SMALL GROUPS MODEL
NORMS-CHALLENGING
INTERVENTION

TRAINING MANUAL

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Section 1: Introduction

Social norms theory states that most college students significantly overestimate the attitude and behavior norms of their peers with regard to alcohol use (Berkowitz, 1997; Berkowitz & Perkins, 1987; Perkins, 1995, 1997; Perkins & Berkowitz, 1986a, b). They then adjust their behavior toward these inaccurate norms, and student drinking increases. When presented with actual norms data, students will lower their own expectations and consumption to conform more closely to that of their peers. Therefore, the goal of social norms-based interventions is to correct misperceptions of alcohol use norms by students and, in turn, to reduce alcohol abuse and related problems.

The effectiveness of alcohol abuse prevention programming based on social norms theory has been demonstrated on a number of campuses over the last few years. Social norms theory may be applied to alcohol abuse prevention programming through a variety of activities. At present, social norms marketing is the approach with which campus prevention workers are most familiar. Social norms marketing strategies deliver accurate alcohol use attitude and behavior norms information to students via newspaper ads, posters, radio and television spots, greeting cards, postcards, key rings, mouse pads, etc. Social norms information may also be disseminated electronically via e-mail, screen savers, or web sites. This approach is proving effective in reducing alcohol abuse in general campus populations.

The authors of this manual were interested in developing an intervention that would target specific campus sub-populations considered to be at high risk for alcohol abuse such as fraternities and sororities. Alcohol abuse and related problems have been well documented in the Greek system. Members of fraternities consistently display higher rates of problem drinking behavior than the general campus population (Baer, 1994; Borsari & Carey, 1999; Coggins & McKellar, 1994; Far, Thompson, & Miller, 1995; Goodwin, 1989; Lo & Globetti, 1993, 1995; Page, Scanlon & Gilbert, 1999). Sorority members also drink at higher rates than other college women. For example, a campus-wide random sample survey at Washington State University (WSU) in 1995 showed that 50.2% of Greek women have 5 or more drinks on the average when they "party". Only 23.7% of non-Greek women drink at that rate (Far, 1998). Perception of drinking norms in the Greek environment also plays a strong role in drinking behavior. Goodwin (1989) found a .43 correlation between the amount a subject drinks and the belief that his/her house drinks more than other houses. Lo and Globetti (1993, 1995) studied first-year college students who were non-drinkers in their senior year of high school (N=493). Forty-six and one half percent of the survey respondents started to drink in their first year of college, and Greek affiliation was the strongest predictor of their decision to begin drinking. There is obviously a strong connection between Greek membership and the decision to begin drinking after abstinence before attending college.

In 1988-89, Jeanne Far, Ph.D., and John Miller, M.S., M.Ed., at Washington State University (WSU), inspired by the work of Alan Berkowitz, Ph.D., and Wes Perkins, Ph.D. (1986a, b), developed the Small Groups Norms-challenging Model (SGNM) intervention using student norms data. They piloted this project in 1990-92 with funding from the WSU Alcohol and Drug
Abuse Program and the invaluable guidance of Steve Burkett, Ph.D., Armand Mauss, Ph.D., and Dave Ward, Ph.D., from the WSU Department of Sociology (Barnett, Far, Mauss, & Miller, 1996). They replicated their research in 1995-96 with funding from Health and Wellness Services-Wellness Programs (Far, 1998). In 1998, they received funding from the U.S. Department of Education (DOED) to implement Project Culture Change (PCC), a project to further research the SGNM. In August 2000, the DOED recognized the SGNM and WSU as a Model Program and awarded a grant to Far and Miller to continue this project for one more year. In addition, in September of 2000 the DOED funded Project Empowerment, a two-year project to research the application of the SGNM to other sub-populations considered to be at high-risk for alcohol abuse and related problems, including entering freshmen, athletes, and students living in residence halls.

The SGNM intervention described in this manual is a mechanism for delivering accurate alcohol-use norms data to students in selected high-consuming subgroups of the campus population, such as fraternities, sororities, athletic teams and other membership and/or reference groups that might be at high risk for alcohol abuse and related problems. It provides an intensive, focused, interactive program facilitated by a respected group leader, making the norms correction message more credible and believable to group members (Berkowitz and Perkins, 1986, 1987; Perkins, 1997). During the 45-minute intervention, students are presented with accurate alcohol use norms from their specific group and the campus as a whole. They discover that their perceptions of their peer’s alcohol use attitudes and beliefs are greatly exaggerated. They discover that most students do not drink excessively or approve of excessive drinking. As a result, they become empowered to follow their “true” beliefs – their own values – with regard to alcohol use, and they bring their drinking attitudes and behaviors more in line with actual group norms.

Jeanne and John have been using this model with fraternities, sororities, athletic teams, incoming freshmen, residence halls and classrooms. Significant corrections in alcohol use misperceptions and/or decreases in alcohol consumption have been demonstrated in each of these populations following just a single intervention.

This manual describes the Small Groups Norms-challenging Model (SGNM) intervention. It provides information for training individuals to facilitate the program, including

- a discussion of social norms theory, which is the theoretical foundation for the intervention.
- the intervention script.
- the intervention overheads.
- an experimental design for determining program effectiveness.
- research findings on the model from the work at WSU.
Section 2: Social Norms Theory

Peer Influence

We experience basic needs to
belong – have a sense of community, of connectedness to others.
be somebody – have a sense of purpose and value, of making a meaningful contribution.

One way to satisfy these needs is to adopt the attitudes, expectations and behaviors of our reference group and conform to some degree with those of our peers. These become our "norms" - unspoken social rules or codes about how we are supposed to behave and what we are supposed to believe (Perkins, 1997).

Young people, particularly those away from home at residential college campuses, tend to adopt peer attitudes and behaviors. These students do not have frequent contact with their parents, siblings, and other reference groups and institutions. Therefore, peer influence becomes prominent in defining their attitudes and behaviors, especially when contact with peers is close and frequent. Peers set standards of acceptable and valuable behavior, and students tend to think and act like their peers.

This holds true for alcohol use attitudes and behaviors. Norms exist for what students should believe about drinking, how much and how often they should drink, when and where they drink, and how they behave when drinking.

The Misperception Hypothesis

Perceived peer attitude and behavior norms tend to drive students’ attitudes and behaviors whether the perceptions are accurate or not. So, what if students’ perceptions are inaccurate or incorrect? Perceptions, accurate or inaccurate, become reality. Students still norm to their perceptions of their peers’ attitudes and behaviors whether or not they are accurate (Perkins, 1997).

Studies have shown that most students across the country in all types of institutions of higher education tend to misperceive significantly the attitude and behavior norms of their peers with regard to alcohol use (Perkins & Wechsler, 1996). They believe that most students drink excessively and approve of excessive drinking. For example, over two-thirds of students on most campuses believe that their peers hold relatively permissive attitudes towards alcohol and other drug use; in fact, the majority of students are extremely moderate in their own attitudes and behaviors concerning alcohol. This is true of other drugs as well, including pot and cocaine.

1 In research referred to above, which has been replicated on a number of campuses nationally, a “moderate” attitude towards alcohol use was defined as someone who thinks that “Drinking is never a good thing to do,” “Drinking is all right, but a student should never get smashed,” or “An occasional drunk is okay as long as it doesn’t interfere with grades or responsibilities.” A more “permissive” or less responsible attitude was defined as someone who thinks that “An occasional drunk is okay even if it does occasionally interfere with grades or responsibilities,” or “A frequent drunk is okay if that’s what the individual wants to do.” While the majority of students chose the moderate or less permissive position as accurately describing their own attitude towards alcohol use, over two-thirds perceived the prevalent norm on campus to correspond with one of the more permissive attitude categories. Thus, very few students accurately perceived the attitudes of other students regarding alcohol consumption.
when it comes to alcohol or other drug use behaviors – “almost everyone thinks that everyone else is doing more of everything than they really are.”

As a result of these misperceptions, many students raise their alcohol use levels to conform to these “inaccurate realities.” They believe their own private values to be different - more moderate and less permissive – than most of their peers. This creates cognitive dissonance, which, in turn, leads to emotional discomfort and motivates them to change their behavior to alleviate the discomfort. Consequently, they increase their drinking to reduce dissonance and avoid potential disapproval or rejection by their peers. In addition, they may not speak out in certain situations and risk the group’s negative judgment. For example, they may not be willing to share concerns, disagree with and/or provide constructive feedback to someone whose excessive drinking is causing problems.

**Cognitive Dissonance**

We believe that, on an individual level, interventions based on social norms theory operate through the effects of cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1956, 1957). Festinger (1957) said that discrepancies between beliefs and behaviors cause dissonance, which can translate into emotional discomfort. This, in turn, provides motivation to change attitudes, behaviors, and/or choice of reference groups to alleviate the discomfort. Reference groups play an important part in how people judge themselves and their own attitudes/behaviors.

