A Group-based Motivational Enhancement Approach to Alcohol Risk Reduction in Cohesive Student Groups

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June 12, 2013
Webinar Objectives

- Participants will be able to:
  - List student learning outcomes for the program
  - Describe how health behavior and social change theories and models are applied in the program
  - Describe programmatic components
  - Discuss how this type of program may be implemented on your campus
Conceptualization of Program

• Focus on things that influence behavior
• Allow students opportunity to become more self-aware as well as aware of group’s beliefs, perceptions
• Emphasize group attitudes and values that are in line with the desired behavior/outcome
• Develop discrepancy between group goals and values and undesirable behaviors/outcome
• Empower students to identify solutions
Student Learning Outcomes

As a result of the program, students will be able to...

1. Identify their own attitudes and behaviors concerning alcohol
2. Acknowledge the variety of perspectives and opinions concerning alcohol that are held within the group
3. Analyze the relationship between alcohol use and consequences and goals and values
4. Distinguish between perceived vs. actual alcohol use within the group
5. Identify at least 3 alcohol risk-reduction strategies
6. Apply knowledge of the group’s ideas, attitudes and behaviors to inform one’s intentions to reduce AOD-related harm for oneself and the group
7. Recall 2 or more available campus resources to further explore one’s use of alcohol
Applicable Theories and Models

• Social Change Model
  – Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA

• Stages of Behavior Change Model
  – Prochaska & DiClemente

• Theory of Reasoned Action/Planned Behavior
  – Ajzen & Fishbein

• Theory of Normative Social Behavior
  – Rimal & Real

• Motivational Interviewing Method
  – Miller & Rollnick
Major Program Components

1. Pre-meeting with 3 members
2. Anonymous survey of all members
3. Program with all members
4. Debriefing with same 3 members
Pre-Meeting Items

• Confidentiality
• Their concerns about alcohol
• Group goal(s) for the year
• HPAW’s harm reduction approach
• How could this program be productive/helpful?
• Review and, if necessary, modify the survey
• Ask for insight into how to best have this conversation with the larger group
Pre-Program Survey

• Brief (10 minutes tops)
• Online (Campus Labs)
• Anonymous and voluntary
• Invitation comes from student leader or coach
• Results are presented as feedback to group
Survey – Attitudes & Perceptions

• A member of my group can fit in/bond with other members regardless of whether or how much they drink.
• How much of a role does alcohol play in the group?
• How much of a role would you prefer that alcohol play in the group?
• How would you feel if a fellow member decided to drink less?
Survey – Attitudes & Perceptions

• In what ways has use of alcohol by you and/or other members affected your life this academic year?
  – Worry about getting in trouble
  – Been concerned about health/safety issues
  – Disrupted living space
  – Causes tension within the group
  – Adversely affects group’s goals
  – Adversely affected athletic performance
  – Other concerns - please explain
Survey – Attitudes, Perceptions & Behavior

• What do you like about alcohol use w/in the group?
• What do you like less about alcohol use w/in the group?
• I believe that my team would perform better if some teammates drank less.
• How much do you think the average member of your group had to drink the last time they parties/socialized?
• How much did YOU have the last time...
Survey: Importance & Confidence

• How important is it that your group makes any changes in its use of alcohol?
• Follow-up: What kind of changes would you like to have happen?
• How confident are you that your group could make changes in its use of alcohol?
Main Components of Program

1. Build rapport
2. Take perspective
3. Make meaning
4. Share ideas
5. Identify next steps
Program Components: Build Rapport

1. Create a safe space to explore survey results
2. What is [group name] all about?
   – Identity
   – Values
   – Goals
Program Components:
Take Perspective & Make Meaning

1. Good things vs. not-so-good things
2. Injunctive norms
3. Alcohol and athletic performance (for athletic groups)
4. Descriptive norms: quantity, frequency
Program Components: Share Ideas

• Students’ ideas for change
• My tips for reducing harm (very brief)
Program Components: Identify Next Steps

1. Remind group that a debriefing will take place within a week
2. Takeaways (written)
3. Intentions (written)
Sorority’s ‘Good Things’ about Drinking

- Fun
- Brings people together/creates opportunities to bond
- Allows people to open up, be more social
- Facilitates meeting new people
- Relax; unwind; relieve stress
- It’s regulated/controlled and closely supervised by peers
- Members are responsible about it and drink moderately
- It’s a personal choice/no pressure/not forced
Sorority’s ‘Not-so-Good’ Things

• Bad decisions and regret
• Lack of responsibility for one’s own actions while drinking
• Overindulging by some causes stress and worry for others
• Dangerous to health and safety
• Alcohol is too central to socializing and happens too often
• Puts chapter at risk for sanctions
• Creates tension
• Sometimes hard to ensure each other’s safety
• Pressure to live up to sorority’s social image
• Negatively impacts our reputation
• Some sisters rely on it to relieve stress
On the one hand...

