Safe Supportive Learning
Engagement | Safety | Environment

Community Coalitions Working Collaboratively Across Secondary and Postsecondary Education to Address Underage Drinking

QUESTION AND ANSWER SUMMARY

On September 18, 2013, the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSLE) hosted a webinar on behalf of the Interagency Coordinating Committee to Prevent Underage Drinking (ICCPUD). The webinar identified key constituents of collaboration; addressed specific mechanisms for engaging key campus and community groups; discussed gender- and culturally-appropriate approaches to working with high schools, colleges, and communities; and identified methods of moving coalitions from talk to action. During the session, the presenters (**Traci Toomey**, PhD, Alcohol Epidemiology Program, University of Minnesota; **Nicole Holt**, Executive Director, Texans Standing Tall; **Kerri Calvert**, Bloomington Normal Community Campus Committee) received several questions from the audience. Because the presenters could not answer all of the questions submitted during the event, the Center has prepared the following Webinar Q/A Summary with responses to each question. For additional information, please email or call the Center (ncssle@air.org; 1-800-258-8413).

> *Please note the content of this summary was prepared under a contract from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to the American Institutes for Research (AIR). This Q/A summary does not necessarily represent the policy or views of the U.S. Departments of Education or Health and Human Services, nor do they imply endorsement by the Departments.*

1. **Should social availability also include community or cultural norms?**

    Traci Toomey- I would not say that cultural norms are a direct source of availability, but certainly they indirectly effect availability of alcohol. For example, some cultures may find it more acceptable to provide alcohol to kids. It is really important to think about the particular community or population with whom you are working. How you address problems has to be determined by the cultural influences of that community or population.

    Nicole Holt- Community and cultural norms all impact youth alcohol use and other aspects of life as well, both positively and negatively. In addition to considering cultural norms when addressing a problem, we also consider how we will show impact when selecting a strategy. We don't like to "hang our hat" on strategies that specifically impact social norms because it is difficult to measure and show progress. When we're working to address underage alcohol use we prefer to pick the

strategy where the data/impact is most easily identified/tracked/ measured. This scenario is an example. The police indicate last year they had 100 noise violations that were related to underage drinking parties. They were trained to conduct controlled party dispersal techniques and increased enforcement of underage drinking parties was promoted through media. This year there were 80 such parties. This would be a decrease of 20 parties, which through evaluation we would attribute to increased law enforcement activities and awareness activities about this strategy. We would assume that people stopped hosting as many parties because they believed they would get in trouble so it decreased social access. However, there is no easy way to measure and prove this. Based on theory of change we expect that increased law enforcement will reduce social access and ultimately change social norms but we track the change through an easier-to-measure strategy related to increased law enforcement activities.

2. **Can you provide an example of a strategy that has been used but has not worked in the past?**

   Traci Toomey- Many communities feel most comfortable using strategies to try to convince underage individuals to not use alcohol rather than reduce availability of alcohol. Some commonly used strategies include educational programs such as D.A.R.E. and fear-based interventions (e.g., displaying crashed cars at schools). These strategies have been shown to be ineffective. Communities often also focus on providing alcohol-free activities. While this approach might complement other strategies, by itself it is not sufficient to significantly reduce underage drinking.

   Nicole Holt- I would add to Traci's comments – people also use "beer goggles" and drunk driving simulators such as go-carts and electronic driving games. These strategies have also been shown to be ineffective in long-term impact. I've heard conversations suggesting that among young people who are more likely to take risks such activities could actually result in a positive – "this is fun" - feeling rather than discouraging use.

   Kerri Calvert- A one-time public speaker does not have a lasting impact; same for the crash cars and fatal vision goggles.

3. **Are there assessment tools/questionnaires available to use with college students?**

   Traci Toomey- Some colleges use the survey from the CORE Institute. Other colleges have developed their own surveys. Whichever survey you use, be sure to include questions that will help you determine the best strategies to employ. For example, if you want to cut off access to alcohol for underage college students, it is important to include questions on your survey asking the students where they typically get their alcohol (e.g., a liquor store, bar, party in the residence hall, etc).

   Nicole Holt- We have identified campuses using the following instruments/resources: National College Health Assessment, Alcohol Use Disorder Identification Index, National Alcohol Screening Day "How Do You Score" Campaign, and MAP-Works. In our 2011 Report Card on Higher Education, pages 13-15, we discuss data collection tools used by campuses. This Report Card is on the Texans Standing Tall website – www.TexansStandingTall.org.

   Kerri Calvert- We offer the Core survey and the National College Health Assessment (NCHA) survey

on alternate years. We also use our institutional National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) data.

