

Martha's Vineyard Teacher Social Norms Assessment Pre-Test Results

Methodology

A brief 17 question survey was created by The Outcomes Project to assess teacher's knowledge and support around a social norms campaign in their school. An email with the link to the online survey was sent out the week of December 14, 2009 with a reminder email sent the week of January 11, 2010. This assessment is being done as a pre-test and a post-test. This report covers the findings from the pre-test only. The post-test will be administered to teachers in February after they have had a social norms training by the Youth Task Force (YTF).

Sample

	Total number that completed pre-test
Middle School Teachers	61
High School Teachers	49

Findings

Knowledge of Youth Task Force

Recognition of YTF

- 71% (n=35) of High School teachers have previously heard of the Youth Task Force
- 95% (n=56) of Middle School teachers have previously heard of the Youth Task Force

YTF Campaign Materials

- 39% (n=19) of High School teachers have seen Youth Task Force campaign materials. The campaign materials were viewed by the way of:
 - In the high school
 - Ads/articles in newspaper (MV Times)
 - Stickers in package stores
 - Promotional items (lanyards, brochures)
 - Posters
 - Mailings
 - Wellness Day workshop
- 59% (n=35) of Middle School teachers have seen Youth Task Force campaign materials. The campaign materials were viewed by the way of:
 - Posters/flyers (in schools, in windows)
 - Health Fair

- Promotional items (lanyards, brochures, pens, mouse pads, pencils, tee-shirts)
- Ads/articles in newspaper
- Stickers in package stores
- Chat and Chowder

Focus of Youth Task Force

Teachers were asked to identify the focus of the Youth Task Force. The majority (80% of High School teachers and 87% of Middle School teachers) correctly identified the YTF as a youth substance abuse prevention coalition. Results are in Table 1, in rank order.

Table 1. Focus of Youth Task Force*

Area	High School Teachers	Middle School Teachers
Youth substance abuse prevention	80% (n=39)	87% (n=53)
Youth violence prevention	25% (n=12)	16% (n=10)
Teen pregnancy prevention	18% (n=9)	13% (n=8)
After school programming	16% (n= 8)	10% (n=6)
Gang prevention	10% (n=5)	7% (n=4)
Faith based	0	2% (n=1)

**Participants were allowed to select more than one answer to this question*

Social Norms Knowledge

- 98% (n=43) of High School teachers have heard of the term "social norms" before receiving the survey
- 95% (n=54) of Middle School teachers have heard of the term "social norms" before receiving the survey

Other Words For "Norm"

Teachers were asked which of the following terms could also be referred to as a "norm." Results are shown in Table 2. All teachers were able to identify social norm terms.

Table 2. Other Words For "Norm"*

Term for "norm"	High School Teachers	Middle School Teachers
Most	14% (n=7)	34% (n=21)
More than 50%	10% (n=5)	26% (n=16)
The majority	29% (n=14)	38% (n=23)
Less than 50%	0	2% (n=1)
Standard practice	67% (n=33)	69% (n=42)
The minority	0	0

**Participants were allowed to select more than one answer to this question*

Social Norms Theory

Teachers were asked to select the correct definition for social norms.

- 40% (n=15) of High School teachers **correctly** believed the social norms theory (in brief) states "people overestimate risky behavior and underestimate protective behaviors"
 - There were no teachers that believed the social norms theory (in brief) states "scare tactics have the most influence on problem behaviors"
 - 61% (n=23) **incorrectly** believed the social norms theory (in brief) states "people need to interact with each other in order to be normal"

- 74% (n=39) of Middle School teachers **correctly** believed the social norms theory (in brief) states "people overestimate risky behavior and underestimate protective behaviors"
 - There were no teachers that believed the social norms theory (in brief) states "scare tactics have the most influence on problem behaviors"
 - 26% (n=14) of teachers **incorrectly** believed the social norms theory (in brief) states "people need to interact with each other in order to be normal"

Aim of Social Norms

Teachers were asked what social norms theory aims to do.

