobacco/nicotine, alcohol, marijuana, and un-prescribed pill use. If your campaign will not focus on all substance categories, select the substance categories that are relevant to meeting your campaign's goals.

In the sample **Social Norms Survey Report** shared later in the Appendix, each of the items on the survey below are included in a table and specify the intended use of each item:

- Assess sample reliability
- Determine actual positive norms about substance use for message development and to assess impact with the evaluation survey
- Reveal misperceptions of norms for program justification and to assess impact with the evaluation survey
- Other information about students that can be used for messaging that will attract their attention

[School Name] Student Survey

This survey asks about students' attitudes and behaviors about general interests, lifestyles, and what you think about substances such as alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and other things. We are mostly interested in what you believe; there are no right or wrong answers.

The survey should take you about 20 minutes to complete. Your responses are completely **anonymous**. We will not collect your name or any information that can directly link you with your answers, so be as honest as possible. This survey deals with an important issue that affects many people, and you can help us understand what [Middle/Junior/High] school students like to do and think is good to do. If you do not want to answer a question, you can skip it, and you may stop at any time.

Thank you for your time.

If you agree to take part in this survey, please click **continue**.

Ease students into the survey by asking questions about student interests and non-substance related protective norms.

INTRODUCTION

We would like to begin by asking you about things that may be of interest to you, important for your lifestyle, and how you get through times when you may feel down or stressed.

1. How do you spend your time after school or on the weekends (check all that apply)?

- Play sports
- Watch a movie/TV/YouTube
- Play video games
- Hang out with family
- Listen to music
- Read a book/comic
- Hang out with friends
- Go shopping

2. What do you do most often when hanging out with friends on the weekend? Mark only one.

- Play sports
- Watch a movie/TV/YouTube
- Play video games
- Listen to music
- Go shopping

3. What do you like more?

Hot dogs	Hamburgers	Soccer	Basketball
Pop Music	Rock Music	Spring	Fall
Beach	Mountains	Comedy	Action
Book	Graphic novel		

4. What is important to you in this phase of your life (check all that apply)?

- Getting good grades
- Involvement in extra-curricular and/or sports activities
- Planning for the future
- Leading a healthy life
- Positive relationships with those I care about

5. How important do you believe it is to...

Not at all important	Somewhat important	Very important
-------------------------	-----------------------	-------------------

- Volunteer in your community
- Make friends with people different from you
- Help a friend in need
- Help someone I don't know who is in need
- Take your schoolwork seriously
- Be physically active
- Eat a healthy diet including fruits and vegetables

6. When you are feeling down or stressed or when bad things happen, how do you get through it? Here is a list of things that some young people do - please tell us which ones you use. (Check all that you use.)

- Exercise
- Prayer

- Talk to someone I trust
- Relax/Take a break
- Meditation/Yoga
- Hang out with family/friends
- Listen to/Make music
- Read/Write
- Make art/Draw
- Gaming
- Social media
- Something else (please describe): _____

As you transition to asking questions about substance use, start with injunctive norms to assess personal attitudes and perceptions of peers' typical attitudes with respect to substance use.

ATTITUDES ABOUT SUBSTANCE USE

We would now like to change the topic. The next set of questions asks what your attitudes are about students using substances, such as alcohol, tobacco/nicotine, marijuana, and other things. Please indicate to what extent you approve or disapprove of each of the following:

7.	Strongly Disapprove	Disapprove	Approve	Strongly Approve
• [Middle/Junior/High] school students using tobacco or nicotine products (cigarettes, cigars, chew, vaping).	A	B	C	D
• [Middle/Junior/High] school students drinking beer or other alcohol (beyond just a few sips in a family or religious gathering).	A	B	C	D
• [Middle/Junior/High] school students smoking/vaping marijuana or eating it in some form.	A	B	C	D
• [Middle/Junior/High] school students pressuring other students to drink alcohol or use other substances.	A	B	C	D
• [Middle/Junior/High] school students taking pills NOT prescribed or given by their doctor, nurse, or parent/guardian.	A	B	C	D
• [Middle/Junior/High] school students sharing their pills with other students.	A	B	C	D

- [For High School] High school students driving under the influence of a substance. A B C D

YOUR ATTITUDES AND OTHER STUDENTS' ATTITUDES ABOUT SUBSTANCE USE

This next section asks questions about your attitudes and what you think might be the most typical or common attitude of other students in your grade at your school.

8a. Which statement below about student use of tobacco or nicotine in any form (smoking, vaping/e-cigarettes, cigars, chew, etc.) do you feel best represents your own attitude? (select one)

- Use of tobacco or nicotine is never a good thing to do.
- Occasional use is OK, but not daily use.
- Frequent use is OK, if that's what the individual wants to do.

8b. Which statement below about student use of tobacco or nicotine in any form (smoking, vaping/e-cigarettes, cigars, chew, etc.) do you expect to be the most common attitude among students in your grade at your school? (select one as your best guess)

- Use of tobacco or nicotine is never a good thing to do.
- Occasional use is OK, but not daily use.
- Frequent use is OK, if that's what the individual wants to do.

9a. Which statement below about drinking alcoholic beverages do you feel best represents your own attitude? (select one)

- Drinking (more than a few sips in a family or religious occasion) is never a good thing to do for anyone at my age.
- Occasional drinking at my age beyond just a few sips is OK.
- Frequent drinking beyond just a few sips at my age is OK if that's what the individual wants to do.

9b. Which statement below about drinking alcoholic beverages do you expect to be the most common attitude among students in your grade at your school? (select one as your best guess)

- Drinking (more than a few sips in a family or religious occasion) is never a good thing to do for anyone at this age.
- Occasional drinking at this age beyond just a few sips is OK.
- Frequent drinking beyond just a few sips at this age is OK, if that's what the individual wants to do.

10a. Which statement below about students smoking/vaping marijuana or eating marijuana in some form (edibles such as candy, cookie, chocolate bar, etc.) do you feel best represents your own attitude? (select one)

- Smoking, vaping, or eating marijuana is never a good thing to do.
- Occasional smoking, vaping, or eating marijuana is OK, but not daily.
- Frequent smoking, vaping, or eating marijuana is OK, if that's what the individual wants to do.

10b. Which statement below about student smoking/vaping marijuana or eating marijuana in some form (edibles such as candy, cookie, chocolate bar, etc.) do you expect to be the most common attitude among students in your grade at your school? (select one as your best guess)

- Smoking, vaping, or eating marijuana is never a good thing to do.
- Occasional smoking, vaping, or eating marijuana is OK, but not daily.
- Frequent smoking, vaping, or eating marijuana is OK, if that's what the individual wants to do.

11a. Which statement below about students taking pills NOT prescribed or given by their doctor, nurse, or parent/guardian do you feel best represents your own attitude? (select one)

- Students should only take pills prescribed or given by a doctor, nurse, or parent/guardian.
- Taking pills that are provided by friends is OK.
- Taking pills provided by anyone is OK, if that's what the individual wants to do.

11b. Which statement below about students taking pills NOT prescribed or given by their doctor, nurse, or parent/guardian do you think is the most common attitude among students in your grade at your school? (select one as your best guess)

- Students should only take pills approved by their doctor, nurse, or parent/guardian.
- Taking pills that are provided by friends is OK.
- Taking pills provided by anyone is OK, if that's what they want to do.

The survey now transitions to asking descriptive norm questions to assess personal behaviors and perceptions of peers' typical behaviors with respect to substance use. For middle school, where substance use is less prevalent, response options could be consolidated (i.e., never, a few times per year, once per month or more, once per week or more).

STUDENT USE OF SUBSTANCES

Thank you for telling us about your attitudes about different substances. Next, we would like to ask about your own use of substances and how often you think substances are used by other students.

12. How often do you and how often do you think students in your grade at your school typically use tobacco/nicotine (including cigarettes, vapes/e-cigarettes, cigars, and chew)? *Just give your best guess of what is most common for yourself and students in your grade at your school.*

	Never	1-2 times per year	Once a month	Twice a month	Once a week	Twice a week	Daily
a. Yourself							
b. Students in your grade at your school							

13. Not counting just a few sips in a family or religious gathering, how often do you and how often do you think students in your grade at your school typically drink alcohol? Include beer, wine, wine coolers, liquor, and mixed drinks in your answer. *Just give your best guess of what is most common for yourself and students in your grade at your school.*

	Never	1-2 times per year	Once a month	Twice a month	Once a week	Twice a week	Daily
a. Yourself							
b. Students in your grade at your school							

14. How often do you and how often do you think students in your grade at your school typically smoke, vape, or eat marijuana (in candy, cookies, chocolate bars or other treats)? *Just give your best guess of what is most common for yourself and students in your grade at your school.*

	Never	1-2 times per year	Once a month	Twice a month	Once a week	Twice a week	Daily
a. Yourself							
b. Students in your grade at your school							

15. How often do you and how often do you think students in your grade at your school typically use any kind of pill that is NOT prescribed or given by their doctor, nurse, or parent/guardian? *Just give your best guess of what is most common for yourself and students in your grade at your school.*

	Never	1-2 times per year	Once a month	Twice a month	Once a week	Twice a week	Daily
a. Yourself							
b. Students in your grade at your school							

During the PAST 30 DAYS, on how many days, if any, did you do any of the following:

16. Use any tobacco or nicotine products (cigarettes, e-cigarettes/vaping, cigars, chew)?
17. Have at least one drink of alcohol including beer, wine, wine coolers, liquor, and mixed drinks (beyond just a few sips in a family or religious gathering)?
18. Smoke, vape, or eat marijuana (i.e., in candy, cookies, chocolate bars or other treats)?
19. Take a pill not prescribed or given by your doctor, nurse, or parent/guardian.

During the past 30 days, what percentage of students in your grade at your school do you believe have used any of the following?

20. Any tobacco or nicotine products (cigarettes, e-cigarettes/vaping, cigars, chew)?
 - A. 0%
 - B. 10%
 - C. 20%
 - D. 30%
 - E. 40%
 - F. 50%
 - G. 60%
 - H. 70%
 - I. 80%
 - J. 90% or more

21. Had at least one drink of alcohol including beer, wine, wine coolers, liquor, and mixed drinks (beyond just a few sips in a family or religious gathering)?

- A. 0%
- B. 10%
- C. 20%
- D. 30%
- E. 40%
- F. 50%
- G. 60%
- H. 70%
- I. 80%
- J. 90% or more

22. Smoked, vaped, or ate marijuana (in candy, cookies, chocolate bars or other treats)?

- A. 0%
- B. 10%
- C. 20%
- D. 30%
- E. 40%
- F. 50%
- G. 60%
- H. 70%
- I. 80%
- J. 90% or more

23. Took a pill not prescribed or given by a doctor, nurse, or parent/guardian.

- A. 0%
- B. 10%
- C. 20%
- D. 30%
- E. 40%
- F. 50%
- G. 60%
- H. 70%
- I. 80%
- J. 90% or more

PARENT OR GUARDIAN RULES

These next questions ask about what kinds of rules your parents/guardians have about you using substances and what you think are the most typical rules other students' parents have about their children using substances.