**Good Things**
- Fun
- Brings people together/creates opportunities to bond
- Facilitates meeting new people
- Allows people to open up, be more social
- Personal choice/no pressure/not forced
- Members are responsible about it and drink moderately
- It’s regulated/controlled and supervised
- Relaxation; unwind; relieve stress

**Not-so-good Things**
- Bad decisions and regret
- Overindulging by some causes stress & worry for others
- Creates tension between sisters
- Negatively impacts our reputation
- Puts chapter at risk for sanctions
- Pressure to live up to sorority’s social image
- Too central to socializing; too often
- Lack of responsibility for one’s own actions while drinking
- Dangerous to health and safety
- Sometimes it’s hard to ensure safety
- Some rely on it to relieve stress
How would you feel if a sister decided to drink less?

Very Comf.  87%
Moderately Comf.  3%
Neither Comf or Uncomf  9%
Moderately Uncomf.  0%
Very Uncomf.  1%

n=77
Members can fit in/bond regardless of whether or how much they drink

- **Strongly Agree** 51%
- **Moderately Agree** 31%
- **Neither** 8%
- **Moderately Disagree** 5%
- **Strongly Disagree** 6%

**Fraternity**

n=65
Role of alcohol in Group’s social life

- Preferred
- Actual

n=65
My Team Would Perform Better if Some Teammates Drank Less

![Bar graph showing the distribution of responses to the statement. The graph has three bars: Agree, Undecided, and Disagree. The Agree bar is the tallest, indicating that a significant percentage of Team X members agree. The graph shows the percentage of responses for each category, labeled Agree, Undecided, and Disagree. The number of respondents (n) is 18.]
Number of Drinks Last Occasion

- Zero (0)
- 1-3
- 4 - 6
- 7 or more

Perception
Actual
How important is it for Group X to make changes in how it uses alcohol?

- Not at all important: 4%
- Not very important: 36%
- Moderately important: 48%
- Very important: 8%
- Extremely important: 4%

Sorority, n=77
Your Ideas

• Bolster fun social stuff that is sober-based
• Communicate that RM is everyone’s job
• Be clear about where we can and can’t drink
• Be more aware of risks for chapter
• Drink less/more responsibly
• Increase accountability for those who drink
• Clean up after ourselves
• Realize attitudes about mistakes people make when drunk are not okay
What is your biggest takeaway from this discussion?

Student Takeaways

- I loved how open and non-judgmental this talk was. Great program!
- It’s interesting that a lot of us only consume 1-3 drinks per night.
- There are a variety of opinions about drinking in the chapter.
- There are a lot of people on the same page as me about how I feel about alcohol.
- There’s a point of diminishing returns.
- We all support each other.
- This free golf pencil.
- A better understanding of chapter-wide thoughts on alcohol.
- Didn’t realize anyone ever felt pressured to drink since I never have.
- There are more consequences to drinking than I had thought of.
Student Takeaways
What is your biggest takeaway from this discussion?

- People want our org to drink less as a whole
- We need to communicate more about drinking and its consequences
- We need to be more aware of how personal decisions around drinking affect others
- The connection between our goals and values and the negative behavior was particularly valuable
- We're open to change
- Our drinking habits are not perfect
- I should reach out to my friends when I think they have a problem...it’s become apparent that that is acceptable and supported by the chapter
- We need to take this discussion seriously and be open to change
- We need to communicate more about drinking and its consequences
- We need to make sure everyone's on the same page re: rules/regulations
Student Intentions

Name 1 self-protective behavior (related to alcohol) that you intend to incorporate into your lifestyle.

- Set a limit and stick to it
- Actually count my drinks
- Drink to be social, not to get drunk
- Use the buddy system
- Drink for the right reasons
- Be ok with drinking less
- Spread my drinks out
- Not care what other people think if I don’t drink
- Remember that my actions reflect on the group
- Nothing – I don’t drink
- Be ok with drinking less
Student Intentions

Name 1 thing you intend to do to help your group minimize harm related to alcohol.

- Plan more events without alcohol
- Let others know when I’m not drinking so that they feel more comfortable not drinking, too
- Stop buying underclassmen alcohol
- Make sure new members know that we stay together when we party
- If someone looks like they’ve had too much, tell them so
- Watch out for my friends more
- Ask frat boys to make water available at events
- Respect individual’s personal decisions
- Communicate to members that risk management is everybody’s job
Debriefing

• Held within 1 week with same 3 members
• Overall reactions and/or response from others
• Themes and/or highlights
• Review of takeaway cards
• Next steps
• My recommendations (if open to them)
• Feedback for me
Logistics

• **Staffing**
  – Co-facilitation by professional staff & graduate intern
  – Motivational Interviewing skills
  – Alcohol knowledge

• **Technology**
  – Online survey; PowerPoint; clickers (optional)

• **Space**
  – Consider privacy, confidentiality, group size and convenience

• **Time**
  – 6 to 7 hours total (includes prep and direct contact w/ students) over the course of ~3 weeks
Follow-up questions? Contact me!

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