Most students want to be seen as appropriate reference group members, as “good WSU students” for example, and they believe (inaccurately) that most of their peers have attitudes and behaviors with regard to alcohol use that are more permissive than their own. Consequently, students with moderate attitudes (the majority of students) believe they are very different from most other students. This cognitive dissonance creates discomfort for these students, motivating them to increase their alcohol use to fit in. On the other hand, students with permissive attitudes (the minority of students) do not experience this dissonance as they believe (inaccurately) that most students hold alcohol-use attitudes similar to their own.

The SGNM intervention delivers accurate norms information to students. Their misperceptions are corrected, and they discover that most students hold moderate attitudes and behaviors with regard to alcohol use. Students with moderate attitudes learn that they are in the majority; their attitudes and behaviors are validated, and the cognitive dissonance fostered by their misperceptions is reduced or eliminated. Consequently, they are empowered to reduce their alcohol use or maintain their current levels of low use or no use. In addition, this accurate information empowers some students to confront those who use alcohol destructively and in ways that are problematic to others. On the other hand, students with permissive attitudes learn that they are in the minority. The cognitive dissonance generated by this discovery creates discomfort for these students, motivating them to reduce their alcohol use.

In other words, as a result of the SGNM intervention, students who are moderate drinkers or who abstain from drinking experience decreased dissonance (and decreased emotional discomfort) when they see that actual campus alcohol-use norms are moderate like their own. Students who are
frequent, heavy drinkers experience increased dissonance (and increased discomfort) when they see that actual campus norms are not as permissive as their own.

As with many of the theoretical issues raised by the SGNM intervention, we have yet to achieve sufficient numbers of participants to demonstrate clearly that cognitive dissonance is operating to affect drinking behavior in the manner we have described above. We hope that the larger numbers of participants we continue to involve in our research will allow us to answer some of these questions.

**Misperceptions**

The Misperception Hypothesis (adapted from Berkowitz and Perkins) may be summarized as follows:

1. Students overestimate:
   - How much other students drink.
   - How much other students approve of drinking.
2. Choices around drinking appear to be related to discrepancy (dissonance) between:
   - Students’ own norms.
   - Their perceptions of other students’ norms.
3. Correcting misperceptions should:
   - Inform students that moderate norms like their own are held by the majority of students.
   - Empower students to make choices based on their own values.

How do misperceptions come about?

**Attribution Theory**

We tend to construct causal explanations of events and behaviors that we experience. This helps us to order our environment, making it more sensible and predictable – more stable and secure. When evaluating our own behavior or that of a close friend, we are familiar with the contexts and circumstances within which the behavior occurs. Therefore, we are able to perceive fairly accurately the reasons for the behavior and understand it (Perkins, 1997).

When evaluating the behavior of people we do not know, we are not aware of the contexts and circumstances surrounding the behavior. Therefore, we assign – or attribute – our own explanations based on visible behavior and behavior that stands out, and we usually see this behavior as stemming from their personalities rather than their environment. For example, if we see a number of individuals at a party who are unusually obnoxious or drunk, we might form the impression that “most people from that residence hall or living group are heavy drinkers,” or “most men on this campus are really out of control with alcohol.”

The less familiar we are with an individual or group, the more we are likely to perceive them inaccurately. We have limited information about their lives, so we take their behavior out of context and attribute it to their character or their general pattern of behavior. We over-generalize certain
attitudes and behaviors of others as more common than is really the case. Thus, students slightly misperceive the drinking attitudes and behaviors of their friends, exaggerate even more the drinking attitudes and behaviors of those in their living unit, and misperceive overall campus attitudes and behaviors the most. In fact, most of us carry misperceptions and perpetuate them through conversations and exhibited behaviors. For example, misperceptions have been found to exist among student leaders such as RA’s, student government representatives, honor students, and faculty. Thus, it is possible that student leaders and faculty may be partially responsible for socializing other students into incorrect perceptions of the campus environment.

**Public Conversation**

We tend to focus on and remember unusual, exceptional behaviors. They leave vivid impressions. This is what we focus on and talk about after an incident or experience. We fail to give equal weight to typical behaviors in forming our impressions of the norm. This distorts the actual picture of what took place – distorting the actual norm and enhancing the misperception.

For example, we attend a party where most of the people are having fun and behaving responsibly. However, a small minority becomes highly intoxicated and participates in unusual behavior (starts fights, dances on the table, takes off their clothes, etc.). We tend to remember the unusual behavior and talk about it the next day with our friends and classmates, as do most of the others who attended the party. The behavior becomes more sensational in the telling, and soon it sounds like most people were highly intoxicated and engaging in the sensational behavior.

**The Media**

Local media tends to focus on sensational, negative, or problematic behavior as well. The reporting of negative incidents related to alcohol, coupled with the lack of reporting on responsible, constructive student activities and behaviors, tends to give the impression that most students (or a large number of students) were behaving in that manner. This contributes to our misperceptions of actual events, attitudes and behaviors as well.

**Summary**

1. Attitudes and behaviors are misperceived; the misperception becomes the reality. (Students believe that most students drink excessively and approve of excessive drinking.)

2. People adjust their attitudes and behaviors accordingly. (Students drink more, and approve of drinking more, to conform to the misperceived norm.)

3. A “reign of error” is produced, creating a self-fulfilling prophecy, a snowball effect. (Students’ drinking levels rise as a result of the misperception. As students see their peers drinking more alcohol, their misperception increases, causing increased student drinking, and so on.)

4. Opposition is discouraged from speaking out; those who disagree believe that there is little support for their point of view. (Even though excessive drinking conflicts with some students’ values, they don’t say anything for fear of criticism, rejection, or being ostracized.)
5. Interventions by students decline; they become bystanders.

6. Students (and others) buy into the misperception and become “carriers” of the inaccurate reality, passing it along to others.

**Conclusion**

We may reverse this process by providing students with accurate information. Social norms interventions aim to 1) correct students' misperceptions of campus-wide consumption and approval of alcohol abuse, and 2) highlight the proportion of students who consume moderately and responsibly (or do not drink at all). Correcting misperceptions contributes to decreasing cognitive dissonance for students who drink moderately or who choose to abstain while increasing dissonance for students who drink more heavily. Innovative social norms programs indirectly incorporate the hypothesis that a supportive social environment bolsters student resilience. Accurate social norms information is considered to increase social bonding for moderate student drinkers while it marginalizes those who abuse alcohol.
Section 3: Collecting Data

Choosing a Survey Instrument

You may choose from a number of reliable, valid survey instruments currently in use on campuses across the country, including the Core Alcohol and Drug Survey (particularly the newer version, which contains social norms questions). These instruments typically come with a package that includes administration, compilation, clean up and analysis, although this varies from survey to survey. They will allow you to compare your data to a large national database; however, these instruments will not provide you with all the information you need to deliver the Small Groups Model Norms-challenging intervention (SGNM) described in this manual.

Consequently, you may choose to 1) develop your own survey that is tailored to your respective programs and campus and that includes the questions you will need to implement the SGNM, or 2) use one of the forms of the survey instrument we have developed for use with the SGNM. The development and testing required to construct a reliable and valid survey instrument is an involved process which may take several months or longer. (It is not acceptable simply to write some questions and assume that your data will be usable, accurate, and meaningful.) Should you choose not to undertake this process, campus-wide and group-specific surveys we have developed for use with the SGNM are provided in the Appendix for your use. All surveys include an ID code so that you may track individuals for research purposes. If you do not wish to track individual participants, you may leave off the directions for generating ID codes.

Data Collection Procedures

Collecting Campus-wide Data

1. Mailed, campus-wide random sample surveys.

   Campus-wide random sample surveys are used to gather data about students' alcohol use attitudes and behaviors and their perceptions of their peers attitudes and behaviors. Information about pro-social, protective and altruistic behaviors is also gathered. The process for gathering true random sample data appears more complicated than it actually is, although it does requires a degree of experimental rigor in order to obtain accurate data. A detailed discussion of this process is beyond the scope of this manual, but there are a number of excellent references available to assist you, including the Dillman Total Design Survey Method (Dillman, 1978; Salant & Dillman, 1994).

2. Other sources of, or methods of collecting, campus-wide data.

   If you don’t have the expertise, technology, or money available to collect true random sample data, there are several alternative methods that will yield data good enough to use in your presentations (although these data will not likely prove adequate for purposes of true research). A number of sources for national data are available and may be accessed through the Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention website, http://www.edc.org/hec. However, local data specific to your school are always of greater interest to your students. You may also use a "convenience sample" rather than a "true random sample." Careful selection of classrooms or other groups, and use of other collection techniques, can give you reasonably accurate data samples that provide “snapshots” of your campus at a given time and place (whereas the random sample would
have more depth, like a video clip). Be sure to indicate your data source(s) in your presentations. Some examples include:

- Choose a sample of classrooms - try to get some from each class ranking and several different departments. For example, freshman, sophomore, junior and senior classes, some English classes, some math, some science, etc.
- Set up a table outside the student union building and ask everyone who passes to complete a brief version of your survey.
- Approach people in a high-traffic campus area, such as a walkway or mall, and ask them to complete a brief version of the questionnaire.
- Recruit students from General Education Requirement classes. As these will probably be freshmen and sophomores, supplement this with a couple of classes of junior and senior students from different departments.