24a. What rules, if any, have your parents/guardians set for you about using tobacco or nicotine in any form (smoking, vaping/e-cigarettes, cigars, chew, etc.) (*select one*)

- No tobacco/nicotine is allowed
- Some tobacco/nicotine is allowed with family member(s) when a parent/guardian is present
- Some tobacco/nicotine is allowed with friends if a parent/guardian is present

- No rules/Do not know of any rules

24b. What rules, if any, would you say are most typically set by parents/guardians of other students in your grade about using tobacco or nicotine in any form (smoking, vaping/e-cigarettes, cigars, chew, etc.)? (select one)

- No tobacco/nicotine use is allowed
- Some tobacco/nicotine use is allowed with family member(s) when a parent/guardian is present
- Some tobacco/nicotine use with friends is allowed if a parent/guardian is present
- No rules/Do not know of any rules

25a. What rules, if any, have your parents/guardians set for you about drinking alcohol (more than a sip or two)? (select one)

- No alcohol use is allowed
- Some alcohol use is allowed with family member(s) when a parent/guardian is present
- Some alcohol use is allowed with friends if a parent/guardian is present
- No rules/Do not know of any rules

25b. What rules, if any, would you say are most typically set by parents/guardians of other students in your grade about drinking alcohol (more than a sip or two)? (select one)

- No alcohol use is allowed
- Some alcohol use is allowed with family member(s) when a parent/guardian is present
- Some alcohol use is allowed with friends if a parent/guardian is present
- No rules/Do not know of any rules

26a. What rules, if any, have your parents/guardians set for you about smoking, vaping, or eating marijuana in some form? (select one)

- No marijuana use is allowed
- Some marijuana use is allowed with family member(s) when a parent/guardian is present
- Some marijuana use is allowed with friends if a parent/guardian is present
- No rules/Do not know of any rules

26b. What rules, if any, would you say are most typically set by parents/guardians of other students in your grade about smoking, vaping, or eating marijuana in some form? (select one)

- No marijuana use is allowed
- Some marijuana use is allowed with family member(s) when a parent/guardian is present
- Some marijuana use with allowed with friends if a parent/guardian is present
- No rules/Do not know of any rules

27a. What rules, if any, have your parents/guardians set for you about taking any kind of pill that is NOT prescribed or given to you by them, a doctor, or nurse? (select one)

- No use is allowed
- Some use is allowed with family member(s) if a parent/guardian is present
- Some use is allowed with friends if a parent/guardian is present
- No rules/Do not know of any rules

27b. What rules, if any, would you say are most typically set by parents/guardians of other students in your grade about taking any kind of pill that is NOT prescribed or given by their doctor, nurse, or parent/guardian? (select one)

- No use is allowed
- Some use is allowed with family member(s) if a parent/guardian is present
- Some use is allowed with friends if a parent/guardian is present
- No rules/Do not know of any rules

The next questions ask about substance-related protective attitudes and behaviors (i.e., reasons for not using and ways of avoiding substances).

ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS ABOUT CARING FOR OTHER STUDENTS

This next section asks what you think you and other students in your grade would do if you saw another student sharing or about to use substances.

28. Who should students tell if they saw other students sharing pills?

I think students should...
(check all that apply)

Most other students would say...
(check all that apply)

- | | |
|---|---|
| a. Tell a principal | a. Tell a principal |
| b. Tell a teacher or counselor | b. Tell a teacher or counselor |
| c. Tell a hall monitor | c. Tell a hall monitor |
| d. Tell a friend | d. Tell a friend |
| e. Tell a police officer or security person | e. Tell a police officer or security person |
| f. Tell a parent/guardian or another adult relative | f. Tell a parent/guardian or another adult relative |
| g. Not tell anyone | g. Not tell anyone |

29a. How much do you agree or disagree with this statement? *If a friend my age was about to drink alcohol, use tobacco/nicotine or marijuana, or take a pill not prescribed or given by their doctor, nurse, or parent/guardian, I think it is right for me to try to talk with and discourage that person from doing so.*

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

29b. What response do you think most other students in your grade at your school would give to the statement you just answered above? (select one)

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

30a. How much do you agree or disagree with this statement? *If a student my age was being pressured by other students to drink alcohol, use tobacco/nicotine or marijuana, or take a pill not prescribed or given by their doctor, nurse, or parent/guardian, I should step in to help that student get out of the situation if I can.* (select one)

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

30b. What response do you think most other students in your grade at your school would give to the statement you just answered above? (select one)

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

HOW YOU AVOID USING SUBSTANCES

Now we want to know how you limit or avoid using substances.

31. If you never use tobacco or nicotine in any form (smoking cigarettes or cigars, vaping or using e-cigarettes), or if you sometimes choose not to use it, how do you avoid using it?

(choose all that apply)

- a. I don't go to places where students are smoking or vaping
- b. I leave places if students begin smoking or vaping
- c. I avoid students who smoke or vape
- d. I hang out with students who don't smoke or vape
- e. I tell students that I don't want to smoke or vape if they ask me
- f. Other ways? (Please describe)

32. If you never drink alcohol, or if you sometimes choose not to, how do you avoid drinking it? (choose all that apply)

- a. I don't go to places where students are drinking
- b. I leave places if students start drinking
- c. I hang out with students who don't drink
- d. I tell students that I don't want to drink if they ask me
- e. I drink non-alcoholic drinks like water, sports drinks, soda/pop, or juice
- f. Other ways? (Please describe)

33. If you never smoke, vape, or eat marijuana, or if you sometimes choose not to, how do you avoid smoking, vaping, or eating it? (choose all that apply)

- a. I don't go to places where students are smoking, vaping, or eating marijuana
- b. I leave places if students start smoking, vaping, or eating marijuana
- c. I avoid students who smoke, vape, or eat marijuana
- d. I hang out with students who don't smoke, vape, or eat marijuana
- e. I tell students that I don't want to smoke, vape, or eat marijuana if they ask me
- f. Other ways? (Please describe)

REASONS FOR NOT USING SUBSTANCES

This next section asks about reasons why you might not use substances. It may be that you never use any substance at all or, even if you are someone that has used a substance, there may be times that you do not use.

34. When you choose not to use tobacco/nicotine in any form, why do you make this choice? (Select all that apply):

- a. I don't like the taste or smell of tobacco/nicotine
- b. I worry about how it will make me feel
- c. I want to do well in sports
- d. Almost all my friends avoid using tobacco/nicotine
- e. I promised a family member(s) I would not use tobacco/nicotine
- f. I don't want to get in trouble
- g. I don't like to make poor or unhealthy choices

- h. I want to be a role model for my friends
- i. Other:

35. When you choose not to drink alcohol, why do you make this choice? (Select all that apply):

- a. I don't like the taste/smell
- b. I worry about how it will make me feel
- c. I want to do well in sports
- d. Almost all my friends avoid drinking alcohol
- e. I promised a family member(s) I would not drink
- f. I don't want to get in trouble
- g. I don't like to make poor or unhealthy choices
- h. I want to be a role model for my friends
- i. Other:

36. When you choose not to smoke, vape, or eat marijuana, why do you make this choice? (Select all that apply):

- a. I worry about how it will make me feel
- b. I want to do well in sports
- c. Almost all my friends avoid using marijuana
- d. I promised a family member(s) I would not use marijuana
- e. I don't want to get in trouble
- f. I don't like to make poor or unhealthy choices
- g. I want to be a role model for my friends
- h. Other:

37. When you choose not to use pills unless they are prescribed or given by your doctor, nurse, or parent/guardian, why do you make this choice? (Select all that apply):

- a. I worry about how it will make me feel
- b. I don't want to risk getting sick or hurt
- c. Almost all my friends avoid using pills that are NOT prescribed to them
- d. I promised a family member(s) I would not use pills that are NOT prescribed to me
- e. I don't want to get in trouble
- f. I don't like to make poor or unhealthy choices
- g. I want to be a role model for my friends
- h. Other:

Callout box: The final set of questions are to collect student demographic information, and other questions needing to be collected by the school on the topic of substance use.

STUDENT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

These last questions make sure a broad range of students representing your school have participated.

38. What grade are you in? (Circle one) 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

39. Are you a boy or a girl? Boy Girl

40. Do you consider yourself to be Hispanic or Latinx? YES NO

41. What race do you consider yourself to be (Check all that apply)?

White

Black or African American

Asian-American/Pacific Islander

American Indian or Alaska Native

Other _____

42. What types of grades do you usually get? (Please check one)

Mostly As Mostly Bs Mostly Cs Mostly Ds Mostly Fs

43. Do you get free school meals, or vouchers for free school lunches?

YES

NO

THANK YOU for taking the time to answer these questions and sharing your thoughts.



Social Norms Survey Report

SPRING 20XX STUDENT SURVEY REPORT FOR [SCHOOL NAME] MIDDLE SCHOOL

Prepared by X

Any questions regarding this report should be directed to X



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DOCUMENT SECTIONS

Summary of Key Findings

This section briefly reports some of the key findings about positive norms concerning substance use revealed in the data as well as evidence of substantial misperceptions among students about their peer norms. The fact that positive norms are so prevalent and yet are often misperceived is the fundamental justification for conducting a social norms message campaign based on the actual data. The intention of reporting the actual positive norms is to let accurate knowledge of peers help guide students in perpetuating this positive behavior. Reducing misperceptions of student norms can help prevent students from being drawn off course into problem behavior by the misperception that the problem is the norm, and it can also help student bystanders to speak up or intervene when a friend might engage in risk taking.

Positive Data-Based Norm Messages about Students Not Using Substances

This section provides an extensive list of messages about positive student norms drawn from the survey data. The specific survey question used to determine the actual norm is noted alongside the message. The frequency/percentage distribution of the data from which the message was determined, and an associated bar graph of these data are also provided to make the evidence clear.

Supplemental Data-Based Messages about Students

This section provides several additional data-based messages that may be of interest to students. The messages are drawn from introductory questions that are not about substance use. These messages can be included in various communications to draw more attention to the campaign and show its intention to communicate norms on other topics for campaign credibility.

Potential Uses of Various Survey Questions in Social Norms Intervention

This section includes a chart listing each question item in the survey by question number in the order presented along with an indicator of how the specific question may be useful in a substance use intervention program.

Summary of Key Findings

There were 397 respondents providing an overall response rate of 86.5%. Response rates from 6th, 7th, and 8th grades were 86.8%, 84.0%, and 85.6%, respectively. With such high response rates from each of the grades as well as from the total population of middle school students, the resulting sample is likely to be quite highly representative of the student population. The sample was almost equally represented by girls (51%) and boys (49%).

The results of the survey strongly support three basic predictions of the social norms theory. Specifically,

- 1. The attitudes and behaviors clearly demonstrate student norms opposing substance use;**
- 2. misperceptions of the norm as one that favors substance use are widely demonstrated in these data; and**
- 3. students who misperceive the norm and especially those students with the most errant misperceptions are at the greatest risk for personally engaging in substance use.**

A sample of results supporting the above predictions:

A large majority—**78%**—of students think tobacco or nicotine is never a good thing to use, so the attitude supporting nonuse is clearly the norm, even though 22% personally believe that at least occasional use is acceptable (Q8.a). Likewise, **90% of students report never using tobacco or nicotine**, making no use the actual student norm regarding behavior (Q12.a) as well, even though 10% use tobacco or nicotine at some point during the year. So regardless of students' own personal attitudes and behaviors, if they were all accurate in their perceptions of the peer norm representing the majority or what was most typical, all respondents—100%—should be perceiving attitudes supporting nonuse and actual nonuse behavior as their peer norms. However, **42% mistakenly think that the peer attitudinal norm in their grade is to think at least occasional use is OK** (Q8.b) and almost **7 out of 10 students (69%) mistakenly perceive peers to be typically using tobacco or nicotine at least sometime during the year** (Q12.b). And **43% of students hold such distorted perceptions of this peer norm that they actually think weekly, or even daily use of tobacco or nicotine is the most typical behavior** (Q12.b). Finally, those **students who mistakenly thought some frequency of using tobacco or nicotine during the year was the peer norm are 3 times more likely to use tobacco themselves** when compared to those who accurately perceived that no use was the peer norm, 13% compared to 4% users, respectively. Those students with a highly distorted perception of the norm—thinking tobacco or nicotine use of peers was typically weekly or daily—were more than 4 times more likely to use tobacco or nicotine themselves compared to the accurate perceiver of the norm, 18% compared to 4%.