- 22% (n=11) of High School teachers **correctly** believe that social norms theory aims to decrease problem behaviors (such as substance use) by decreasing misperceptions about that behavior through promotion of the majority behavior
 - There were no teachers that believed social norms theory aims to encourage people to be normal
 - 57% (n=28) **incorrectly** believe social norms theory aims to encourage people to interact with each other

**Participants were allowed to select more than one answer to this question*

- 12% (n=7) of Middle School teachers **correctly** believe that social norms theory aims to decrease problem behaviors (such as substance use) by decreasing misperceptions about that behavior through promotion of the majority behavior
 - 2% (n=1) of teachers **incorrectly** believe social norms theory aims to encourage people to be normal
 - 75% (n=46) of teachers **incorrectly** believe social norms theory aims to encourage people to interact with each other

**Participants were allowed to select more than one answer to this question*

Social Norms Messaging

Teachers were asked what social norms messaging uses for the campaign..

- 97% (n=38) of High School teachers **correctly** believe that social norms messaging uses positive and hopeful messages about majority behaviors
 - One teacher **incorrectly** believed that social norms messaging uses fear and minority messages as a motivator

- 89% (n=54) of Middle School teachers correctly believe that social norms messaging uses positive and hopeful messages about majority behaviors
 - There were no teachers that believed that social norms messaging uses fear and minority messages as a motivator

Support of Social Norms Campaign

A brief description of social norms was integrated within the survey instrument. After this description, they were given the statement "I believe a social norms campaign would be effective in my school" and asked to indicate their level of support by selecting 'true' or 'false'.

- 93% (n=38) of High School teachers said 'true'
 - 7% (n=3) said 'false'
- 91% (n=49) of Middle School teachers said 'true'
 - 9% (n=5) said 'false'

Attitudes/Beliefs and Perceptions

Teachers were asked to indicate their level of agreement with several statements assessing attitudes and beliefs of youth substance use.

Table 3. High School Teachers attitudes and beliefs of youth substance use

Statement	1=Strongly Agree	2	3	4	5=Strongly Disagree
Alcohol use by high school students is a "normal rite of passage"	--	13% (n=2)	33% (n=5)	47% (n=7)	13% (n=2)
Alcohol use by high school students is harmful	33% (n=4)	50% (n=6)	19% (n=3)	--	--
I support the police departments of Martha's Vineyard in enforcing underage drinking laws	76% (n=16)	24% (n=6)	--	--	--
Schools should exclude a student from school activities (i.e. athletic events, prom, etc.) for out-of-school alcohol use	36% (n=12)	21% (n=7)	33% (n=11)	3% (n=1)	9% (n=3)
It is okay to allow high school students to drink alcohol on special occasions (weddings, prom, graduation, etc.)	3% (n=1)	14% (n=5)	8% (n=3)	25% (n=9)	53% (n=19)

Table 4. Middle School Teachers attitudes and beliefs of youth substance use

Statement	1=Strongly Agree	2	3	4	5=Strongly Disagree
Alcohol use by middle school students is a "normal rite of passage"	--	7% (n=2)	10% (n=3)	24% (n=7)	(n=20)
Alcohol use by middle school students is harmful	80% (n=15)	20% (n=3)	--	--	--
I support the police departments of Martha's Vineyard in enforcing underage drinking laws	72% (n=26)	21% (n=7)	(n=2)	3% (n=1)	--
Schools should exclude a student from school activities (i.e. athletic events, prom, etc.) for out-of-school alcohol use	30% (n=12)	(n=10)	32% (n=12)	5% (n=2)	11% (n=4)
It is okay to allow middle school students to drink alcohol on special occasions (weddings, prom, graduation, etc.)	--	2% (n=1)	12% (n=5)	26% (n=11)	63% (n=29)

Support of Data Being Collected in School

- 87% (n=32) of High School teachers are in support of annual data collection on high school student substance use rates
 - 14% (n=5) of High School teachers are not in favor of annual data collection

Reasons Why Not:

 - It isn't necessary
 - Students will not seriously take a survey that is done on a regular basis, it is better to do it every two or three years
 - Concerns about how accurate data is because students do not answer truthfully/make things up/exaggerate
 - We know there is a problem and should be proactive
- 82% (n=42) of Middle School teachers are in support of annual data collection on middle school student substance use rates
 - 18% (n=9) of Middle School teachers are not in favor or annual data collection

Reasons Why Not:

 - Data is not accurate/ not reliable
 - Do not believe it should be collected annually (perhaps every other year); too frequent surveying may decrease how seriously the kids approach survey completion
 - Students think that somehow the surveys are used to get them into trouble, concerns with privacy issues
 - The students lie/make up answers
 - Do not take it seriously

- "It is not necessary; the DARE program is provided for all sixth graders"

Disapproval of Youth Substance Use

Teachers were asked how wrong they think it is for students to use the following drugs.