3. No campus-wide data are available.

If campus-wide data are not available, the intervention may be presented using only the data from the selected target group. This is perfectly acceptable, and we would encourage you to go forward in this circumstance. However, should you proceed in this manner, you will need to omit from your presentation the overhead transparencies, or sections of transparencies, that display campus-wide information. (Note: Although not verified as yet through our research, we believe the SGNM to be much more likely to influence behavior change if both campus-wide and group-specific data are included.)

**Collecting Group-Specific Data**

Approximately two weeks prior to intervention delivery, student alcohol use attitude and behavior data are collected from the specific group (such as a fraternity, a sorority, a residence hall, an athletic team or a classroom) that will be receiving the intervention. The shorter form of the campus-wide survey is used to gather this information.

The survey form takes approximately 10 - 15 minutes to complete. It is helpful to provide enough pencils for the entire group. It is very important that everyone complete the survey form at the same time (if at all possible), and they need to be altogether so you can watch them. It is also very important that everyone be quiet and take the survey form as if it is a test - no talking or comparing answers, no filling it out as a group effort with a small bunch of pals. Have people throw the survey forms into a big paper bag when they finish, so that they can see no one is watching to see who filled out which survey (to help assure confidentiality).

**Recommended procedure**

1. Two weeks prior to the intervention, schedule a session with the target group to gather group-specific data. The process will take approximately 15 minutes.

2. Have all participants read and initial the consent forms provided. (See the Appendix for a sample consent form.) Collect and return them with the completed surveys.
3. Disperse participants around the room (as much as possible) and instruct them not to talk to each other while filling out the survey. It should be as much like taking an exam as possible.

4. Walk around the room and proctor people’s behavior while they are filling out the forms.

5. If you have participants who are learning disabled, etc., they will need assistance. It may be best to meet with them as a group at a later time. Have them read and initial the consent forms and fill out the survey. Return them to the Project Coordinator.

6. Have participants place the completed surveys into a large paper bag (to help assure confidentiality). Return them to the Project Coordinator.

7. If you collect survey forms from people who did not attend the meeting, be sure to explain confidentiality to them. Have them read and initial the consent forms and fill out the survey. Collect their surveys in a large manila envelope or paper bag. Return them to the Project Coordinator.

8. Document any occurrences during the surveying process that do not fit with these procedures. Submit the documentation along with the completed survey forms.

**Sample survey introduction**

“Please fill out your own surveys and answer the questions to the best of your ability. Please don't write your name on the survey, so we can be sure to keep complete confidentiality. Also, your group data will be kept confidential so no one except participants from your group will know what your specific group data look like. If we combine groups together to get a larger sample, or write anything up about this information, no one will know which groups gave us what data. Your data will never be given to anyone else who knows exactly where it comes from. Please don't talk or share answers while completing the forms. It is very important that everyone answers the questions independently and honestly. If you choose, you may discuss the process with others after everyone has completed the survey. Thank you very much.”

**Collating the Group-Specific Data**

In preparation for delivery of an SGNM intervention, you will need to enter campus-wide and group-specific norms data onto the appropriate overhead transparencies. To calculate these figures, you may enter your data into a statistical program for analysis by computer. There are many methods for doing this, including excel spreadsheets and SPSS data analysis programs. If the resources and expertise are not available to you for this level of analysis, calculations for each individual group can be done by hand. (Campus-wide data may be done by hand as well; however, the process will likely prove quite cumbersome as you will have a fairly large data set.)

The following instructions are provided to assist you in using a hand calculator for determining the group-specific norms data. Specific directions are provided for calculating the percentages or averages for each overhead transparency that requires data figures. The questions from the survey that correspond to a specific overhead are provided immediately following each
example. Be careful to note which questions require that you DO NOT include the “0” or “N/A” columns in your calculations. (These examples are from a group-specific survey used with a Greek chapter. The small group you are working with might also be a classroom, athletic team, residence hall or other group. The same questions, in the same sequence, are included on all of the group-specific surveys.)

**First Data Overhead**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>You estimate your chapter believes</th>
<th>Your chapter actually believes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of A answers</td>
<td>% of A answers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of B answers</td>
<td>% of B answers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of C answers</td>
<td>% of C answers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of D answers</td>
<td>% of D answers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of E answers</td>
<td>% of E answers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Corresponding questions and directions for calculating percentages:**

Percentages for the left-hand column, “You estimate your chapter believes,” are calculated from question 2, #2 (Your chapter) on the group-specific survey. (This could be a team or a classroom as well as a residence hall or Greek house.) Add up the total number of answers to this question given on the surveys you have collected from your specific group. To get the percentage of “A” answers, add up the number of “A” answers and divide by the total number of answers for question 2, #2. Repeat this same procedure for “B”, “C”, “D,” and “E.”

A. Drinking is never a good thing to do.
B. Drinking is all right, but a person should never get “smashed.”
C. An occasional “drunk” is okay as long as it doesn’t interfere with academics or other responsibilities.
D. An occasional “drunk” is okay even if it does interfere with academics or other responsibilities.
E. A frequent “drunk” is okay if that’s what the individual wants to do.

2. Please circle the letter corresponding to the statement above which best represents the attitudes of the following:
   1. The campus in general A B C D E
   2. Your chapter A B C D E

Percentages for the right-hand column, “Your chapter actually believes,” are calculated from question 5 on the group-specific survey. Add up the total number of answers to this question given on the surveys you have collected from your specific group. To get the percentage of “A” answers, add up the number of “A” answers and divide by the total number of answers for question 5. Repeat this same procedure for “B”, “C,” “D,” and “E.”

5. Which of the following statements about drinking alcoholic beverages do you feel best represents
**your own attitude?** (Circle the number.)

(A) 1. Drinking is never a good thing to do.
(B) 2. Drinking is all right, but a person should never get “smashed.”
(C) 3. An occasional “drunk” is okay as long as it doesn’t interfere with academics or other responsibilities.
(D) 4. An occasional “drunk” is okay even if it does interfere with academics or other responsibilities.
(E) 5. A frequent “drunk” is okay if that’s what the individual wants to do.

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**Second Data Overhead**

![Data Overhead](image)

**Corresponding questions and directions for calculating percentages:**

(Omit this overhead if using only group-specific data in your presentation.)

Percentages for the left-hand column, “You estimate that [Your Campus] believes,” are taken from question 2, #1 (The campus in general) on the group-specific survey. Follow the directions provided for the left-hand column of the First Data Overhead, using the answers from question 2, #1 (The campus in general).

A. Drinking is never a good thing to do.
B. Drinking is all right, but a person should never get “smashed.”
C. An occasional “drunk” is okay as long as it doesn’t interfere with academics or other responsibilities.
D. An occasional “drunk” is okay even if it does interfere with academics or other responsibilities.
E. A frequent “drunk” is okay if that’s what the individual wants to do.

2. Please circle the letter corresponding to the statement above which best represents the attitudes of the following:
   1. The campus in general
   2. Your chapter

Percentages for the right-hand column, “[Your Campus] actually believes,” are taken from question 13 on your campus-wide mailed random sample survey. (Answers to this question reflect the attitudes of the “typical student” on campus). Follow the directions provided for the right-hand column of the First Data Overhead, using the answers from question 13 on your campus-wide survey (The campus in general).

13. Which of the following statements about drinking alcoholic beverages do you feel best represents **your own attitude?** (Circle the number.)
   (A) 1. Drinking is never a good thing to do.
(B) 2. Drinking is all right, but a person should never get “smashed.”
(C) 3. An occasional “drunk” is okay as long as it doesn’t interfere with academics or other responsibilities.
(D) 4. An occasional “drunk” is okay even if it does interfere with academics or other responsibilities.
(E) 5. A frequent “drunk” is okay if that’s what the individual wants to do.

**Third Data Overhead**

![Diagram showing data on drinking habits]

**Corresponding questions and directions for calculating averages:**

The estimate of “Your Chapter” is the average answer (number of drinks) from question 13 on the group-specific survey. Add up the total number of drinks from all responses to question 13 and divide by the number of responses. (Again, this could be a team or a classroom as well as a residence hall or Greek house)

13. How many drinks, on the average, do you think **students in your living group** (or your specific Greek chapter, residence hall, athletic team or classroom) have when they consume alcohol?
   \[ \text{________drinks} \]
   \[ (\text{number}) \]

The actual findings of “Your Chapter” is the average answer (number of drinks) from question 7 on the group-specific survey. Add up the total number of drinks from all responses to question 7 and divide by the number of responses.