The same patterns of positive norms, substantial misperceptions, and higher risks of personal use associated with the misperceptions of peer substance use are found in the data for alcohol use (see Q7.b, Q9, Q13.a, and Q13.b), **for marijuana use** (see Q7.c, Q10, Q14.a, and Q14.b), **and for use of pills not provided by a doctor, nurse or parent/guardian** (see Q7.e, Q11, Q15.a, and Q15.b).

Further evidence of substantial misperceptions about peer substance use comes from the questions on the survey regarding personal use of substances in the past 30 days (Q16-19) and students' estimates of what percentage of their peers had used each of the four forms of substance use investigated in the survey (Q20-23). For example, only 9% of students in the sample had used marijuana in the last 30 days, 91% had not (Q18). In contrast, students, on average, estimated that 37% of peers had used this substance in the last 30 days (Q22), well above the actual 9%. An inflated percentage estimate, on average, existed in this school for each of the other three forms of substance use on their respective past 30-day measures as well.

In another set of questions, most students reported that their parents or guardians have rules prohibiting their use of substances. **Over 80% of students had rules prohibiting use for each substance examined in the survey** (tobacco/nicotine (Q24.a), alcohol (Q25.a), marijuana (Q26.a), or pills not prescribed or given by a doctor, nurse, or parent/guardian (Q27.a)). Even though the parental norm clearly indicated no use allowed for each substance, **over half of all students misperceived the parental norm for other students as being typically more lax or nonexistent for one or more of these substances** (Q24.b, Q25.b, Q26.b, and Q27.b). (Between 28-41% of students misperceived the parental norm in each instance.)

Finally, **most students—64%—agreed that if a friend their age was about to engage in any of the four forms of substance use described in the survey, it was right for them to try to talk with to discourage that person from doing so** (Q29.a). Again however, a large percentage—48%—mistakenly thought most other students would disagree about intervening as the right thing to do (Q29.b). In another question about intervening as an active bystander, the majority—**66%—agreed that if another student was being pressured by other students into some form of substance use, they should personally try to help that student get out of the situation** (Q30.a). So again, the actual norm among students was to support intervening, but **almost half (45%) mistakenly thought that the majority would choose to disagree with intervening** (Q30.b).

In short, the findings clearly suggest that an important prevention strategy for this school may be the implementation of a social norms campaign to inform students about the positive norms among their peers regarding avoidance of substance use. **The evidence in this survey reveals that misperceptions of the norms at this school are pervasive**, much like what has been found consistently in a wide range of secondary schools across the nation (see related research referenced below). Moreover, the findings support an association between misperceiving the norm and higher risk for substance use, again, like patterns found nationally. **Thus, a campaign may help students who are not using substances remain steadfast in their behavior and strengthen their resolve to intervene with peers by dispelling their misperceptions that substance use is normal and valued by most peers. Furthermore, a campaign challenging the misperceived norms among those who do use substances can lead them to reduce or eliminate their use if they learn that their behavior is not normal and valued by most other students.**

Positive Data-Based Norm Messages about Students Not Using Substances

The messages listed on the next two pages are based on the responses to specific questions in the survey as noted by the question numbers in brackets. The survey question data for the suggested messages are presented in frequency/percentage distributions and bar charts on the pages that follow this listing of messages. (The frequency/percentage distributions are also found in the Supplement for this Report.) The order of messages presented below is not intended to imply an exact order of delivery or posting is required. Items may be delivered in a campaign using a variety of communication methods available locally and sent in different sequences depending on local concerns and current conversations in the school and community. The campaign may be focused only certain particular substances, or a range of substances as reflected in the variety of messages that follow.

A suggested order for presenting types of messages is, nonetheless, presented here with a brief rationale: Start with some of the messages about norms for personal attitudes (message item #'s 7 - 11) and then begin to include the norm messages about personal behavior regarding nonuse of substances (message item #'s 12 - 19). There will likely be substantial disbelief and initial questioning of the results for both types of messages, given the pervasive misperceptions for each norm. However, messages about the actual normative attitudes may present less initial rejection in comparison with messages about personal behavior. This is because high-risk use, though not normative, is particularly vivid when observed, is therefore recalled easily, and is talked about frequently among peers, so that these concrete images and experiences may be more resolutely inflated in students' perceptions. Thus, by beginning with what are actual normative attitudes, students may be slightly less likely to dismiss them without consideration. Then, having been shown what are the true attitudes of most students, it may be easier for students to consider that their dramatic misperceptions about peer use could be at least somewhat off the mark. Finally, normative messages about parental rules (message item #'s 24 - 27) and normative support for bystander engagement in prevention (message item #'s 28 - 30) can be added to the mix of campaign messages to reinforce the primary findings about nonuse of substances being the norm. Likewise, other messages might be formulated from the survey data regarding reasons students give for not using and ways students commonly avoid substance use (not provided in this listing) and disseminated for the same supporting effect.

Example Positive Norm Messages

IMPORTANT: For message credibility, the source information should accompany the message in the communication. For example, it could say:

“Source: Results are based on a Spring 2023 anonymous survey of 397 **[SCHOOL NAME] MIDDLE SCHOOL** students in grades 6-8 with 86% of students responding.”

1. **9 out of 10 [SCHOOL NAME] MIDDLE SCHOOL** students (**92%**) **disapprove of** middle school students using tobacco/nicotine products. [Q7.a]
2. **9 out of 10 [SCHOOL NAME] MIDDLE SCHOOL** students (**91%**) **disapprove of** middle school students drinking beer or other alcohol. [Q7.b]
3. **9 out of 10 [SCHOOL NAME] MIDDLE SCHOOL** students (**92%**) **disapprove of** middle school students smoking/vaping marijuana or eating it in some form. [Q7.c]
4. **MOST [SCHOOL NAME] MIDDLE SCHOOL** students (**95%**) **disapprove** of middle school students pressuring other students to drink alcohol or use other substances. [Q7.d]
5. **More than 9 out of 10 [SCHOOL NAME] MIDDLE SCHOOL** students (**94%**) **disapprove** of middle school students taking pills NOT prescribed or given by their doctor, nurse, or parent/guardian. [Q7.e]
6. **95%** of **[SCHOOL NAME] MIDDLE SCHOOL** students **disapprove** of middle school students sharing their pills with other students. [Q7.f]
7. **3 out of 4 [SCHOOL NAME] MIDDLE SCHOOL** students (**78%**) think using tobacco/nicotine in any form (smoking, vaping/e-cigarettes, cigars, chew, etc.) is NEVER a good thing to do. [Q8.a]
8. **79% [SCHOOL NAME] MIDDLE SCHOOL** students think that drinking alcohol is NEVER a good thing for students their age. [Q9.a]
9. **79% [SCHOOL NAME] MIDDLE SCHOOL** students think that smoking/vaping marijuana or eating marijuana in some form (edibles such as candy, cookie, chocolate bar, etc.) is NEVER a good thing to do. [Q10.a]
10. **9 out of 10 [SCHOOL NAME] MIDDLE SCHOOL** students (92%) say students should only take pills prescribed or given by a doctor, nurse, or parent/guardian. [Q11.a]
11. **MOST [SCHOOL NAME] MIDDLE SCHOOL** students—**90%—NEVER** use tobacco or

- nicotine products cigarettes, vapes/e-cigarettes, cigars, or chew). [Q12.a]
12. **MOST [SCHOOL NAME] MIDDLE SCHOOL** students—**87%**—**NEVER** drink alcohol (not counting just a few sips in a family or religious gathering). [Q13.a]
 13. **MOST [SCHOOL NAME] MIDDLE SCHOOL** students—**91%**—**NEVER** smoke or vape marijuana or eat it in treats. [Q14.a]
 14. **95%** of **[SCHOOL NAME] MIDDLE SCHOOL** students **NEVER** use any kind of pill that is not prescribed or given by their doctor, nurse, or parent/guardian. [Q15.a]
 15. Just the facts: When **[SCHOOL NAME] MIDDLE SCHOOL** students were asked about their last 30 days in a Spring 2023 anonymous survey, the **LARGE MAJORITY**—

...had NOT used tobacco or nicotine products	(94%)	[Q16]
...had NOT consumed alcohol	(90%)	[Q17]
...had NOT used marijuana	(91%)	[Q18]
...had NOT taken a pill that was NOT prescribed or given to them by their doctor, nurse, or parent/guardian	(95%)	[Q19]
 16. **88%** of **[SCHOOL NAME] MIDDLE SCHOOL** students say their parents or guardians have set rules **NOT** allowing them to use tobacco or nicotine in any form in any form. [Q24.a]
 17. **4 out of 5 [SCHOOL NAME] MIDDLE SCHOOL** students (81%) say their parents or guardians **NEVER** allow them to consume alcohol. [Q25.a]
 18. **87%** of **[SCHOOL NAME] MIDDLE SCHOOL** students say their parents or guardians have set rules **NOT** allowing them to smoke, vape, or eat marijuana in any form. [Q26.a]
 19. **87%** of **[SCHOOL NAME] MIDDLE SCHOOL** students say their parents or guardians do NOT allow them to take any kind of pill that is not prescribed or given to them by a doctor, nurse, or their parent/guardian. [Q27.a]
 20. **7 out of 10 [SCHOOL NAME] MIDDLE SCHOOL** students—**70%**—think students should tell a principal, teacher, or counselor if they saw other students sharing pills. [Q28.a & Q28.b combined]
 21. **64%** of **[SCHOOL NAME] MIDDLE SCHOOL** students agree or strongly agree that if a friend their age was about to drink alcohol, use tobacco/nicotine or marijuana, or take a pill not prescribed or given by a doctor, nurse, or parent/guardian, it is right for them to try to talk with and discourage that person from doing so. [Q29.a]

-
22. Almost **two-thirds** of **[SCHOOL NAME] MIDDLE SCHOOL** students –**66%**– agree or strongly agree that if a student their age was being pressured by other students to drink alcohol, use tobacco/nicotine or marijuana, or take a pill not prescribed or given by a doctor, nurse, or parent/guardian, they should try to help that student get out of the situation if they can. [Q30.a]

Supplemental Data-Based Messages about Students

The messages on the following page are based on the responses to the first two questions in the survey. Questions 1 - 5 asked about how important various general activities are for the respondent and Question 6 asked about what things the student does when feeling down or stressed to get through it. Information from these questions can supplement the messages about substance use. It may help attract more readers and give them a larger picture of their student peers, which, in turn, may ultimately bring more attention to the substance use messages and give students the sense that all the data being presented are more credible and newsworthy.

The specific question item for each of the following suggested messages that follow is noted in brackets along with the message. The frequency/percentage distribution data associated with the message can be found in the Supplement for this Report. This list of messages is ordered simply by question number in the actual survey. The order of messages here is not intended to be the necessary order for delivery or posting. Items may be delivered as single messages or multiple messages along with social norms messages about substance use in various types of postings.

Supplementary Message Examples Based on Questions 1 and 2

IMPORTANT: For message credibility, the source information should accompany the message in the communication. For example, it could say:

“Source: Results are based on a Spring 2023 anonymous survey of 397 **[SCHOOL NAME] MIDDLE SCHOOL** students in grades 6-8 with 86% of students responding.”