Table 5. High School Teachers

Drug	Very wrong	Wrong	A little bit wrong	Not wrong at all
Drink beer, wine, or hard liquor (more than a few sips)	46% (n=17)	41% (n=15)	14% (n=5)	--
Smoke cigarettes	68% (n=25)	30% (n=11)	3% (n=1)	--
Smoke marijuana	65% (n=24)	35% (n=13)	--	--
Use prescription drugs without a doctor's orders	81% (n=30)	19% (n=7)	--	--

Table 6. Middle School Teachers

Drug	Very wrong	Wrong	A little bit wrong	Not wrong at all
Drink beer, wine, or hard liquor (more than a few sips)	85% (n=44)	12% (n=6)	2% (n=1)	2% (n=1)
Smoke cigarettes	94% (n=49)	6% (n=3)	--	--
Smoke marijuana	98% (n=50)	2% (n=1)	--	--
Use prescription drugs without a doctor's orders	98% (n=51)	2% (n=1)	--	--

Perception of Student Use

Teachers were asked what percentage of Martha's Vineyard Middle/High School students they believe have used the following drugs in the past 30 days.

Table 7. High School Teachers Beliefs of High School Student Use

Drug	0-24%	25-49%	50-74%	75-100%	Actual 2009 Use Rate
Alcohol Use (Past 30 days)	6% (n=2)	43% (n=15)	37% (n=13)	14% (n=5)	51%
Marijuana Use (Past 30 days)	18% (n=6)	59% (n=20)	15% (n=5)	9% (n=3)	34%
Prescription Drug Use without a doctor's orders (Past 30 days)	77% (n=26)	15% (n=5)	9% (n=3)	--	4%
Cigarette Use (Past 30 days)	47% (n=16)	32% (n=11)	21% (n=7)	--	18%

Table 8. Middle School Teachers Beliefs of Middle School Student Use

Drug	0-24%	25-49%	50-74%	75-100%	Actual 2009 Use Rate
Alcohol Use (Past 30 days)	78% (n=40)	22% (n=11)	--	--	9%
Marijuana Use (Past 30 days)	86% (n=43)	12% (n=6)	2% (n=1)	--	3%
Prescription Drug Use without a doctor's orders (Past 30 days)	92% (n=46)	8% (n=4)	--	--	1%
Cigarette Use (Past 30 days)	88% (n=44)	8% (n=4)	4% (n=2)	--	2%

Limitations

The findings discussed in this report are only representative of those teachers that completed the pre-test and answered each individual question. There were several places (especially around attitudes and beliefs) where many teachers skipped questions. For each question, as few as 8 did not respond and as many as 37 teachers did not respond to each question. The 'n' provided within the results section indicates the number of teachers that answered each question

Summary

There are many interesting findings which came out of this pre-test that should serve as useful information when developing the social norms training for teachers. Most teachers who completed the survey have heard of the Youth Task Force, more so with middle school teachers (95%) than high school (71%). Most (59%) middle school teachers have seen YTF campaign materials, but only 39% of high school teachers have. This may be due to the fact that a social norms campaign has not been implemented in the high school. Also, most (80% and 87%) teachers were able to correctly identify the focus of the YTF as a youth substance abuse prevention program.

Almost all teachers have heard of the term 'social norms' prior to taking the pre-test and understand social norms messaging, however, most teachers do **not** appear to understand the purpose of the social norms theory. More middle school teachers were able to correctly describe the social norms theory than high school teachers. Additionally, most teachers were in support of a social norms theory being conducted in their school, after having social norms theory and campaigning explained.

Most teachers had positive attitudes and beliefs around youth substance use. Surprisingly there were several places where teachers had unfavorable beliefs, such as disapproval of youth substance use.

Most teachers surveyed were in support of data being collected in their school around student substance use. However, teachers did have feedback about why they would not be in support of surveying annually. This includes not believing the data is accurate and having concerns about student's honesty.

Lastly, misperceptions exist around teachers' views of youth substance use, especially around high school alcohol and cigarette use. Since the social norms theorists believe that adults carry misperceptions, this last finding is not surprising.

Our recommendations for the YTF staff to consider in developing the Social Norms Teacher training would include areas on:

- purpose of social norms theory
- data collection and validity
- values clarification; and
- misperceptions

In summary, this survey was useful in assessing the knowledge and attitudes of the middle school teacher where a social norms campaign was implemented last year and high school teachers before a social norms campaign will be conducted.

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