4. **Can you recommend a manual, or guide, or established model for community organizing as a strategy for preventing underage drinking? Or a web source for that matter.**

Traci Toomey- There are a few resources available. Like Nicole, I often refer people to the Midwest Academy book *Organizing for Social Change.* I also recently purchased the book *Collective Action for Social Change: An Introduction to Community Organizing* for one of my classes. It may be useful to people who are new to community organizing. Citations for both books are listed below. Additionally, the Youth Leadership Institute offers CMCA training (http://www.yli.org/cmcatraining). CMCA is a model program that used community organizing to reduce youth access to alcohol.

> Bobo K, Kendall J., Max S. *Organizing for Social Change*, 4th Edition, The Forum Press: Santa Ana, CA, 2010.
> Schutz A, Sandy, MG. Collective Action for Social Change: An Introduction to Community Organizing. Palgrave MacMillan: New York, 2011.

Nicole Holt- I direct my staff to Midwest Academy's Organizing for Social Change. It is a very good tool for understanding the basic concepts of the many things we discussed today.

5. **How effective is the "Alcohol Abuse/Awareness Training" that incoming freshman are required to take before the semester starts?**

Traci Toomey- In 2002, the National Institute on Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse (NIAAA) indicated that Tier 4 strategies (Evidence of Ineffectiveness) include: "Informational, knowledge-based, or values clarification interventions about alcohol and the problems related to its excessive use, when used alone." Not all colleges require their freshman to take alcohol abuse/awareness training. Among colleges that do have such a requirement, there are several programs that may be used. Effectiveness may vary by program. We do know that what appears to be most effective for influencing alcohol use of individual students are interventions that "Combine cognitive-behavioral skills with norms clarification and motivational enhancement interventions" (Tier 1 Intervention: Evidence of Effectiveness Among College Students). However, usually these programs are implemented for students most at risk for alcohol-related problems.

Nicole Holt- Traci has addressed this more specifically from a data standpoint. It is certainly a useful tool if the data is being looked at in order to inform prevention policies and strategies. Strategies are best selected when they are data driven and integrated. Multiple sources, including NIAAA, talk about the significance of using multiple strategies to prevent underage alcohol use/risky drinking.

Kerri Calvert- We require our incoming first year and transfer students to take an online alcohol education program. We look at it as one tool among all the other efforts we undertake on our campus. We feel it is important for incoming students to realize this is an issue we take very seriously. We don't expect the program to make a dramatic impact on our use rates but do see the value in setting expectations before students arrive at our school.

6. **We collect excellent data on our campus and share the data on a regular basis. However, I don't know if we're telling a "story" with our data. Could you share some specifics on how you are doing this?**

    Nicole Holt- The first thing we consider is what doesn't the public know or what don't parents know that they should know; what is the "aha" data that can be used to create a sense of urgency. If the public thinks it's mostly boys that drink and we find data that indicates that girls rival their male counterparts in alcohol-related violation rates then we will show photos of girls passed out on benches next to the data point that shows the increase in violations. The image helps generate the understanding and often leads to increased concern. The simplest way we use the technique is to clarify what people don't know about the issue – their gut may say "it's a rite of passage" or "all kids get it from their parents" but your data indicates that most young people that drink binge drink and they mainly get it from friends. You can tell a story about the use rates and patterns rather than simply putting the information on a chart. You can create a fact sheet about youth social access and indicate all the dangers related to underage drinking and share your data about how youth are using and accessing alcohol locally. Then indicate strategies that would be effective at solving the problem by reducing social access.

7. **Do you invite the treatment providers into the coalition building?**

    Traci Toomey- This question is best answered by Nicole and Kerri but I have a few general comments to make. First, treatment providers may be good allies for prevention work. However, like any potential partners, treatment providers should only be invited into the coalition if they are supportive of and want to work on the issues that the coalition intends to address.

    Nicole Holt- We have relationships with treatment providers but we use the same set of expectations for all coalition members – support our mission and vision and how we conduct our work. We treat all members as Traci indicated in her answer.

    Kerri Calvert- We do not have a specific provider at the moment but have in the past. We do consistently have counselors who work at the universities with students who are struggling with substance abuse issues as part of the coalition.

8. **Do you have examples or resources of interventions that are proven NOT to work and TO work?**

    Traci Toomey- As noted above, we do know there are many strategies being used that are not effective alone (e.g., D.A.R.E. and other knowledge-based educational approaches, fear-based interventions, alcohol-free activities). Some will say that these interventions may work if combined with other approaches. That is possible. But given the limited resources of most organizations, I would encourage organizations to first identify and focus on the strategies that are evidence-based and are shown to be effective. Second, identify new strategies that fill existing gaps—and then evaluate these strategies to see if they work. There are a variety of resources to help determine what interventions work. I've listed some below.