1. **9 out of 10 [SCHOOL NAME] MIDDLE SCHOOL** students (**92%**) think volunteering in the community is at least “somewhat important” with the majority—**55%**— saying it is “important” or “very important.” [Q5.a]
2. **Almost Half of [SCHOOL NAME] MIDDLE SCHOOL** students (**46%**) think it is “important” or “very important” to make friends with people different from oneself. [Q5.b]
3. **95% of [SCHOOL NAME] MIDDLE SCHOOL** students think it is “important” or “very important” to take their schoolwork seriously. [Q5.e]
4. **Almost 4 out of 5 [SCHOOL NAME] MIDDLE SCHOOL** students (**79%**) think it is “important” or “very important” to be physically active. [Q5.f]
5. **78% of [SCHOOL NAME] MIDDLE SCHOOL** students (**94%**) say it is “important” or “very important” to eat a healthy diet including fruits and vegetables. [Q5.g]
6. **6 out of 10 [SCHOOL NAME] MIDDLE SCHOOL** students say they talk to someone they trust when feeling stressed or down. [Q6.c]

7. **Two-thirds** of [SCHOOL NAME] MIDDLE SCHOOL students (**68%**) relax or take a break when feeling down or stressed to get through it. [Q6.d]
8. **4 out of 5** [SCHOOL NAME] MIDDLE SCHOOL students (**80%**) listen to or make music when feeling stressed or down to get through it. [Q6.g]
9. **40% of** [SCHOOL NAME] MIDDLE SCHOOL students say when they are feeling stressed or down that they read, write, draw, or make art to get through it. [Q6.h and Q6.i combined]

Potential Uses for Survey Questions in a Social Norms Intervention

Question#_TopicName	Assess sample reliability	Determine actual positive norms about substance use for message development and to assess impact with the evaluation survey	Reveal misperceptions of norms for program justification and to assess impact with the evaluation survey	Other information about students use for messaging to attract student attention
Q1_HowDoYouSpendTime				
Q1.a_SpendTimeSports				X
Q1.b_SpendTimeTV				X
Q1.c_SpendTimeVideoGames				X
Q1.d_SpendTimeFamily				X
Q1.e_SpendTimeMusic				X
Q1.f_SpendTimeRead				X
Q1.g_SpendTimeFriends				X
Q2_DoMostOftenWithFriends				
Q2.a_FriendsSports				X
Q2.b_FriendsTV				X
Q2.c_FriendsVideoGames				X
Q2.d_FriendsMusic				X
Q2.e_FriendsShopping				X
Q3_WhatDoYouLikeMore				
Q3.a_LikeMoreFood				X
Q3.b_LikeMoreMusic				X
Q3.c_LikeMoreDestination				X
Q3.d_LikeMoreRead				X
Q3.e_LikeMoreSports				X
Q3.f_LikeMoreSeasons				X

Question#_TopicName	Assess sample reliability	Determine actual positive norms about substance use for message development and to assess impact with the evaluation survey	Reveal misperceptions of norms for program justification and to assess impact with the evaluation survey	Other information about students use for messaging to attract student attention
Q3.g_LikeMoreGenre				X
Q4_HowImportantPhaseofLife				
Q4.a_ImportantGrades				X
Q4.b_ImportantExtracurricular				X
Q4.c_ImportantPlanning				X
Q4.d_ImportantHealthy				X
Q4.e_ImportantRelationships				X
Q5_HowImportant				
Q5.a_HowImportantVolunteer				X
Q5.b_HowImportantMakeFriends				X
Q5.c_HowImportantHelpFriend				X
Q5.d_HowImportantHelp				X
Q5.e_HowImportantSchoolwork				X
Q5.f_HowImportantActive				X
Q5.g_HowImportantEatHealthy				X
Q6_WhatYouDoWhenFeelDownStress				
Q6.a_Exercise				X
Q6.b_Prayer				X
Q6.c_TalkTrust				X
Q6.d_RelaxTakeBreak				X
Q6.e_MeditationYoga				X
Q6.f_HangWithFamilyFriends				X
Q6.g_ListenMakeMusic				X
Q6.h_ReadWrite				X
Q6.i_MakeArtDraw				X
Q6.j_Gaming				X
Q6.k_SocialMedia				X
Q7_ApproveOrDisapprove				
Q7.a_TobaccoNicotineDisapproval		X		
Q7.b_DrinkingAlcoholDisapproval		X		
Q7.c_MarijuanaDisapproval		X		

Question#_TopicName	Assess sample reliability	Determine actual positive norms about substance use for message development and to assess impact with the evaluation survey	Reveal misperceptions of norms for program justification and to assess impact with the evaluation survey	Other information about students use for messaging to attract student attention
Q7.d_DisapprovePressuringOthersToDrink		X		
Q7.e_DisapproveUsingOthersPills		X		
Q7.f_DisapproveSharingPills		X		
Q7.g_DisapproveDrivingUnderInfluence		X		
Q8_YourAttitudesAndOtherStudentsAttitudes				
Q8.a_YourTobaccoAttitude		X		
Q8.b_StudentTobaccoAttitude			X	
Q9.a_YourAlcoholAttitude		X		
Q9.b_StudentAlcoholAttitude			X	
Q10.a_YourMarijuanaAttitude		X		
Q10.b_StudentMarijuanaAttitude			X	
Q11.a_YourPillAttitude		X		
Q11.b_StudentPillAttitude			X	
Q12_StudentUseofSubstances				
Q12.a_YourTobaccoUseFrequency		X		
Q12.b_StudentsTobaccoUseFrequency			X	
Q13.a_YourAlcoholUseFrequency		X		
Q13.b_StudentsAlcoholUseFrequency			X	
Q14.a_YourMarijuanaUseFrequency		X		
Q14.b_StudentsMarijuanaUseFrequency			X	
Q15.a_YourPillUseFrequency		X		
Q15.b_StudentsPillUseFrequency			X	
Q16_YourTobaccoUsePast30Days		X		
Q17_YourAlcoholUsePast30Days		X		
Q18_YourMarijuanaUsePast30Days		X		
Q19_YourSharedPillUsePast30Days		X		
Q20_PercentTobaccoUsePast30Days			X	
Q21_PercentAlcoholUsePast30Days			X	
Q22_PercentMarijUsePast30Days			X	
Q23_PercentPillUsePast30Days			X	
Q24.a_YourParentRulesTobaccoUse		X		

Question#_TopicName	Assess sample reliability	Determine actual positive norms about substance use for message development and to assess impact with the evaluation survey	Reveal misperceptions of norms for program justification and to assess impact with the evaluation survey	Other information about students use for messaging to attract student attention
Q24.b_OtherParentsRulesTobaccoUse			X	
Q25.a_YourParentRulesAlcoholUse		X		
Q25.b_OthersParentRulesAlcoholUse			X	
Q26.a_YourParentRulesMarijuanaUse		X		
Q26.b_OtherParentsRulesMarijuanaUse			X	
Q27.a_YourParentRulesPillUse		X		
Q27.b_OtherParentsRulesPillUse			X	
Q28_WhoShouldStudentsTellIfSawPills				
Q28.a_TellPrincipal		X		
Q28.b_TellTeacherCounselor		X		
Q28.c_TellHallMonitor		X		
Q28.d_TellFriend		X		
Q28.e_TellPoliceOfficer		X		
Q28.f_TellParent		X		
Q28.g_NotTellAnyone		X		
Q28_OtherStudentsWouldSayIfSawPills				
Q28.a_TellPrincipal			X	
Q28.b_TellTeacherCounselor			X	
Q28.c_TellHallMonitor			X	
Q28.d_TellFriend			X	
Q28.e_TellPoliceOfficer			X	
Q28.f_TellParent			X	
Q28.g_NotTellAnyone			X	
Q29.a_IShouldDiscourageFriendDrugUse		X		
Q29.b_OthersWouldDiscourageFriendDrugUse			X	
Q30.a_IShouldHelpPressuredFriend		X		
Q30.b_OthersWouldSayHelpPressuredFriend			X	
Q31_HowYouAvoidTobaccoNicotineUse				
Q31.a_IDoNotGoWhereStudentsSmoke		X		
Q31.b_ILeavePlacesStudentsSmoke		X		
Q31.c_IAvoidStudentsWhoSmoke		X		

Question#_TopicName	Assess sample reliability	Determine actual positive norms about substance use for message development and to assess impact with the evaluation survey	Reveal misperceptions of norms for program justification and to assess impact with the evaluation survey	Other information about students use for messaging to attract student attention
Q31.d_IHangOutWithNonsmokers		X		
Q31.e_ITellStudentsIDoNotWantToSmoke		X		
Q31.f_OtherWays		X		
Q32_HowYouAvoidDrinkingAlcohol				
Q32.a_IDoNotGoWhereStudentsDrink		X		
Q32.b_ILeavePlacesWhereStudentsDrink		X		
Q32.c_IHangOutWithNondrinkers		X		
Q32.d_ITellStudentsIDoNotWantToDrink		X		
Q32.e_IDrinkNonalcoholicDrinks		X		
Q32.f_OtherWays		X		
Q33_HowDoYouAvoidMarijuanaUse				
Q33.a_IDoNotGoWhereMarijuanalsUsed		X		
Q33.b_ILeavePlacesWhereMarijuanalsUsed		X		
Q33.c_IAvoidStudentsWhoUseMarijuana		X		
Q33.d_IHangOutWithNonusersOfMarijuana		X		
Q33.e_ITellStudentsIDoNotWantToUse		X		
Q33.f_OtherWays		X		
Q34_WhyChooseToNotUseTobaccoNicotine				
Q34.a_DoNotLikeTasteOrSmell		X		
Q34.b_WorryHowItWillMakeMeFeel		X		
Q34.c_WantToDoWellInSports		X		
Q34.d_MostFriendsAvoidTobaccoNicotine		X		
Q34.e_PromisedFamilyWouldNotUse		X		
Q34.f_DoNotWantToGetInTrouble		X		
Q34.g_DoNotLikeToMakeUnhealthyChoices		X		
Q34.h_WantToBeRoleModelForFriends		X		
Q34.i_OtherReasons		X		
Q35_WhyChooseNotToDrink				
Q35.a_DoNotLikeTasteOrSmell		X		
Q35.b_WorryHowItWillMakeMeFeel		X		
Q35.c_WantToDoWellInSports		X		

Question#_TopicName	Assess sample reliability	Determine actual positive norms about substance use for message development and to assess impact with the evaluation survey	Reveal misperceptions of norms for program justification and to assess impact with the evaluation survey	Other information about students use for messaging to attract student attention
Q35.d_MostFriendsAvoidDrinkingAlcohol		X		
Q35.e_PromisedFamilyWouldNotDrink		X		
Q35.f_DoNotWantToGetInTrouble		X		
Q35.g_DoNotLikeToMakeUnhealthyChoices		X		
Q35.h_WantToBeRoleModelForFriends		X		
Q35.i_OtherReasons		X		
Q36_WhyChooseNotToUseMarijuana				
Q36.a_WorryHowItWillMakeMeFeel		X		
Q36.b_WantToDoWellInSports		X		
Q36.c_MostFriendsAvoidUsingMarijuana		X		
Q36.d_PromisedFamilyWouldNotUse		X		
Q36.e_DoNotWantToGetInTrouble		X		
Q36.f_DoNotLikeToMakeUnhealthyChoices		X		
Q36.g_WantToBeRoleModelForFriends		X		
Q36.h_OtherReasons		X		
Q37_WhyNonuseOfPillsNotPrescribed				
Q37.a_WorryHowPillsWillMakeMeFeel		X		
Q37.b_DoNotWantToGetSickOrHurt		X		
Q37.c_MostFriendsAvoidNonprescribedPills		X		
Q37.d_PromisedFamilyWouldNotUse		X		
Q37.e_DoNotWantToGetInTrouble		X		
Q37.f_DoNotLikeToMakeUnhealthyChoices		X		
Q37.g_WantToBeRoleModelForFriends		X		
Q37.h_OtherReasons		X		
Q38_Grade	X			
Q39_Gender	X			
Q40_Ethnicity	X			
Q41_Race	X			
Q41.a_RaceWhite	X			
Q41.b_RaceBlackAfricanAmerican	X			
Q41.c_RaceAsianAmericanPacificIslander	X			



Question#_TopicName	Assess sample reliability	Determine actual positive norms about substance use for message development and to assess impact with the evaluation survey	Reveal misperceptions of norms for program justification and to assess impact with the evaluation survey	Other information about students use for messaging to attract student attention
Q41.d_RaceAmericanIndianAlaskaNative	X			
Q41.e_RaceOther	X			
Q42_Grades	X			
Q43_FreeSchoolLunch	X			

Social Norms Survey Summary Report for Collaborators

Social Norms Media Campaign for Substance Use Prevention in [Name of School]

The social norms media campaign is an evidence-based communications intervention for substance use prevention. The vast majority of American youth – including the students at [Name of School] – are choosing not to use any substances. Yet both youth and adults overwhelmingly overestimate the number of 11–18-year-olds who use substances. People tend to believe that substance use and tolerance of substance use are more common than they actually are (e.g., “everyone drinks”, “most parents let their kids drink”, “most peers pressure their friends to use substances”). In reality, the most common attitudes and behaviors among youth (and their parents) are typically positive, healthy, and protective.