7. When you consume alcohol how many drinks do YOU usually have on the average?
   \[ \text{________drinks} \]
   \[ (\text{number}) \]

The estimate of “Students at [Your Campus]” is the average answer (number of drinks) from question 3 on the group-specific survey. Add up the total number of drinks from all responses to question 3 and divide by the number of responses. (Omit this section if using only group-specific data in your presentation.)

3. How **many drinks**, on the average, do you think **most students** at [Your Campus] have when they consume alcohol?
   \[ \text{________drinks} \]
   \[ (\text{number}) \]
The actual findings of “Students at [Your Campus]” is the average answer (number of drinks) from question 20 on the campus-wide survey. Add up the total number of drinks from all responses to question 20 and divide by the number of responses. (Omit this section if using only group-specific data in your presentation.)

20. When you consume alcohol how many drinks do YOU usually have on the average?  

________drinks  
(number)

Fourth Data Overhead

Corresponding questions and directions for calculating averages:
Estimates of “Your Chapter” is the average answer (times drinking per month) from question 1 on the group-specific survey divided by 4.3 to give times per week. Add up the total number of times from all responses to question 1, divide by the number of responses, then divide this number by 4.3. (Again, this could be a team or a classroom as well as a residence hall or Greek house):

1. How many times per month, on the average, do you think students in your chapter consume alcohol?  

________times  
(number)

The actual findings of “Your Chapter” is the average answer (times drinking per month) from question 9 on the group-specific survey. Add up the total number of times from all responses to question 9, divide by the number of responses, then divide this number by 4.3.

9. How many times per month, on the average, do YOU consume alcohol?  

________times  
(number)

The estimate of “Students at [Your Campus]” is the average answer (times drinking per month) from question 11 on the group-specific survey. Add up the total number of times from all responses to question 11, divide by the number of responses, then divide this number by 4.3. (Omit this section if using only group-specific data in your presentation.)

11. How many times per month, on the average, do you think the typical [YC] student consumes alcohol?  

________times  
(number)
The actual findings of “Students at [Your Campus]” is the average answer (times drinking per month) from question 22 on the campus-wide survey. Add up the total number of times from all responses to question 22, divide by the number of responses, then divide this number by 4.3. (Omit this section if using only group-specific data in your presentation.)

22. How many times per month, on the average, do YOU consume alcohol? ________ times
(number)

Fifth Data Overhead

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of students in your chapter who do this</th>
<th>% of students on campus-wide who do this</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eat before and during drinking</td>
<td>Question 4a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a designated driver</td>
<td>Question 4b, A + U / total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choose beverages you know the alcohol content of</td>
<td>Question 4c, A + U / total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit $$$ spent on alcohol</td>
<td>Question 4d, A + U / total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Corresponding questions and directions for calculating percentages:
Figures for the left-hand column “% of students in your chapter do” are taken from question 4 on the group-specific survey (The categories listed in the left-hand column, “Eat before and during drinking,” “Have a designated driver,” etc., are majority protective behaviors at WSU. If your campus-wide survey shows different majority behaviors, you should adjust the overhead to display those items instead.) Add up the total number of responses in the “Always” and “Usually” columns for the category “Eat before and during drinking,” and divide this number by the total number of responses from all columns for this category. Repeat this procedure for all of the remaining categories.

4. Please indicate with an X how often YOU practice each of the following behaviors in response to “When I drink I” (Mark an X for each line; if you don't drink mark "N/A" here: _______).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Usually</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Eat before and during the time I am drinking.</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Have a designated driver when I know I will be drinking.</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Choose beverages with alcohol contents I know.</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
d. Limit the amount of money I spend on alcohol.  

Figures for the right-hand column “% of students campus-wide do” are taken from question 23 on the campus-wide survey. This question is identical to question 4 on the group-specific survey, the question used in your previous calculations. Follow the same directions for calculating percentages as given for question 4 above. (Omit this column if using only group-specific data in your presentation.)

**Sixth Data Overhead**

![Data Overhead Table]

**Corresponding questions and directions for calculating percentages:**
Figures for the left-hand column “% of students in your chapter did this” are taken from question 8 on the group-specific survey. Add up the numbers (number of times) for all of the responses for the category “Went to a party/social activity …” and divide this number by the total number of responses for this category. Repeat this procedure for all of the remaining categories.

8. During the last 30 days, how many times **have you** engaged in each of the following?  
   (Give a **number for each line**.)  
   (Number of times)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>% of students in your chapter did this</th>
<th>% of students campus-wide did this</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Went to a party or social activity not serving alcohol</td>
<td>Question 8, sum of numbers (times) divided by total number of responses</td>
<td>Question 12, same calculation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did something fun without alcohol</td>
<td>Question 9, sum of times</td>
<td>Question 13, same procedure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refused an offer of alcohol</td>
<td>Question 10, sum of responses</td>
<td>Question 14, same procedure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures for the right-hand column “% of students campus-wide did this” are taken from question 12 on the campus-wide survey. This question is identical to question 8 on the group-specific survey, the question used in your previous calculations. However, there are additional categories in question
12. Follow the same directions for calculating percentages for the same three categories as given for question 8 above. (Omit this column if using only group-specific data in your presentation.)

Seventh Data Overhead

| Would you be willing to help a friend who had too much to drink and might have a problem? |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| % of students in your chapter would do this | % of students campus-wide would do this |
| Intervene with a drunk friend to prevent injury to them or others | Question 6a, sum of “definitely yes” and “probably yes” divided by total responses | Campus-wide 9a, DY + PY / Total |
| Prevent friend going home with someone . . . regret | Question 6b, DY + PY / Total | Campus-wide 9c, DY + PY / Total |
| Intervene to keep someone . . . victim | Question 6c, DY + PY / Total | Campus-wide 9b, DY + PY / Total |

Corresponding questions and directions for calculating averages:
Figures for the left-hand column “% of students in your chapter would do this” are taken from question 6 on the group-specific survey. Add up the number of responses in the “Definitely Yes” and “Probably Yes” columns for the category “Intervene with a drunk friend…” and divide this number by the total number of responses from all columns for this category. Repeat this procedure for all of the remaining categories.

6. Would you be willing to do the following? (Place an X for each line)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>Probably</th>
<th>Probably</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Intervene with a drunk friend to prevent physical injury to them or another person</td>
<td>______</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Prevent a friend from going home with someone when you think they might regret it the next day</td>
<td>______</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Intervene to keep someone from being either a victim or a perpetrator of alcohol-related sexual assault/date rape</td>
<td>______</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figures for the right-hand column “% of students campus-wide would do this” are taken from question 9 on the campus-wide survey. Although this question is identical to question 6 on the group-specific survey, more categories are listed on the campus-wide survey. Follow the same directions for calculating percentages as given for question 6 above, using the same categories as listed on the data overhead. (Omit this column if using only group-specific data in your presentation.)

**Collecting Follow-up Data**

Follow-up surveys are conducted approximately 4 weeks and 12 weeks following each presentation. (As with some other steps in the model, this step is optional, but strongly suggested for program evaluation purposes). These data help determine the degree to which the intervention has influenced 1) an increase in the accuracy of students' perceptions of the alcohol use behavior and attitude norms of their peers, and 2) a decrease in their alcohol use. Again, a shorter form of the survey is used for collecting this information. Here are some additional important considerations with regard to collecting follow-up data.

- Since a number of questions on the surveys ask about behaviors that took place over the last 30 days, it is important to conduct your follow-up survey at least 30 days following the intervention to help you get a better sense of the impact of the intervention on these behaviors.

- Since other events (educational programs, campus-wide awareness campaigns such as a social norms marketing campaign, sensational and/or tragic campus-wide or group-specific events such as a serious alcohol-related accident or death, etc.) may have occurred during the time between your intervention delivery and follow-up data collection, which might influence the attitudes, behaviors and perceptions you are tracking, it is important to be aware of and document such events.

- Since different drinking behaviors might occur during holidays or breaks from school, which might influence the attitudes, behaviors and perceptions you are tracking, it is important to schedule your follow-up data collection so that these events do not occur between intervention delivery and follow-up data collection.
Section 4: The Intervention

Description
The Small Groups Norms-Challenging Model (SGNM) intervention has been used and studied with students in classrooms (Peeler, Far, Miller, & Brigham, 2000), student athletes, and students living in fraternities (Barnett, et al., 1996), sororities and residence halls. (Other groups would also be appropriate, such as high school or middle school audiences - wherever people have some cohesive reference group identity.) Actual and estimated norms data regarding student alcohol use attitudes and behaviors are gathered through campus-wide and group-specific surveys. Trained peer educators or student leaders facilitate the interventions in their respective groups using the previously gathered norms data. Using a series of overheads, the facilitators engage their audience in lively, interactive discussions regarding the discrepancies between the actual norms and those estimated by the group. The overheads contain explanations of social norms theory and comparisons of campus-wide and group-specific norms data using the norms estimated by the group receiving the intervention. The presentations last approximately 45 minutes. Follow-up data are gathered to determine program effectiveness and adaptability.