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Babor T., Caetano R, Casswell S., Griffith E. et al. *Alcohol: No Ordinary Commodity*, 2nd Edition, Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2010.

The Community Prevention Guide (http://www.thecommunityguide.org/alcohol/index.html)

The Underage Drinking Enforcement Training Center (http://www.udetc.org/)

Nicole Holt- In addition to Traci's responses/resources I would include the Surgeon General's **Call To Action to Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking**; Institute of Medicine's report **Reducing Underage Drinking: A Collective Responsibility**. These resources also indicate effective prevention approaches and strategies.

Kerri Calvert- The NIAAA report noted below is a good source for which interventions are effective and which are not.
http://www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov/niaaacollegematerials/taskforce/CallToAction_02.aspx

9. **How active can schools be at bringing together community groups to help them reduce underage drinking in their school?**

    Nicole Holt- As active as they are willing.

    Kerri Calvert- Our universities were the founders of our coalition. If your schools recognize that this is a community problem and that you need community members to help address it, they (the schools) can be the driving force.

10. **What program/resources would you recommend for responsible beverage service training for schools?**

    Traci Toomey- I don't have a specific recommendation for responsible beverage service training (RBS) for schools. When selecting RBS programs, make sure the programs cover both over-service of alcohol as well as prevention of serving to underage individuals. Programs should provide skills for identifying underage and obviously intoxicated individuals as well as skills to refuse service of alcohol. Supervisors or school leaders (i.e., those who oversee alcohol servers), need to set expectations for responsible alcohol service and back up servers when the refuse alcohol service.

    Nicole Holt- I agree with Traci and I would include working with law enforcement to conduct compliance checks to ensure people are checking IDs and not serving to minors as well as asking place of last drink questions when a person is caught for an alcohol violation. If a campus is considering on-campus sales I would discourage it.

11. **Is the RBS training being offered for college units and the community college? Who teaches the class?**

    Kerri Calvert- Our program is not offered for college credit; it is a community education class. Currently, two police officers trained in our program teach the class.

12. **How do you get your coalition away from overseeing the work, to doing the work?**

   Nicole Holt- In general, we create plans and work groups that focus on specific activities, strategies, and tasks.

   Kerri Calvert- Have a strong strategic plan and then tap into people's passion – what brought them to the table and how can you use that to accomplish your strategic plan's goals?

13. **Where can I find data on younger student use of alcohol?**

   Traci Toomey- One source is the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS), (http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm). The Monitoring the Future survey also includes younger students (8th, 10th, and 12th graders) (http://monitoringthefuture.org/index.html).

14. **A major food outlet sponsored legislation in WA and now liquor is available everywhere you look. How can we possibly influence availability now when it is at every store on every corner?**

   Traci Toomey- It is unfortunate that this change occurred. But availability can be changed in multiple ways. First, policies can be adopted and enforced to reduce the likelihood of youth obtaining alcohol from multiple sources (e.g., regular compliance checks can be conducted to prevent illegal alcohol sales to youth). The price of alcohol can be raised to reduce the economic availability through community- or state-level bans on price promotions such as increases in excise taxes or minimum pricing policies. Further increases of density of alcohol establishments can be influenced by zoning laws or set limits on establishment density. Availability of alcohol at establishments can be influenced by how responsibly alcohol is sold or served. Alcohol service may be influenced by dram shop laws, enforcement, and responsible beverage service training (note that responsible beverage service training by itself may not be sufficient to create sustained improvements in responsible alcohol service but may be strategically necessary to move towards enforcement).

   Nicole Holt- We agree with Traci. In addition, in our office we often comment that there is no silver bullet for solving the problem so we chip away at it day by day using effective strategies. As Gandhi said, be the change you wish to see in the world.

15. **How would you suggest influencing TRUE and ACTIVE cultural change within the military community environment; i.e. influencing leaders, who SAY they desire to affect change, but take little action or minimize/"block" the implementation of prevention measures?**

   Nicole Holt- We start with relationship building focused on meeting people where they are and focus on how what we're doing benefits a mutual goal and/or objective. Another way to think about it is "What's In It For Them." The more trust and confidence each entity has in the relationship the more we find cooperation and investment in larger prevention goals and environmental change.

   Kerri Calvert- That's a hard one and unfortunately, there is no perfect answer. We've had our most influential members meet one-on-one with leaders to help understand where the resistance is

coming from and how we can reduce it. We continuously provide information to educate people on the issues. And sometimes, frankly, you have to wait for people to move on or retire.

16. **What was the survey used for high school students?**

   Nicole Holt- PRIDE has a survey for high school students.

   Kerri Calvert- Our community uses the Illinois Youth Survey http://iys.cprd.illinois.edu/.