Perceived norms (i.e., what individuals *think* their peers and peer’s families do and believe) often do not align with actual peer and parental norms (i.e., what most peers and their parents *actually* think and do). These misperceptions influence how people behave. When people think substance use is the norm, they are more likely to make choices that align with that misperception (i.e., initiation of use, increased use, acceptance, or promotion of use). This misalignment between perceptions and reality makes individuals more likely to hide or diminish their own healthy and protective choices, attitudes, and behaviors. The presence of misperceived norms and their influence on substance use behavior has been replicated across the nation, age levels, and subpopulations of youth. The social norms approach applied to substance use prevention evolved out of this research.

A social norms media campaign was held at [Name of School] during the [Year] academic year. The goals of the campaign were to: 1) Reduce the misperceptions of peer substance use; 2) Increase engagement in protective behaviors (such as healthy coping strategies); and 3) Reduce substance use.

In [Month Year], students were administered a baseline social norms survey assessing their attitudes and behaviors related to substance use as well as engagement in healthy activities. Over XXX students completed the survey. The data showed that students are employing healthy coping strategies. For example, X out of X [Name of School] students relax or take a break when feeling down or stressed. **Overwhelmingly, students report disapproval of their peers drinking (XX%) and the majority (XX%) never drink alcohol. Despite the norm being non-use of alcohol, XX% of students mistakenly think that the peer norm is to drink alcohol.**

Students who misperceive the norm are at an increased risk for personally engaging in substance use. The social norms media campaign was designed to decrease this misperception by highlighting the true, positive norms based off the real data collected within the school, such as “XX% of students at [Name of School] never drink alcohol and XX% agree that if a student their age was being pressured by other students to drink alcohol, they should try to help that student get out of the situation.”

The social norms media campaign at [Name of School] [will run/ran] from [Month Year] to [Month Year]. The true positive norms of the students [will be/were] disseminated broadly



using a variety of media channels, including [List of Media such as posters and morning announcements].

[If presenting evaluation results to demonstrate the impact of the campaign, include the following]

In [Month Year], the social norms survey was re-administered to determine campaign impact. Over XXX students completed this follow-up survey. Results of the evaluation found several significant effects:

- Misperceptions of peer norms about using alcohol reduced by more than one-third (X%).
- Rates of alcohol use dropped X%.
- Alcohol use was lowest among students with high exposure to campaign messages.

The social norms media campaign at [Name of School] met its goals of correcting misperceptions about peer alcohol use and decreasing rates of drinking by highlighting the true, positive norms that already existed within the school.

Sample Social Norms Media Timeline: Academic Year 1

Week	Media	Responsible Party(ies)
Week 1 - First week of school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final fall implementation preparations 	
Week 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher and staff training on the social norms approach and media campaign 	
Week 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday: Put up 1st set of fall posters (<i>replaced every 2-3 weeks</i>) 	
Week 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Friday: Begin morning announcements 	
Week 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Friday: Morning announcement 	
Week 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday: Put up 2nd set of fall posters Friday: Morning announcement 	
Week 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday: Put out 1st set of fall table tents Friday: Morning announcement 	
Week 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff wear button #1 Friday: Morning announcement 	
Week 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday: Put up 3rd set of fall posters Friday: Morning announcement Homecoming event: table with media samples and giveaways (e.g., pencils, erasers) 	
Week 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students receive water bottle stickers Friday: Morning announcement 	
Week 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday: Put out 2nd set of fall table tents Friday: Morning announcement Hold focus groups to gather student feedback 	
Week 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday: Put up 4th set of fall posters Friday: Morning announcement 	
Week 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff wear button #2 Friday: Morning announcement 	
Week 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Friday: Morning announcement Lunch table with candy prizes for correctly answering quiz questions based on positive norm messaging 	
Week 15: Thanksgiving		

Week 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday: Put up 5th set of fall posters Friday: Morning announcement 	
Week 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday: Put out 3rd set of fall table tents Friday: Morning announcement 	
Week 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Friday: Morning announcement 	
Winter break		
Week 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalize spring implementation preparations 	
Week 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday: Put up 1st set of spring posters Friday: Morning announcement 	
Week 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday: Put out 1st set of spring table tents Friday: Morning announcement 	
Week 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday: Put up 1st set of bathroom stall journals Friday: Morning announcement 	
Week 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday: Put up 2nd set of spring posters Friday: Morning announcement 	
Week 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff wear button #3 Friday: Morning announcement 	
Week 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students receive water bottle stickers Friday: Morning announcement 	
Week 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday: Put up 3rd set of spring posters Friday: Morning announcement 	
Week 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday: Put out 2nd set of spring table tents Friday: Morning announcement 	
Week 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday: Put up 2nd set of bathroom stall journals Friday: Morning announcement 	
Week 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday: Put up 4th set of spring posters Friday: Morning announcement 	
Week 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff wear button #4 Friday: Morning announcement 	
Spring Break		
Week 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday: Put up 5th set of spring posters Monday: Put out 3rd set of spring table tents 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friday: Morning announcement 	
Week 32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friday: Morning announcement 	
Week 33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students receive water bottle stickers • Friday: Morning announcement 	
Week 34	No positive norms messaging	
Week 35	No positive norms messaging	
Week 36	No positive norms messaging	
Week 37	No positive norms messaging	
Week 38	Administer Year 1 social norms evaluation survey	
Week 39		
Week 40 - Last week of school		

Sample Academic Year Messaging

The following sample messaging timeline showcases how a school may unfold campaign messaging across media channels over the course of an academic year. The focus of this messaging is on alcohol use. The substance of focus should be informed by the needs of the school and data from the baseline social norms survey.

August/September - December

Week	Media	Message
1	N/A	Campaign not yet started
2	N/A	Campaign not yet started
3	Small poster	Fairview Middle School Students are HEALTHY! Over 90% of students disapprove of FMS students using alcohol Information from FMS anonymous spring 2023 survey
	Large poster	Fairview Middle School Students Care! They believe it is important to volunteer in the community (92%) and make friends with people who are different from themselves (82%) They think it is wrong to pressure each other to use alcohol (95%) Information from FMS anonymous spring 2023 survey
4	Staff Buttons	9 of 10
5	Small poster	Most Fairview students would try to talk their friends out of ever drinking alcohol (64%) Information from FMS anonymous spring 2023 survey
5	Large poster	9 out of 10 Fairview students choose to NEVER drink alcohol Parents of FMS students have rules NOT allowing use of alcohol (about 90%) Information from FMS anonymous spring 2023 survey
6	Table tent	Students at Fairview Middle School Took a Survey Last Spring Here's What they Said: They choose music when feeling stressed or down to help them get through it They choose to be physically active (4 out of 5 say it is important) They choose to never drink alcohol (Over 90%) Middle school students across the U.S. also choose not to use (about 90%*) What do you choose to do? Information from FMS anonymous spring 2023 survey & National Institute on Drug Abuse* 2022 survey
7	Small poster	4 out of 5 Fairview Middle School students (81%) say their parents NEVER allow them to consume alcohol Information from FMS anonymous spring 2023 survey

7	Large poster	Almost all Fairview Middle School students disapprove of teen use of alcohol (91%) Information from FMS anonymous spring 2023 survey
8	Table tent	At Fairview Middle School, students value friends and family They find it important to make friends with people different from them (82%) They talk to someone they trust if feeling down or stressed (59%) They discourage friends from alcohol use (64%) Do you help your friends choose NOT to use? Information from FMS anonymous spring 2023 survey
8	Small decal sticker	I'm in the 90% No alcohol for me
8	Staff Buttons	Almost All
9	Small poster	ALMOST ALL Fairview students (87%) NEVER drink alcohol (not counting just a few sips in a family or religious gathering) Information from FMS anonymous spring 2023 survey
8	Large poster	Fairview Middle School Students do not let alcohol interfere with schoolwork, athletics, or friendships Most students avoid beer and other alcohol (87%) They strongly disapprove of pressuring another student to drink (95%) Information from FMS anonymous spring 2023 survey
8	Floor decal	We're in the 90% No alcohol for us
10	Table tent	Students at Fairview Middle School Took a Survey Last Spring. Here's what they said: They choose music when feeling stressed or down to help them get through it (80%) It is important to take schoolwork seriously (95%) They choose not to use alcohol (over 90%) What do you choose to do? Information from FMS anonymous spring 2023 survey
11	Small poster	FMS Students overwhelmingly CHOOSE NOT TO USE ALCOHOL Information from FMS anonymous spring 2023 survey
11	Large poster	9 out of 10 do not drink alcohol Over 90% think it's wrong for peers to drink That's Us! Information from FMS anonymous spring 2023 survey
11	Floor decal	Drink alcohol? No us! We Choose NOT To Use

12	Table tent	At Fairview Middle School, students choose not to use 90% do not drink alcohol Fairview Middle School Students Have a Good Time without Alcohol Information from FMS anonymous spring 2023 survey
12	Staff Buttons	90+
13	Small poster	Fairview middle school students say parents have rules not allowing alcohol use of any kind Information from National Institute on Drug Abuse 2022 survey
13	Large poster	The overwhelming majority of U.S. middle school students do not drink alcohol Over 90% of FMS students do not drink Information from FMS anonymous spring 2023 survey & National Institute on Drug Abuse 2022 survey
13	Floor decal	Over 90% of students at Fairview Middle School choose not to use alcohol That's Us!
13	Small decal sticker	Drink alcohol? Not us! We choose not to use
14	N/A	No new items
15	N/A	No new items

January - May/June

Week	Media	Message
1	N/A	Campaign not yet started
2	N/A	Campaign not yet started
3	Large poster	Which fact about Fairview Middle School Students surprised you most? - Over 90% of FMS students disapprove of middle school students drinking alcohol - 9 out of 10 students choose to never drink alcohol Information from FMS anonymous spring 2023 survey
3	Table tent	Fairview Middle School Students CARE! They think it is wrong to pressure each other to drink alcohol (95%) They believe it is important to volunteer in the community (92%) They would discourage their friends from ever drinking alcohol Over 4 out of 5 think it is important to make friends with people different from themselves Who do YOU care for? Information from FMS anonymous spring 2023 survey
3	Staff button	Surprised?
4	N/A	No new media