Intervention Style: Theory and Development
When we began developing this intervention, we wanted to find a delivery style that would make it as easy as possible for student participants to accept the norms information being presented. We knew we would be presenting information that was, in most cases, very different from what students believed about drinking on campus. It would be difficult for them to accept that information, particularly if they had behaved in some way that violated their own values where alcohol was concerned. We have incorporated our understanding of these mechanisms into the development of the SGNM.

The original articles (Perkins & Berkowitz, 1986a, b), which led us to develop the SGNM, suggested that individual high-consuming students could complete their own survey and then be given campus-wide survey information during a one-on-one clinical intervention. Given our goal, to reach targeted high-risk groups rather than individuals, we began by testing a number of norms information delivery systems for their ease of use and acceptability to participants.

One early trial had a classroom of students filling out and discussing the survey as a group project with a trained facilitator. The people who talked the loudest (and whom we learned later were probably the most permissive drinkers) or had the most status in the group controlled how the questions got answered (perhaps inadvertently), and misperceptions were perpetuated rather than corrected. Another attempt had a trained facilitator discussing the survey data with a small group and making every effort to get the participants to accept what was to them unbelievable information. A discussion group with these participants made it clear that any attempt to "sell" this "disconfirming information" (Festinger) was going to increase the participants' defensiveness and make it less likely that they would accept the actual moderate norms data.
Findings from social influence experiments by Rokeach (Rokeach & Ball-Rokeach, 1984) suggested strongly that persons are more willing to change their minds, and consequently, their behavior, when being confronted with the survey data "in the privacy of their own minds" rather than out loud or in public. This research, coupled with our early experiences with delivery styles that were not effective, suggested that we should present the information in a more non-threatening way, which didn't require people to agree or disagree, nor to make any public commitment to acceptance of the information unless they wished to do so.

Based on these ideas and observations we developed the “game show” format, a delivery style that has remained consistent through later changes and additions to the intervention’s content. With this format, participants are “trained” to speak or shout out by the use of an “icebreaker” exercise asking them to give words for "drunk" and “sober.” Participants find this exercise humorous and engaging. They are next given some educational materials about norms, media literacy, and the cause and influence of misperceptions.

Throughout the course of the presentation, presenters are asking non-confrontive and open-ended questions, like "What do you think about this?" or "How do you think that could happen?" In line with social norms theory, most audience questions or comments come from participants who are the heaviest drinkers or from group leaders (this information comes from post-experimental inquiry with Greek chapter presidents). The majority of group members, the "silent majority" who are more moderate in their alcohol-use attitudes and behaviors, do not speak up, challenge the data, or make any comments except when giving their guesses about norms. From giving the presentation a number of times, however, we can report that these silent participants make eye contact, smile, and nod their heads when receiving accurate moderate norms data. They are more moderate drinkers or non-drinkers, making it easier and more rewarding for them to accept that most others are moderate as well.

The overhead transparencies containing campus-wide and group-specific norms data are then presented with all the numbers covered, and participants are encouraged to interact with the presenter by shouting out their guesses of what the data will be (what the warm-up exercise has trained them to do). The presenters continue to ask the same kinds of questions, which stimulate discussion without ever asking the participants in any personal way whether or not they accept or believe the information. If participants want to disagree or argue about the data, presenters are trained to avoid engaging in such discussion and to refer questions to project staff. In this way, the data "confrontation" between misperceived and actual norms takes place as much as possible within the participants' minds without causing public exposure or arousing defensiveness more than is unavoidable (Rokeach & Ball-Rokeach, 1983).

Another deliberate choice in format was to have the overhead transparencies projected onto a large screen in the front of the room, similar to a television or movie screen. In this country are socialized and “trained” to view visual media - we are surrounded and bombarded by billboards, posters, television shows, and entertainment media. Presenters are directed not to read any of the overhead transparencies out loud as this may appear patronizing and remind the participants of being in a classroom. However, without any conscious decision or even awareness on their parts
(because it is an over-determined behavior), participants will automatically read the intervention materials appearing in this large, brightly colored visual medium, probably several times for each slide. In this way, they are taking in and processing the "disconfirming information" without being confronted directly or required to defend their own misperceptions, as is probably the case with social norms marketing interventions as well.

Changes in the intervention content over time have been both theory-driven and shaped by our experiences in offering these presentations. When we first designed the intervention, we were still “in the misperception” ourselves. We included information about negative alcohol-related behaviors and problems people had with others’ drinking because we thought, like the common sense of the times, that these were majority behaviors. After several intervention cycles, we realized that we were actually presenting behaviors that most people did not engage in. By emphasizing these behaviors, we were falling into the very "misperception trap" from which we were trying to divert our participants. The slides have been continually redesigned to display and emphasize the kinds of majority behaviors the model aims to publicize and empower.

We are still trying to find a means of "growing altruism" (Michael Haines, personal communication, Big Sky, Montana, 1998). Altruistic behaviors include such things as helping a friend who has had too much to drink, or helping someone who might be at risk of unwanted sexual activity (their own, or someone else's) because of drinking alcohol. We are developing questions that provide us with accurate information and continue to work at finding a way to present the information so that it does not confuse participants or inadvertently encourage "bystander behavior." Currently, we are also using information about majority protective behaviors, such as using a designated driver or limiting the amount of money spent on alcohol, in order to support responsible alcohol choices. In addition, we have developed and are using questions about altruistic behaviors in the same manner. In the future we plan to mount a social norms marketing campaign using these factors rather than norms information about alcohol consumption.

**Recruiting and Training Peer Educators**

The interventions are facilitated by respected student leaders, peer educators, or peer mentors. These individuals are recruited from the

- substance abuse prevention peer education groups.
- classroom teaching assistants from the class that will receive the intervention.
- leaders of the living groups that will receive the intervention.
- captains of the athletic teams that will receive the intervention.

The selected facilitators participate in a three-hour training prior to facilitating an intervention. Using this manual, they receive

- information on social norms theory and campus-wide and group-specific norms data.
- specific instruction in using the script to deliver the intervention.
- a list of frequently asked questions with the answers.
- practice in facilitating the intervention.
Preparation of the Room

Set the room up as follows:
1. Set up the overhead projector and screen.

2. Display the “Everybody thinks...” poster, or the display overhead transparency with this statement.

3. Prepare icebreaker materials and/or have this material on an overhead transparency.

The Intervention Script

This is a suggested script for your presentation. Please feel free to adapt the language to your own personal style. We would like each presentation to be as similar as possible, since the script has been developed over a long period of time and is constructed to fit the theoretical model. Therefore, we are asking that you (1) follow the order of the presentation as closely as circumstances permit, (2) maintain a consistent time frame, and (3) cover the same questions, giving similar answers and the same amount of time for each one.

[The wording of this script is set up for a presentation to a fraternity or sorority chapter; change the wording accordingly to fit for other groups.]

**Introduction of Self** – Whatever you usually say - name (they probably all know you anyway).

**Overhead 1: [Project Title and Sponsor]**
Remind participants of filling out the survey forms a couple weeks ago. Tell them you are going to give them back their survey information so they can talk about it. Tell them Project Culture Change is a campus research project examining how students think about alcohol use. The researchers are finding that students are healthier than anyone realized, including the students themselves.

**Overhead 2: DRUNK and SOBER**
Ask participants to give you different words for "drunk" and "sober." Write them on the overhead. You will probably get a lot of different terms. If no one else says "shit-faced" or "fucked up" fairly early in the game, it might help if you say it to put people at ease.

**Overhead 3: Everybody thinks everybody else . . .**
"Now we're going to talk about some interesting information about students and alcohol on this campus. As researchers around the country look at students and alcohol, what they're finding is that students don't drink as much as people think - or even as much as the students think themselves. Across a wide range of behaviors, like smoking, sexual behavior, and alcohol use, people overestimate how much people do these things, and how much people approve of doing these things."
The other part is that people underestimate how often people do healthy, positive, helpful things. Actually most people are "cheerful, helpful, friendly" most of the time - but people underestimate that, and see the negative behaviors instead. And here on our campus, the same thing is true - students overestimate the negative, and underestimate the positive.