5	Large poster	<p>Over 90% of Fairview Middle School Students Choose Not to Use Alcohol! HERE'S <u>WHY</u>: "I do not like the taste or smell" "I worry how it will make me feel" "I want to do well in sports" "Almost all my friends avoid using" "I promised a family member I would not use" "I want to be a role model for my friends" Information from FMS anonymous spring 2023 survey</p>
5	Table tent	<p>SIDE 1 & 2 In the Spring 2023 Survey Fairview Middle School Students were asked WHY you choose not to use alcohol. Most students said one or more of these reasons: "I do not like the taste or smell" "I worry how it will make me feel" "I want to do well in sports" "Almost all my friends avoid using" "I promised a family member I would not use" "I want to be a role model for my friends" Why do YOU choose not to use?</p>
5	Staff button	<p>WHY Over 90%</p>
6	N/A	<p>No new media</p>
7	Large poster	<p>9 out of 10 Fairview Middle School Students Choose Not to Use Alcohol! HERE'S <u>HOW</u>: "I don't go to places where students use" "I leave places if students are using" "I avoid students who use" "I hang out with students who don't use" "I tell students I don't want to use" Information from FMS anonymous spring 2023 survey</p>
7	Table tent	<p>SIDE 1 & 2 94% of FMS Students said they use one or more of these ways to avoid drinking alcohol: "I don't go to places where students are drinking." "I leave places if students begin drinking." "I hang out with students who don't drink." "I tell students that I don't want to drink if they ask me." "I drink non-alcoholic drinks like water, sports drinks, soda/pop, or juice." Information from FMS anonymous spring 2023 survey</p>
7	Staff button	<p>HOW 9 out of 10</p>

8	N/A	No new media
9	Large poster	Fairview Middle School Students Know The Facts! - Almost all FMS students disapprove of middle school students drinking alcohol - Over 90% of FMS students do not drink alcohol - About 90% of FMS parents have a rule: No alcohol allowed Information from FMS anonymous spring 2023 survey and national survey data
9	Table tent	SIDE 1 & 2 Do you know the facts? Which of the following are true? A. Over 90% of FMS students avoid drinking alcohol B. FMS students think it is important to volunteer in the community C. Most U.S. middle school students do not drink alcohol D. Parents of FMS students do not have rules about alcohol use E. Taylor Swift played trombone in the FMS marching band F. 85% of FMS students believe the earth is flat G. Most FMS middle school students like hot dogs more than hamburgers H. Nearly every FMS student use one or more ways to avoid drinking alcohol I. Birds of feather flock together How did you do? The facts > all are true except D, E, and F
9	Staff button	Know the Facts
10	N/A	No new media
11	Large poster	Fairview Middle School Students Rock! Most students have various reasons why they do not use alcohol and have many ways to avoid drinking Wow FMS students! 9 of 10 do not use! Information from FMS anonymous spring 2023 survey
11	Table tent	SIDE 1 & 2 Which of the following are true of FMS students? o Most like Nike over other brands o Over 90% do not drink alcohol o Over half have a pet o About 9 out of 10 say their parents have rules about not drinking alcohol o Netflix is their favorite way to stream o FMS students Rock (They are all true)
11	Staff button	You All Rock! (Ask me why)
12	N/A	No new media

13	Sticker	Healthy Choices All Summer Long for Us! Fairview Students
13	Large poster	<p>Congratulations Fairview students You did it! Another school year almost done! (95% of you have said it is important to take schoolwork seriously) And here's what you also think and do: Nearly 90% of students NEVER drink any alcohol. Most Fairview students agree that they would discourage a friend from using alcohol.</p> <p>Have a safe and happy summer!</p>
14	N/A	No new items
15	N/A	No new items

Focus Group Protocol: Media and Message Development

Purpose: To gather information to make delivery of protective norm messages more effective. The youth themselves are our audience (market). The discussion groups are a form of market research. We will probably be asking some of the same questions of the school staff. Once the SNMC commences, the discussion groups may provide ongoing feedback to enhance and fine tune the message delivery. The group meeting should last 45-60 minutes.

Recruitment: Each group should consist of approximately 8-10 students, ideally equal numbers of boys and girls. Where possible, get a representative sample of students and avoid recruiting from one organization or group (e.g., volleyball team, student coalition group, etc.)

Preparation: The ideal room setup will allow for an in-person facilitator(s) to lead the discussion. To encourage student engagement, it is best if perceived authority figures are not present during the discussion.

Facilitator Instructions: Allow a few minutes for all students to arrive. Once the discussion has begun, it is not recommended to allow late students to enter. It is helpful for the facilitator to know the first names of the students so that they can call on them by name and ensure that no one is left out.

Where appropriate, further probe to better understand a response (e.g., "Can you say more about that?"). Allow for space after questions as they are all designed to be open-ended. Allow for a minimum of 10 seconds of silence then prompt with another open-ended question or call on individual youth. If needed, continue with closed-ended follow-up questions. If one or two people offer an idea, see what others would like to add before moving to the next question.

Suggested script to read aloud: "Hello I am _____. Thank you for being here. This discussion group will be easy and not too long. We would like to ask you all about how you get information at your school. There are a few simple rules for our discussion.

- The rules:
- 1- Everyone participates.
 - 2- One at a time.
 - 3- Short answers, not long stories. No repeats.
 - 4- There are no right or wrong answers.
 - 5- You can always "pass" if you do not want to answer or do not know how to answer."
 - 6- The group will start on time and latecomers will not be allowed to join.


Warm-up exercise: Begin with a warm-up exercise after stating the rules for discussion. Perhaps ask the group to name various breeds of dogs with no repeats. This is a simple task that is not gender biased. The purpose of the warm-up is to demonstrate the rules. The facilitator calls on each student to participate and reminds them that it is OK to pass. After all students have participated, the facilitator should conduct a second round. In the second round, one or more students will pass and all will become more comfortable with the rules.

Sample questions:

- How many of you completed the end of year school survey that asked about your attitudes and experiences with various substances or drugs?

For the next set of questions, imagine that we would like to share information with all students at [School Name].

- What are the different ways that you receive information your school or your peers are putting out?
 - a. Of those things, what are some specific examples of ones that grabbed your attention the most?
 - b. Are there any you saw that seemed like they didn't work?
 - c. What about it didn't feel like it worked for you?
- If we have posters or flyers containing information, where are the locations for best placement?
- About how long should we leave the posters or flyers on the wall before you get tired of seeing them?
- Would placing messages on lunchroom tables be a good idea? How about table tents?
- At some schools, the students liked reading the information in restroom stalls. Would that work here in your school?
- Do you have a school newspaper? Do you read it?
- What are other different ways you might notice information?
- Are there morning announcements or some other form of all school announcements? Is this a good way to get information out to all students?
- Which of the following would be a good way of getting information to you - that you actually pay attention to:
 - a. Emails
 - b. Text alerts
 - c. Virtual learning platform
 - d. School website
 - e. School-based mobile apps
- Who do you think is most believable for providing health information? For example, the principle, school nurse, resource officer, fellow students, teachers, counselors.
- How would you respond to something personalized to your school? Such as using school colors, logo, mascot, etc.
- How interested would you be in getting information about what most other students are interested in (e.g., activities, preferences)? What would you like to know?
- Do you prefer to see statistics displayed as ratios (8 out of 10), percentages (80%), or narrative (most)?
- Would you like to see information in different languages (e.g., Spanish)?
- Which of these two messages is most believable? Why?
 - a. Sample A:
 - b. Sample B:



The next set of questions can be used to pilot test media that has been developed.

- Which of these two [posters] do you prefer?
- Which is more attractive? Eye catching?
- Which is more believable? Why?
- Which is more positive?
- What do you think this [poster] is trying to convey?
- What changes would you suggest?

Focus Group Protocol: Process Evaluation

Purpose: To gather feedback from students regarding the first half of campaign materials and content. This feedback will be used to adjust and enhance campaign content and activities. Student input is vital to the success of the campaign. By eliciting student feedback, they have an opportunity to have their voices heard and also see some of their suggestions being implemented. The group meeting should last about 30 minutes.

Recruitment: Each group should consist of approximately 8-10 students, ideally equal numbers of boys and girls. Where possible, get a representative sample of students and avoid recruiting from one organization or group (e.g., volleyball team, student coalition group, etc.). It is preferable to secure a new set of students who did not previously participate in the previous focus group. This approach ensures varied representation from across the student body and increases the chances of receiving a variety of new ideas and perspectives.

Preparation: The ideal room setup will allow for one in-person adult facilitator to ensure each youth has an opportunity to contribute their ideas. To encourage student engagement, it is best if perceived authority figures are not present during the discussion.

It is useful to have media materials on-hand as a reference to present at the end when provided with a final opportunity for feedback. First, engage in getting their thoughts solely based on their recollection of the material.

On-site Facilitator Instructions

Allow a few minutes for all students to arrive. Once the discussion has begun, it is not recommended to allow late students to enter. It is helpful for the facilitator to know the first names of the students so that they can call on them by name and ensure that no one is left out.

Where appropriate, further probe to better understand a response (e.g., "Can you say more about that?"). Allow for space after questions as they are all designed to be open ended. Allow for a minimum of 10 seconds of silence then prompt with another open-ended question or call on individual youth. If needed, continue with closed-ended follow-up questions. If one or two people offer an idea, see what others would like to add before moving to the next question.

Suggested script to read aloud: "Hello I am _____. Thank you for being here. This discussion group will be easy and not too long. We would like to ask you all about information being shared at your school regarding the end-of-year survey last year and the ongoing messaging campaign happening here at [School Name]. There are a few simple rules for our discussion.

- The rules:
- 1- Everyone participates.
 - 2- One at a time.
 - 3- Short answers, not long stories.
 - 4- There are no right or wrong answers.
 - 5- You can always "pass" if you do not want to answer or do not know how to answer."

Warm-up exercise: Begin with a warm-up exercise after stating the rules for discussion. Perhaps ask the group to name various types of trees with no repeats. This is a simple task that is not gender biased. The purpose of the warm-up is to demonstrate the rules. The leader calls on each student to participate and reminds them that it is OK to pass. After all students have participated, the facilitator should conduct a second round. In the second round, ideally, two or more students will pass and all will become more comfortable with the rules. Especially no stigma attached to passing.

Sample Facilitator Questions:

- How many of you have heard a morning announcement regarding the end-of-year survey taken last year?
 - a. How many of these announcements have you heard?
 - b. What was your reaction to them?
 - c. Did they catch your attention?
 - i. If yes, why?
 - ii. If not, what would catch your attention?
 - d. Did you believe the information shared in the announcement(s)?
 - i. What made it believable? Why or why not?
 - ii. What would make the information more believable?
- How many of you have seen posters regarding the school survey taken at the end of last school year?
 - e. What was your reaction to seeing the posters?
 - f. Were the posters noticeable? Large enough to see?
 - i. How many other posters are on the walls? Are the posters with survey information noticeable/stand out?
 - g. Was there any that you liked in particular?
 - i. Why?
 - ii. What did you think about....the colors, images, size, message, words, placement, etc.?
 - h. Was there any that you disliked?
 - i. What did you dislike and why?
 - ii. Were there any colors, images, size, message, words, placement, etc. that turned you off?
 - i. What suggestions do you have to make the posters more interesting? More believable?
- How many of you have seen school staff wearing buttons that say “9 out of 10” or “almost all”?
 - j. What was your reaction to seeing them?
 - k. Have you had conversations with your teachers, staff, or other students regarding the buttons?
 - i. If so, what was talked about?
 - l. What did you like about the buttons? Dislike?
- How many of you have seen table tents containing survey information?
 - m. What was your reaction to seeing them?
 - n. What did you like about them? Dislike?
 - o. What suggestions do you have to make the table tents more interesting? More believable?

- How many of you have seen water bottle/laptop stickers containing survey information?
 - p. What was your reaction to seeing them?
 - q. What did you like about them? Dislike?
 - r. Are the stickers being used by students? Why do you think they are being used/not being used?
 - s. What suggestions do you have to make the stickers more appealing? More believable?
- How many of you have seen stickers on the floor containing survey information?
 - t. What was your reaction to seeing them?
 - u. What did you like about them? Dislike?
 - v. What suggestions do you have to make the stickers more interesting? More believable?
- Out of everything we have talked about, what has stood out to you the most? Posters, announcements, etc.? Why?
 - a. What has worked well in grabbing your attention and why did it grab your attention?
 - b. Would you like to see more or less of this information? Was it enough to notice? Did you get tired of seeing it/did you start ignoring the information?
 - i. Do you receive a lot of other information through the school? Does the survey information stand out? If not, what would make it stand out?
 - c. What has worked well in giving information that you believe? What made the information believable?
 - d. What has stood out the *least* and why?
 - e. What has *not* worked well in giving information that you believe? What made the information unbelievable?
- Overall, do you find the media to be positive in nature? Why or why not?
- Would you like to see recognizable colors or images on the materials? This can include school mascot, school colors, entrance to the school, sporting events/fields, etc.
- Are there any other suggestions on how the survey information can be made more visible, interesting, or believable?

Evaluation Survey

The evaluation survey can provide data serving three primary functions: 1) assessing the extent of exposure to social norms messages through a variety of media, 2) assessing change in perceived norms from the baseline social norms survey, 3) assessing change in personal attitudes and behaviors from the baseline social norms survey, and 4) providing new data for the development of ongoing campaign messaging. An evaluation survey that collects updated data for ongoing campaign messaging will include the baseline social norms survey questions and campaign exposure questions.

A sample evaluation survey to be used for the purposes of evaluation and ongoing campaign messaging is shared below. If your goal in administering the evaluation survey is only for evaluation purposes, we have noted below which items can be omitted.

Please note that like the baseline social norms survey, the evaluation survey has been designed to be inclusive of the four primary substance categories previously assessed: tobacco/nicotine, alcohol, marijuana, and un-prescribed pill use. You will want to modify the evaluation survey to focus on the substances you initially assessed or are interested in learning more about for the purposes of ongoing campaign message development.

[School Name] Student Survey

This survey asks about students' attitudes and behaviors regarding general interests, lifestyles, and what you think about substances such as alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and other things. We are mostly interested in what you believe; there are no right or wrong answers.

The survey should take you about 20 minutes to complete. Your responses are completely **anonymous**. We will not collect your name or any information that can directly link you with your answers, so be as honest as possible. This survey deals with an important issue that affects many people, and you can help us understand what [Middle/Junior/High] school students like to do and think is good to do. If you do not want to answer a question, you can skip it, and you may stop at any time.

Thank you for your time.

If you agree to take part in this survey, please click **continue**.

Questions 1-3 can be omitted if you are not gathering updated data for ongoing campaign messaging. The remaining protective norms can be used to assess changes from baseline and to ease students into the survey.

INTRODUCTION

We would like to begin by asking you about things that may be of interest to you, important for your lifestyle, and how you get through times when you may feel down or stressed.

1. How do you spend your time after school or on the weekends (check all that apply)?
- Play sports
 - Watch a movie/TV/YouTube
 - Play video games
 - Hang out with family
 - Listen to music
 - Read a book/comic
 - Hang out with friends
 - Go shopping
 - Something else (please describe): _____

2. What do you do most often when hanging out with friends on the weekend? Mark only one.
- Play sports
 - Watch a movie/TV/YouTube
 - Play video games
 - Listen to music
 - Go shopping

3. What do you like more?

Hot dogs	Hamburgers	Soccer	Basketball
Pop Music	Rock Music	Spring	Fall
Beach	Mountains	Comedy	Action
Book	Graphic novel		

4. What is important to you in this phase of your life (check all that apply)?
- Getting good grades
 - Involvement in extra-curricular and/or sports activities
 - Planning for the future
 - Leading a healthy life
 - Positive relationships with those I care about

5. How important do you believe it is to...

	Not at all important	Somewhat important	Very important
a. Volunteer in your community			
b. Make friends with people different from you			
c. Help a friend in need			
d. Help someone I don't know who is in need			
e. Take your schoolwork seriously			
f. Be physically active			
g. Eat a healthy diet including fruits and vegetables			

6. When you are feeling down or stressed or when bad things happen, how do you get through it? Here is a list of things that some young people do - please tell us which ones you use. (Check all that you use.)

- Exercise
- Prayer

- Talk to someone I trust
- Relax/Take a break
- Meditation/Yoga
- Hang out with family/friends
- Listen to to/Make music
- Read/Write
- Make art/Draw
- Gaming
- Social media

As you transition to asking questions about substance use, start with injunctive norms to assess personal attitudes and perceptions of peers' typical attitudes with respect to substance use.

ATTITUDES ABOUT SUBSTANCE USE

We would now like to change the topic. The next set of questions asks what your attitudes are about students using substances, such as alcohol, tobacco/nicotine, marijuana, and other things. Please indicate to what extent you approve or disapprove of each of the following:

7.	Strongly Disapprove	Disapprove	Approve	Strongly Approve
• [Middle/Junior/High] school students using tobacco or nicotine products (cigarettes, cigars, chew, vaping).	A	B	C	D
• [Middle/Junior/High] school students drinking beer or other alcohol (beyond just a few sips in a family or religious gathering).	A	B	C	D
• [Middle/Junior/High] school students smoking/vaping marijuana or eating it in some form.	A	B	C	D
• [Middle/Junior/High] school students pressuring other students to drink alcohol or use other substances.	A	B	C	D
• [Middle/Junior/High] school students taking pills NOT prescribed or given by their doctor, nurse, or parent/guardian.	A	B	C	D
• [Middle/Junior/High] school students sharing their pills with other students.	A	B	C	D

- [For High School] High school students driving under the influence of a substance.

A

B

C

D

YOUR ATTITUDES AND OTHER STUDENTS' ATTITUDES ABOUT SUBSTANCE USE

This next section asks questions about your attitudes and what you think might be the most typical or common attitude of other students in your grade at your school.

8a. Which statement below about student use of tobacco or nicotine in any form (smoking, vaping/e-cigarettes, cigars, chew, etc.) do you feel best represents your own attitude? (select one)

- Use of tobacco or nicotine is never a good thing to do.
- Occasional use is OK, but not daily use.
- Frequent use is OK, if that's what the individual wants to do.

8b. Which statement below about student use of tobacco or nicotine in any form (smoking, vaping/e-cigarettes, cigars, chew, etc.) do you expect to be the most common attitude among students in your grade at your school? (select one as your best guess)

- Use of tobacco or nicotine is never a good thing to do.
- Occasional use is OK, but not daily use.
- Frequent use is OK, if that's what the individual wants to do.

9a. Which statement below about drinking alcoholic beverages do you feel best represents your own attitude? (select one)

- Drinking (more than a few sips in a family or religious occasion) is never a good thing to do for anyone at my age.
- Occasional drinking at my age beyond just a few sips is OK.
- Frequent drinking beyond just a few sips at my age is OK if that's what the individual wants to do.

9b. Which statement below about drinking alcoholic beverages do you expect to be the most common attitude among students in your grade at your school? (select one as your best guess)

- Drinking (more than a few sips in a family or religious occasion) is never a good thing to do for anyone at this age.
- Occasional drinking at this age beyond just a few sips is OK.
- Frequent drinking beyond just a few sips at this age is OK, if that's what the individual wants to do.

10a. Which statement below about students smoking/vaping marijuana or eating marijuana in some form (edibles such as candy, cookie, chocolate bar, etc.) do you feel best represents your own attitude? (select one)

- Smoking, vaping, or eating marijuana is never a good thing to do.
- Occasional smoking, vaping, or eating marijuana is OK, but not daily.
- Frequent smoking, vaping, or eating marijuana is OK, if that's what the individual wants to do.

10b. Which statement below about student smoking/vaping marijuana or eating marijuana in some form (edibles such as candy, cookie, chocolate bar, etc.) do you expect to be the most

common attitude among students in your grade at your school? (select one as your best guess)

- Smoking, vaping, or eating marijuana is never a good thing to do.
- Occasional smoking, vaping, or eating marijuana is OK, but not daily.
- Frequent smoking, vaping, or eating marijuana is OK, if that's what the individual wants to do.

11a. Which statement below about students taking pills NOT prescribed or given by their doctor, nurse, or parent/guardian do you feel best represents your own attitude? (select one)

- Students should only take pills prescribed or given by a doctor, nurse, or parent/guardian.
- Taking pills that are provided by friends is OK.
- Taking pills provided by anyone is OK, if that's what the individual wants to do.

11b. Which statement below about students taking pills NOT prescribed or given by their doctor, nurse, or parent/guardian do you think is the most common attitude among students in your grade at your school? (select one as your best guess)

- Students should only take pills approved by their doctor, nurse, or parent/guardian.
- Taking pills that are provided by friends is OK.
- Taking pills provided by anyone is OK, if that's what they want to do.

The survey now transitions to asking descriptive norm questions to assess personal behaviors and perceptions of peers' typical behaviors with respect to substance use. For middle school, where substance use is less prevalent, response options could be consolidated (i.e., never, a few times per year, once per month or more, once per week or more).

STUDENT USE OF SUBSTANCES

Thank you for telling us about your attitudes about different substances. Next, we would like to ask about your own use of substances and how often you think substances are used by other students.

12. How often do you and how often do you think students in your grade at your school typically use tobacco/nicotine (including cigarettes, vapes/e-cigarettes, cigars, and chew)? *Just give your best guess of what is most common for yourself and students in your grade at your school.*

	Never	1-2 times per year	Once a month	Twice a month	Once a week	Twice a week	Daily
a. Yourself							
b. Students in your grade at your school							

13. Not counting just a few sips in a family or religious gathering, how often do you and how often do you think students in your grade at your school typically drink alcohol? Include beer, wine, wine coolers, liquor, and mixed drinks in your answer. *Just give your best guess of what is most common for yourself and students in your grade at your school.*

	Never	1-2 times per year	Once a month	Twice a month	Once a week	Twice a week	Daily
a. Yourself							
b. Students in your grade at your school							

14. How often do you and how often do you think students in your grade at your school typically smoke, vape, or eat marijuana (in candy, cookies, chocolate bars or other treats)? *Just give your best guess of what is most common for yourself and students in your grade at your school.*

	Never	1-2 times per year	Once a month	Twice a month	Once a week	Twice a week	Daily
a. Yourself							
b. Students in your grade at your school							

15. How often do you and how often do you think students in your grade at your school typically use any kind of pill that is NOT prescribed or given by their doctor, nurse, or parent/guardian? *Just give your best guess of what is most common for yourself and students in your grade at your school.*

	Never	1-2 times per year	Once a month	Twice a month	Once a week	Twice a week	Daily
a. Yourself							
b. Students in your grade at your school							

During the PAST 30 DAYS, on how many days, if any, did you do any of the following:

16. Use any tobacco or nicotine products (cigarettes, e-cigarettes/vaping, cigars, chew)?

17. Have at least one drink of alcohol including beer, wine, wine coolers, liquor, and mixed drinks (beyond just a few sips in a family or religious gathering)?

18. Smoke, vape, or eat marijuana (i.e., in candy, cookies, chocolate bars or other treats)?

19. Take a pill not prescribed or given by your doctor, nurse, or parent/guardian.

During the past 30 days, what percentage of students in your grade at your school do you believe have used any of the following?

20. Any tobacco or nicotine products (cigarettes, e-cigarettes/vaping, cigars, chew)?

- A. 0%
- B. 10%
- C. 20%
- D. 30%
- E. 40%
- F. 50%
- G. 60%
- H. 70%
- I. 80%
- J. 90% or more

21. Had at least one drink of alcohol including beer, wine, wine coolers, liquor, and mixed drinks (beyond just a few sips in a family or religious gathering)?