Overhead 4: Norms and Misperceptions
"But first we're going to talk about how people are influenced by what they think about other people. Remember the questions on the survey that asked you ‘What do you think the typical WSU student thinks or does?’ Those questions are about Perceived Norms and Actual Norms. Norms are the unspoken social rules that we all follow in our public behavior and often in our private beliefs. An example would be personal space. Nobody ever really talks much about it, but people from different cultures are comfortable with different distances between them. (show example by standing 2-3 feet from a student) In this culture, we stand about this far from one another. (get closer - about 1 foot) In other countries, let's say in the Middle East, people stand closer. No one ever told you how close to stand to another person, we all just figure it out by watching each other and trying to interpret what people's actions mean without being aware that we're doing it. Another example is public behavior. College students act like college students, they don't act like corporate management, and they don't act like school teachers. No one actually says these rules out loud, we all just kind of figure them out by watching and find ourselves acting like the people we want to be a part of and accepted by.” Ask the group for additional examples.

“Because they are unspoken, norms can often be misperceived. People try to figure out the norms of the groups they want to belong to, and then they act that way. If a person is misperceiving the norms of a certain group, they'll act that way anyway, because they want to be accepted as a part of that valued membership group."

Overhead 5: Media Literacy
“How do things get this way? Part of it is the media - what is different from the average run of things is what gets noticed, and what gets written and talked about in the newspapers and on TV. Think of the example of serial killers. The FBI estimates there are anywhere from 60 - 90 serial killers at large at any given time, and there are over 3 hundred million Americans. That tiny number of killers is not even close to one hundredth of a percent of the population, and yet that is what gets written about and talked about.

Another part of it is our culture, how this country was settled, and our fascination with cowboys and outlaws. We've grown up with the idea that its really good to be "bad" - to be outlaws, break the rules, cause trouble, "live hard, die young, and leave a beautiful corpse." That image, which really doesn't fit most people at all, or bring them fulfilling lives, is part of our cultural heritage.

Another part of it is probably our biological heritage. We seem to be "hardwired" to notice differences from the pattern - not the pattern itself. Imagine that you are living a hundred thousand years ago, on the savanna, part of a tribe of hunter-gatherers. You don't
notice the high grass swaying everywhere, you don't notice the trees and huge herds of antelope everywhere - those things aren't dangerous, they won't hurt you. But if a tiger jumps up out of the grass, you have to notice that, or you'll be the tiger's dinner. You have to notice the changes or differences from the pattern - it's a survival technique.

Another example is the WSU ‘riot’ in Spring '98. Maybe 200 students took part in that disturbance. That means there were 17,000 students who didn't ‘riot.’ But who got talked about in the news? The small minority who made trouble - who were the problem - instead of the 17,000 who didn't cause any problems and are the responsible, "cheerful, helpful, friendly" majority who don't get noticed and don't get any attention. That's backwards, isn't it - paying attention to the problem and ignoring the solution.”

**Overhead 7: Misperceived Norms**

“Even if misperceived norms are incorrect, people think they are true and talk as if they are true. A good example is the misperception that [Your Campus] is a party school. Actually, [Your Campus] students drink less than the national average. The Princeton survey that named us a top party school was done by interviewing college students in the CUB and asking them if they think people drink a lot here. Because that is the misperception, they said yes, and so we got named a party school.

Students overestimate how much other students drink, and how much other students approve of drinking. That is true all over the country, for all ages of students (and non-students), for a wide variety of behaviors, such as cigarette smoking, sexual activity, eating disorders, etc. And it's true at WSU.

**Overhead 6: A Typical Party**

“So here we are, at [Your Campus] in 2003, and what we are noticing is the differences from the pattern, not the normal background or the pattern itself. Think about this - you're at a party with a hundred people. Of those hundred people, probably about 15 are not drinking at all. About 50 are drinking, but not a lot, they're just having a few beers. Another 25 or so are drinking a bit more than that, but still not a huge amount. Then there are the 10 or so people who are really throwing down the beer and maybe a few shots as well - they're really drunk. A couple of them are undressing each other over in the corner, one guy is passed out on the floor in the middle of the room and people are using him for a table, a couple more are getting in a fight and starting to punch on each other, one is throwing up on the front porch and another is urinating off the balcony. What do you notice? What do you talk about the next day?

You're not going to say ‘Boy, I was at this great party last night - people were having a great time, hardly anybody was smashed, everybody was polite and friendly, and we all really enjoyed ourselves without causing any problems for ourselves or for anybody else.’ No, what you're going to say is, ‘You should have been there - this one guy was passed out in
the middle of the dance floor, these people were hooking up in the corner, there was a huge fight and people were throwing up all over the place!’ Right?

OK, that's how the misperceptions get going and how they keep going. People notice what's different, everybody talks about that, and pretty soon that's what looks common and normal - when really almost everyone there was just having a few beers and having a good time - no problems for themselves, no problem for anyone else, just having a good time."

**Overhead 8: Comparing Perceptions to Reality**

"In this presentation we're going to be looking at misperceptions about alcohol at WSU, and then showing you what the actual beliefs and behaviors really are. All the questions from our own surveys have been analyzed and we're going to show you what our numbers look like. Also, for several semesters now, project workers have collected data with a campus-wide survey using the same questions our chapter just answered. We're going to show you that information also, along with the data from our own chapter. That way we can compare our own answers with those of other students on campus and see what our chapter looks like. Also, while we show you the data, remember your own personal answers to the questions, and see how you compare."

Emphasize that the chapter-specific data is strictly CONFIDENTIAL. Assure people that ONLY THEY are seeing data that comes from their own chapter - this data is not shared with any other groups and is used by the research team only as group data with number code identification.

“When we looked at the [Your Campus] campus data, and our chapter's data, we found a very interesting fact: At WSU, just like at other schools,

**EVERYBODY THINKS EVERYBODY ELSE IS DOING MORE OF EVERYTHING THAN THEY ACTUALLY DO.”**

Be prepared to say that we only see the people who are drunk and causing problems - we don’t see the people who are not drunk and not causing problems - we don’t see the majority who are elsewhere either not drinking or drinking responsibly. Because we don’t see them, others (who are drinking too much and causing problems) look like the majority.

Sample questions to ask here include:

- “What does this mean?”
- “Do you think you might misperceive others' behavior with alcohol?”
- “Do you think our chapter might misperceive others' behavior?”
- “Remember when we filled out the survey, we answered a question about attitudes towards drinking, like: ‘Drinking is alright, but a person should never get smashed,’ or ‘An occasional drunk is okay as long as it doesn't interfere with academics or other responsibilities.’ Think about how you answered that question for yourself. How do you think other people in here or on campus answered that question?"
Ask everyone who thought the typical [Your Campus] student drinks **more than you** to raise their hands. Explain that, whether or not they see the campus as more liberal than themselves, **two-thirds** of students on most campuses **DO** misperceive (exaggerate) the campus norm for alcohol use.

"We're going to show you data that talks about both beliefs (perceptions or estimates) and behaviors (what people report they actually do) from all over campus. The information starts with our own chapter, and then moves to the campus as a whole. We'll be talking about both of these in terms of both beliefs (attitudes) and behaviors."

**Overhead 9: Collecting Data on Actual Behaviors of your Chapter and [Your Campus]**

“We’re going to be looking at the results from some of the questions we answered when we took the survey. We will be looking at several sets of information:

1) The way those of us in this chapter answered the questions about behavior (that is, our own chapter's answers)

2) The way a random sample of the entire campus answered these questions.” (mailed true random sample of 1,000 [Your Campus] students provided by the Registrar's Office; return rate of 56%; total of 560 respondents; statistically accurate and rigorous research design)

**GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS:** The rest of the presentation is designed to be discussion-based. The 45- minute discussion should be broken down as follows:

10 minutes: overheads 1 - 8
30 minutes: 3-4 minutes for each ensuing overhead with results
5 minutes: "What we Learned" overhead

Present the overheads with results as follows:
1) First, **cover up** any part of overhead with data already present, and introduce the overhead as per instructions.

2) Second, **uncover data** as you present the different parts of the overhead.

**Overhead 10: Your Chapter Believes (Attitudes)**
Set up this overhead as follows:
1) With the actual data covered up, **POINT** to the data labels and explain that the top is the conservative attitude, the middle is the moderate attitude, and the bottom is the permissive attitude.

2) Before you uncover each of their estimated answers (left side of the overhead), ask them what they think the answers will be. Get responses from **several people** before you begin to uncover the data.
3) Say, "**OK, here's what we estimated our chapter’s attitude was like.**" Uncover their responses (left side of overhead). Ask them to notice that their estimated attitudes are “**permissive to moderate.**” (If this is not true of their data, just ask them to notice how they estimated that the majority of their chapter is moderate.)

4) Facilitate discussion. Here are some questions you might use to do this:
   - “**Do you think your guess was accurate?**”
   - “**Did you guess too conservative? Too permissive?**”

5) Say, "**Then, we averaged the answers from our chapter about our actual beliefs to get our chapter’s actual attitudes. Here's what we said.**” Uncover the data on the right side of the overhead.