- A. 0%
- B. 10%
- C. 20%
- D. 30%
- E. 40%
- F. 50%
- G. 60%
- H. 70%
- I. 80%
- J. 90% or more

22. Smoked, vaped, or ate marijuana (in candy, cookies, chocolate bars or other treats)?

- A. 0%
- B. 10%
- C. 20%
- D. 30%
- E. 40%
- F. 50%
- G. 60%
- H. 70%
- I. 80%
- J. 90% or more

23. Took a pill not prescribed or given by a doctor, nurse, or parent/guardian.

- A. 0%
- B. 10%
- C. 20%
- D. 30%
- E. 40%
- F. 50%
- G. 60%
- H. 70%
- I. 80%
- J. 90% or more

PARENT OR GUARDIAN RULES

These next questions ask about what kinds of rules your parents/guardians have about you using substances and what you think are the most typical rules other students' parents have about their children using substances.

24a. What rules, if any, have your parents/guardians set for you about using tobacco or nicotine in any form (smoking, vaping/e-cigarettes, cigars, chew, etc.) (*select one*)

- No tobacco/nicotine is allowed
- Some tobacco/nicotine is allowed with family member(s) when a parent/guardian is present
- Some tobacco/nicotine is allowed with friends if a parent/guardian is present

- No rules/Do not know of any rules

24b. What rules, if any, would you say are most typically set by parents/guardians of other students in your grade about using tobacco or nicotine in any form (smoking, vaping/e-cigarettes, cigars, chew, etc.)? (select one)

- No tobacco/nicotine use is allowed
- Some tobacco/nicotine use is allowed with family member(s) when a parent/guardian is present
- Some tobacco/nicotine use with friends is allowed if a parent/guardian is present
- No rules/Do not know of any rules

25a. What rules, if any, have your parents/guardians set for you about drinking alcohol (more than a sip or two)? (select one)

- No alcohol use is allowed
- Some alcohol use is allowed with family member(s) when a parent/guardian is present
- Some alcohol use is allowed with friends if a parent/guardian is present
- No rules/Do not know of any rules

25b. What rules, if any, would you say are most typically set by parents/guardians of other students in your grade about drinking alcohol (more than a sip or two)? (select one)

- No alcohol use is allowed
- Some alcohol use is allowed with family member(s) when a parent/guardian is present
- Some alcohol use is allowed with friends if a parent/guardian is present
- No rules/Do not know of any rules

26a. What rules, if any, have your parents/guardians set for you about smoking, vaping, or eating marijuana in some form? (select one)

- No marijuana use is allowed
- Some marijuana use is allowed with family member(s) when a parent/guardian is present
- Some marijuana use is allowed with friends if a parent/guardian is present
- No rules/Do not know of any rules

26b. What rules, if any, would you say are most typically set by parents/guardians of other students in your grade about smoking, vaping, or eating marijuana in some form? (select one)

- No marijuana use is allowed
- Some marijuana use is allowed with family member(s) when a parent/guardian is present
- Some marijuana use with allowed with friends if a parent/guardian is present
- No rules/Do not know of any rules

27a. What rules, if any, have your parents/guardians set for you about taking any kind of pill that is NOT prescribed or given to you by them, a doctor, or nurse? (select one)

- No use is allowed
- Some use is allowed with family member(s) if a parent/guardian is present
- Some use is allowed with friends if a parent/guardian is present
- No rules/Do not know of any rules

27b. What rules, if any, would you say are most typically set by parents/guardians of other students in your grade about taking any kind of pill that is NOT prescribed or given by their doctor, nurse, or parent/guardian? (select one)

- No use is allowed
- Some use is allowed with family member(s) if a parent/guardian is present
- Some use is allowed with friends if a parent/guardian is present
- No rules/Do not know of any rules

The next questions ask about substance-related protective attitudes and behaviors (i.e., reasons for not using and ways of avoiding substances).

ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS ABOUT CARING FOR OTHER STUDENTS

This next section asks what you think you and other students in your grade would do if you saw another student sharing or about to use substances.

28. Who should students tell if they saw other students sharing pills?

I think students should...
(check all that apply)

Most other students would say...
(check all that apply)

- | | |
|---|---|
| a. Tell a principal | a. Tell a principal |
| b. Tell a teacher or counselor | b. Tell a teacher or counselor |
| c. Tell a hall monitor | c. Tell a hall monitor |
| d. Tell a friend | d. Tell a friend |
| e. Tell a police officer or security person | e. Tell a police officer or security person |
| f. Tell a parent/guardian or another adult relative | f. Tell a parent/guardian or another adult relative |
| g. Not tell anyone | g. Not tell anyone |

29a. How much do you agree or disagree with this statement? *If a friend my age was about to drink alcohol, use tobacco/nicotine or marijuana, or take a pill not prescribed or given by their doctor, nurse, or parent/guardian, I think it is right for me to try to talk with and discourage that person from doing so.*

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

29b. What response do you think most other students in your grade at your school would give to the statement you just answered above? (select one)

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

30a. How much do you agree or disagree with this statement? *If a student my age was being pressured by other students to drink alcohol, use tobacco/nicotine or marijuana, or take a pill not prescribed or given by their doctor, nurse, or parent/guardian, I should step in to help that student get out of the situation if I can.* (select one)

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

30b. What response do you think most other students in your grade at your school would give to the statement you just answered above? (select one)

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

HOW YOU AVOID USING SUBSTANCES

Now we want to know how you limit or avoid using substances.

31. If you never use tobacco or nicotine in any form (smoking cigarettes or cigars, vaping or using e-cigarettes), or if you sometimes choose not to use it, how do you avoid using it?

(choose all that apply)

- a. I don't go to places where students are smoking or vaping
- b. I leave places if students start smoking or vaping
- c. I avoid students who smoke or vape
- d. I hang out with students who don't smoke or vape
- e. I tell students that I don't want to smoke or vape if they ask me
- f. Other ways? (Please describe)

32. If you never drink alcohol, or if you sometimes choose not to, how do you avoid drinking it? (choose all that apply)

- a. I don't go to places where students are drinking
- b. I leave places if students start drinking
- c. I hang out with students who don't drink
- d. I tell students that I don't want to drink if they ask me
- e. I drink non-alcoholic drinks like water, sports drinks, soda/pop, or juice
- f. Other ways? (Please describe)

33. If you never smoke, vape, or eat marijuana, or if you sometimes choose not to, how do you avoid smoking, vaping, or eating it? (choose all that apply)

- a. I don't go to places where students are smoking, vaping, or eating marijuana
- b. I leave places if students start smoking, vaping, or eating marijuana
- c. I avoid students who smoke, vape, or eat marijuana
- d. I hang out with students who don't smoke, vape, or eat marijuana
- e. I tell students that I don't want to smoke, vape, or eat marijuana if they ask me
- f. Other ways? (Please describe)

REASONS FOR NOT USING SUBSTANCES

This next section asks about reasons why you might not use substances. It may be that you never use any substance at all or, even if you are someone that has used a substance, there may be times that you do not use.

34. When you choose not to use tobacco/nicotine in any form, why do you make this choice? (Select all that apply):

- a. I don't like the taste or smell of tobacco/nicotine
- b. I worry about how it will make me feel
- c. I want to do well in sports
- d. Almost all my friends avoid using tobacco/nicotine
- e. I promised a family member(s) I would not use tobacco/nicotine
- f. I don't want to get in trouble
- g. I don't like to make poor or unhealthy choices

- h. I want to be a role model for my friends
- i. Other:

35. When you choose not to drink alcohol, why do you make this choice? (Select all that apply):

- a. I don't like the taste/smell
- b. I worry about how it will make me feel
- c. I want to do well in sports
- d. Almost all my friends avoid drinking alcohol
- e. I promised a family member(s) I would not drink
- f. I don't want to get in trouble
- g. I don't like to make poor or unhealthy choices
- h. I want to be a role model for my friends
- i. Other:

36. When you choose not to smoke, vape, or eat marijuana, why do you make this choice? (Select all that apply):

- a. I worry about how it will make me feel
- b. I want to do well in sports
- c. Almost all my friends avoid using marijuana
- d. I promised a family member(s) I would not use marijuana
- e. I don't want to get in trouble
- f. I don't like to make poor or unhealthy choices
- g. I want to be a role model for my friends
- h. Other:

37. When you choose not to use pills unless they are prescribed or given by your doctor, nurse, or parent/guardian, why do you make this choice? (Select all that apply):

- a. I worry about how it will make me feel
- b. I don't want to risk getting sick or hurt
- c. Almost all my friends avoid using pills that are NOT prescribed to them
- d. I promised a family member(s) I would not use pills that are NOT prescribed to me
- e. I don't want to get in trouble
- f. I don't like to make poor or unhealthy choices
- g. I want to be a role model for my friends
- h. Other:

The next two questions ask about campaign exposure. You will want to customize the response options on Question 38 to reflect media you did and did not use to assess the reliability of the survey responses and determine the possible presence of co-occurring messaging campaigns.

SCHOOL INFORMATION ABOUT MOST STUDENTS AT [SCHOOL NAME]

These are two questions about messages you may have seen or heard during this school year.

38. During this school year, how often have you seen or heard information about WHAT MOST STUDENTS OR THE MAJORITY AT YOUR SCHOOL do or think about the use of alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana, or use of pills not provided by a doctor/nurse or parent/guardian BASED ON SURVEY RESULTS FROM STUDENTS AT YOUR SCHOOL? (choose one)

- Never
- Once
- Twice
- 3-4 times
- 5-9 times
- 10-19 times
- 20 or more times

39. Where did you see or hear this survey information ABOUT WHAT MOST STUDENTS AT YOUR SCHOOL DO OR THINK about alcohol, tobacco, or marijuana use, or use of pills not prescribed or provided by a doctor/nurse or parent/guardian? (Check how often seen/heard for each item.)

- | | Never | Once | More than once |
|--|-------|------|----------------|
| • On wall posters at school | | | |
| • In school newsletters | | | |
| • On lunchroom table tents | | | |
| • On bathroom printed bulletins | | | |
| • On baseball caps work by teachers or students | | | |
| • On buttons work by teachers or students | | | |
| • In school announcements over PA (speaker system) | | | |
| • On t-shirts worn by students | | | |
| • Other (please specify): | | | |

STUDENT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

These last questions make sure a broad range of students representing your school have participated.

40 What grade are you in? (Circle one) 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

41. Are you a boy or a girl? ___ Boy ___ Girl

42. Do you consider yourself to be Hispanic or Latinx? ___YES ___NO

43. What race do you consider yourself to be (Check all that apply)?

- ___ White
- ___ Black or African American
- ___ Asian-American/Pacific Islander
- ___ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ___ Other _____

44. What types of grades do you usually get? (Please check one)

- ___ Mostly As ___ Mostly Bs ___ Mostly Cs ___ Mostly Ds ___ Mostly Fs

45. Do you get free school meals, or vouchers for free school lunches?
 ___YES ___NO

The final two questions also ask about campaign exposure. These questions assess recall of the actual social norms campaign materials disseminated in your school. You will want to customize these items by adjusting the questions to represent the types of media used in your school and sharing a collage of that media.

46. Please look at the first set of images of different school posters that may have appeared sometime during this school year. Do you recall seeing any of this material? (Choose one answer.)

- I do not recall seeing any of these posters.
- I may have seen one or two of them at some point during the year.
- I have definitely seen some of them a few times during the year.
- I have seen most of them several times during the year.



47. Please look at this next set of images of other materials that includes stickers, buttons, and a bathroom bulletin that may have appeared sometime during this school year. Do you recall seeing any of this material? (Choose one answer.)

- I do not recall seeing any of these items.
- I may have seen one or two of them at some point during the year.
- I have definitely seen some of them a few times during the year.
- I have seen most of them several times during the year.



THANK YOU for taking the time to answer these questions and sharing your thoughts.

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