6) Facilitate discussion. Here are some questions you might use to do this:
   - “**Are you surprised?**”
   - “**Did you expect something different?**”
   - “**There’s quite a big difference here. What do you think it means that we overestimate what our chapter really thinks is OK?**”

   Have them discuss this for a few minutes, then move on to the next overhead. Set it up as described for Overhead 9.

   **Overhead 11: You Estimate [Your Campus] Believes**

   "**Then we took the information from the surveys that our chapter completed about the whole campus, and here's what we THINK [Your Campus] believes.**"

   Continue on here as you did with the previous overhead. Again, ask questions to get them talking about the data, if they think they're accurate or not, etc. Then UNCOVER the "[Your Campus] actually believes" data (right side of the overhead), and say,

   "**When we averaged what [Your Campus] students said were their attitudes, here's what they said. Most people in this chapter think that everybody on campus thinks drinking a lot is OK, (POINT to the permissive end of the scale - bottom) but really most people on campus think something else** (READ statement with the highest percentage - probably middle, moderate statement).” Again, what is important here is NOT the actual figures, but to point out that the estimates are higher at the permissive end, but the actual figures are higher at the conservative end.

   As before, ask them the same kinds of questions to facilitate discussion. These questions may be used throughout the presentation to stimulate discussion. Some examples are:
   - “**What do you think about this?**”
   - “**What does it mean that you overestimated?**”
   - “**Did you think people were actually so conservative or moderate?**”
People will be saying things like: "OK, that's what people say they think, but what about what they actually do?" Tell them that now you are going to look at reports of actual behaviors - HOW MUCH, AND HOW OFTEN, people say they consume alcohol.

Put up the next overheads (how many drinks people have when they consume alcohol, and how many times per month they consume alcohol), using the same procedure with each one:

**Overhead 12: How many drinks people have**
Follow the same steps as before and facilitate discussion.

**Overhead 13: How often people drink**
Follow the same steps as before and facilitate discussion.

INSTRUCTIONS for Overheads 13 – 15: Don't cover up the data - just put the overheads up and let people look at the data. Begin by saying, “Now we're going to look at some of the behaviors people reported on that might have something to do with alcohol consumption. The first set of these has to do with what are called ‘protective behaviors’ - that is, what students do to insure that they will be safe when they are consuming alcohol.”

**Overhead 14: What Percentage of Students Practice the Following?**
(POINT to columns - tell them that these are for "ALWAYS AND USUALLY" answers combined)

"Here you can see the percentage of you who do these behaviors (always or usually). What do you think about this?"

"Now, looking at the [Your Campus] figure, you can see how many students do these things campus-wide." Uncover the right hand column. Ask all those same questions to stimulate discussion - get them to discuss these things thoroughly. Then go on to the next overhead.

**Overhead 15: What Percentage of Students Engaged in the Following?**
“This question looks at students having fun without drinking alcohol. Our chapter reported how often we do these things. In the survey, we asked you how often the typical [Your Campus] student has done these things without alcohol (one or more times in the past 30 days). Were you close in your estimates?”
Handle this question the same as the one above. Talk them through the data and ask questions to stimulate discussion.

Overhead 16. What Percentage of Students Willing to Help a Friend?

“This question looks at students’ willingness to help a friend in a difficult or potentially dangerous situation.” Facilitate discussion with such questions as:

- “Does this surprise you?”
- “Were the figures what you thought they would be?”
- “Looking at this, what conclusions might you draw?”

“We tend to underestimate peoples’ ‘good’ behaviors. In reality, most of have great values and act from those values.”

Overhead 17: What have we learned?

Don't read this overhead out loud - just let them read it and think about it while you talk and ask them questions. Begin by saying, "Now that we've looked at what students actually think and do, instead of our misperceptions of what they think and do, it appears that we're all a lot healthier than we thought we were. Most students make responsible healthy choices, even if we don't realize that. What do you think it might mean to you in the future to know that the majority of [Your Campus] students make healthy choices around alcohol consumption?"

Overhead 18: Contact Information (Insert your own contact information here.)

Thank the group for their participation. Tell participants that they're welcome to call [Project Title] co-directors and ask them questions any time – [Your contact information].

As you have noticed from reading the script, a number of overhead transparencies are used to present data material. If you are not using the exact same material, you may adjust the transparencies to reflect the materials you are using. However, it is very important to cover all the material about norms, perceptions, media literacy, etc. This information helps the audience understand and integrate the norms data that follows. It is easier for participants to grasp and accept information they might not have expected, or may disagree with, if they are provided with clear explanations about where the material comes from and why it is meaningful.

Frequently Asked Questions

Various questions surface during the intervention. Some of the more frequently asked questions and suggested responses include:

"How do we know these data are accurate?"

Explain that the data is collected and analyzed using the latest and best research
methodology and statistical programs, and that all of the work is done by people with expertise in these areas. Explain that while scientific data about humans is never as accurate as data about lab rats or organic chemistry molecules, this data is as accurate as possible for "people data."

"We think people lie on these surveys. How do you know that people are being honest?"

Explain that there is a large body of literature, spanning many decades, about the accuracy of self-report survey data. Some authors think it is inaccurate, while others think it is accurate. There is much research which uses reports by confederates (i.e., friends of the participants who secretly observe and report) or scientific testing (i.e., chemical analysis of blood gasses for smoking studies) which shows that people tend to give fairly accurate self-reports. In addition, we have findings over a period of 10 years, which show consistent data patterns from our campus-wide and group-specific surveys. Consequently, given all of these factors, we believe that our data is fairly accurate and representative.

“How can these data be right? We live here on campus, and we see lots of people drunk all of the time."

Remind the audience about what they have learned about misperceptions – that what we tend to notice is what is unusual and then talk about it until it seems like everybody is doing it all of the time. What we don't see are all of the people studying in the library, studying or relaxing at their homes, or having fun with friends without drinking excessively or without drinking at all.

“Do you think students lie on these surveys to make themselves look better?"

We can't be sure of 100% accuracy, but what we can say is that our findings show a great deal of internal consistency over time, both for Greek students and for students campus-wide. Some people may under-report (to make themselves or Greeks or their particular group look better) and some may over-report (to exaggerate their drinking because they're proud of it, or to mess up the survey data). If that is happening, we can say that the patterns of under- or over-reporting have been consistent over time and over student groups because our data patterns from our campus-wide and group-specific surveys have remained consistent. Therefore, we believe that those people average each other out and that the data are fairly accurate.

Section 5: Brief Outline for the Intervention

1. Prior to beginning, set up the room with the overhead projector. Display Overhead 1 (Title).

2. Introduce yourself. Briefly introduce the presentation. Talk about confidentiality.

3. Display Overhead 2 (Drunk vs. Sober). Facilitate the icebreaker.
4. Do lead-in for Overhead 3 (*Everybody thinks everybody else . . .*). Display the overhead. Explain. Ask questions to stimulate audience participation.

5. Do lead-in for Overhead 4 (*Norms and Misperceptions*). Display the overhead. Explain. Ask for additional examples. Ask questions to stimulate audience participation.

6. Do lead-in for Overhead 5 (*Media Literacy*). Display the overhead. Explain. Ask questions to stimulate audience participation.

7. Do lead-in for Overhead 6 (*Misperceived Norms*). Display the overhead. Explain. Ask questions to stimulate audience participation.

8. Do lead-in for Overhead 7 (*Typical Party*). Display the overhead. Explain. Ask questions to stimulate audience participation.


11. Do lead-in for Overhead 10 (*Your Chapter Believes*). Display the overhead with the data covered. Explain data labels. Ask people what they think it will say. Uncover group members’ estimates of their group’s attitudes. Facilitate discussion. Uncover group’s actual attitudes. Facilitate discussion. Ask questions to stimulate audience participation.

12. Do lead-in for Overhead 11 (*You Estimate WSU Believes*). Display the overhead with the data covered. Ask people what they think it will say. Uncover group members’ estimates of WSU students’ attitudes. Facilitate discussion. Uncover WSU students’ actual attitudes. Facilitate discussion. Ask questions to stimulate audience participation.

13. Do lead-in for Overhead 12 (*How Many Drinks People Have*). Display the overhead with the data covered. Ask people what they think it will say. Uncover group members’ estimates. Facilitate discussion. Uncover actual findings. Facilitate discussion. Ask questions to stimulate audience participation.


15. Do lead-in for Overhead 14 (*What Percentage of Students Practice the Following*). Display the overhead. Facilitate discussion. Ask questions to stimulate audience participation.
16. Do lead-in for Overhead 15 (*During the Past 30 Days, What Percentage Students Engaged in the Following*?). Display the overhead. Facilitate discussion. Ask questions to stimulate audience participation.

17. Do lead-in for Overhead 16 (*What Percentage of Students Willing to Help a Friend*?). Display the overhead. Facilitate discussion. Ask questions to stimulate audience participation.

18. Display Overhead 17 (*What have we learned*?). Facilitate discussion.

18. Display Overhead 18 (*Project Title and Contact Information*).

19. Thank the group members for their participation. Provide them with contact numbers for further questions or comments.
Section 6: Researching the Model

It is important to evaluate the effectiveness of any prevention activity. Good outcome-based evaluation will help us to
• learn what works and what does not.
• fine-tune effective activities and interventions.
• provide encouraging information to key stakeholders.
• make a case to key administrators for ongoing and additional support.
• write successful grant applications.

This section outlines a model for evaluating the SGNM intervention, including sample goals, outcomes, objectives and experimental design. In addition, summaries are presented from a number of projects completed at WSU.

Goals, Outcomes and Objectives

Main Goal:
• To correct misperceptions of student alcohol use norms among students living in fraternities and sororities.

Main Outcomes: (measurable indicators that the goal is being achieved)
• Decreases in rates of students’ use of alcohol.
• Decrease in the overall quantity and frequency of alcohol use and abuse.
• Changes in reported attitudes about the acceptability of alcohol use and abuse.
• Increases in accurate perceptions of student alcohol use.
• Reduction in harmful health, social and academic effects related to alcohol abuse, including violence.

Main Objective: (strategies to achieve outcomes)
• Deliver small group interventions to students living in fraternities and sororities facilitated by trained student consultants with accurate alcohol use data.

Additional Objectives:
• Administer the WSU Alcohol Use Survey to a randomly selected representative sample of WSU students.
• Administer the WSU Alcohol Use Survey to WSU students living in fraternities and sororities.
• Train student leaders to facilitate small group interventions with accurate alcohol use norms data.

Experimental Design

1. Campus-wide random sample surveys – Campus-wide random sample surveys are used to gather baseline data about students' alcohol use attitudes and behaviors and their perceptions of their peers attitudes and behaviors. Information about pro-social, protective and altruistic behaviors is also gathered. The survey questions were tested and re-tested over a three-year period for reliability and validity. A participant identification system was devised for tracking participants using participant-generated ID codes to provide assurance of anonymity.
2. Target group surveys – Prior to facilitating the intervention for a particular group, such as a fraternity, a sorority, a residence hall, or a classroom, alcohol use attitude and behavior data is collected from the specific group about to receive the intervention.

3. Intervention delivery – Campus-wide and group-specific norms data are presented to the target group for discussion using the prepared script. The intervention is facilitated by a respected student leader, peer educator, or peer mentor who has received specific training. The intervention is interactive and lasts approximately 45 minutes.

4. Trained personnel – Trained observers witness the interventions, documenting presenter style, group behaviors during the intervention, and other factors that might affect the quality and consistency of the presentations.

5. Follow-up surveys – Follow-up surveys are conducted approximately 4 to 6 weeks (and perhaps again at the end of the semester) following each intervention to determine the degree to which the intervention influenced 1) an increase in the accuracy of students' perceptions of the alcohol use behavior and attitude norms of their peers, and (2) a decrease in the actual quantity and frequency of their drinking.

6. Control groups – groups with similar characteristics receive the pre- and post-surveys at the same time as the groups receiving the intervention. However, they do not receive the intervention.

7. Focus groups – Focus groups are conducted with randomly selected students from each group that has received the intervention for feedback to assist in fine-tuning the survey instrument and the intervention process.

8. Archival data – mechanisms have been established to gather data on alcohol-related campus problems, including Student Health and Emergency Room visits, conduct incidents, alcohol policy violations, citations and arrests, and withdrawals from school.

**WSU Projects**

The small group norms-challenging intervention has been delivered to the following groups. In each case, significant corrections in alcohol use misperceptions and/or decreases in alcohol consumption have been demonstrated following just a single SGNM intervention.

**Greek System**

During the spring semesters of 1999, 2000 and 2001 and fall semester of 2001, the SGNM intervention was delivered to several fraternities and sororities. Campus-wide data were gathered through a mailed random sample survey, the WSU Student Life and Health Behaviors Survey. The survey gathers data on students’ personal attitudes and behaviors with regard to alcohol use, their estimates of the attitudes and behaviors of their peers, and information about pro-social, protective behaviors. Approximately two weeks prior to receiving the intervention, group-specific alcohol use attitude and behavior data were collected from the participating fraternities and sororities. Trained
house presidents facilitated the interventions in their respective living groups. Follow-up surveys were conducted approximately 3 weeks and 6 weeks following each presentation. Recent studies (fall 2002) demonstrated a significant increase in the accuracy of participants’ perception of student alcohol-use norms and a significant decrease in the quantity and frequency of participants’ alcohol use following the delivery of a single intervention.

**Classroom Intervention - Psychology 106**

During spring semester, 1999, the SGNM intervention was presented in Dr. Tom Brigham’s Psychology 106 class, a one-credit self-management class for freshmen. Colin Peeler, Graduate Assistant, coordinated the project. During week one of the class, all of the students filled out the WSU Alcohol Use Survey to gather norms data for the entire class (the pre-test). The survey gathers data on the students’ personal attitudes and behaviors with regard to alcohol use and their estimates of the attitudes and behaviors of their peers. Then the students were randomly divided into two groups - one group received the intervention during week nine of the class, and one group did not. During the intervention, trained student facilitators use a prepared script and a series of overheads to present the data to their respective class section.

During week fifteen, all of the students again filled out the survey (the post-test). The group that received the intervention demonstrated 1) a significant increase in the accuracy of their perceptions with regard to the alcohol use attitudes and behaviors of their peers, and 2) a significant reduction in the amount of alcohol they consumed per time. These findings are very promising considering the intervention took place during a single class period; most prevention modules will take place over a period of two to three weeks.

**PROWL Class**

During fall semester, 1999, the SGNM intervention was presented in the PROWL class, a one-credit class through the Athletic Department for new student athletes. During week four, students filled out the WSU Alcohol Use Survey (the pre-test) prior to a lecture by John Miller on alcohol and other drug abuse at WSU. The following week, Jeanne Far facilitated the intervention using class data. During week fifteen, students again filled out the survey (the post-test). The class participants demonstrated 1) an increase in the accuracy of their perceptions with regard to the alcohol use attitudes and behaviors of their peers, and 2) a reduction in the amount of alcohol they consumed per time.

**Curriculum Infusion**

During the 2001-2002 school year, 13 classrooms participated in some form of small group intervention. Eight classrooms received the SGNM presentation from Jeanne Far; five classrooms received an alcohol information presentation, including student alcohol-use norms data, designed and presented by the course instructor. Pre-intervention data were collected approximately two weeks prior to intervention delivery which occurred approximately one month into the semester. Post-intervention data were collected one week before the end of the semester. In almost all cases, the accuracy of participants’ perceptions of the alcohol-use norms of WSU students increased significantly. However, no significant changes were demonstrated in participants’ quantity and frequency of drinking.
Athletic Teams

The Athletic Department became involved with our Project in spring of 1999. Several teams were recruited to take part, and team captains were trained to be peer presenters for their respective teams. Data collections and presentations were timed to coincide with each team’s active playing season. Follow-up data were collected approximately 6-7 weeks after the interventions. Over the past year, additional teams have become involved; during this round of interventions, Jeanne Far delivered the presentations to assure consistency. Participating team members demonstrated a significant increase in the accuracy of their perceptions with regard to the alcohol use attitudes and behaviors of their peers and a significant decrease in the quantity and frequency of their drinking following the delivery of a single intervention.

“WSU Alive!” – Summer Orientation Program for New Students and their Parents

Each summer 80% of new students and their parents attend one of the nine, two-day new-student-orientation sessions on the WSU campus. These programs, titled “WSU Alive!,” take place from early June to late July. This summer data is being collected from the new students during the first morning of each session using the brief form of the WSU Alcohol Use Survey. That evening, three trained WSU student leaders present the data to these students using the SGM intervention. The next morning, interested parents attend a workshop titled “Social Norms and Alcohol at WSU.” They are provided with overviews of the WSU Substance Abuse Prevention Program and the Alcohol Policy, a discussion of social norms theory, and the same SGM intervention their students received the previous evening. Anticipated outcomes include 1) correcting the misperceptions of most incoming students about the drinking attitudes and behaviors of WSU students which, in turn, will reduce over-consumption and related problems on campus, and 2) correcting the misperceptions of many parents of incoming students who, in turn, will discuss these issues with their daughters and sons and carry accurate data to other parents and to the greater public.
Section 7: Bibliography


Appendix

1. The WSU Alcohol Use Surveys
   a. Consent Form
   b. Campus-wide Survey
   c. Group-specific Survey

2. The Overheads