

## **EBP Workgroup Position Statement on Media or Social Norms Campaigns focused on Family Communication around Drug Use**

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When implementing media or social norms campaigns focused on the variable family communication around drug use, the EBP workgroup requires that all SPF-PFS funded communities include an additional intervening variable to articulate the causal relationship between family communication around drug use and decreased consumption.

For example, this theory of change does not specify the relationship between the causal relationship between family communication and decreased consumption.

- **If** parents' knowledge, skills, and attitudes about how and when to have conversations about alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs increases, **then** the percentage of youth reporting family communication around drug use will increase.
- **If** the percentage of youth reporting family communication around drug use increases, **then** the percentage of youth reporting [prescription drug use/underage alcohol use] will decrease.

Whereas, this theory of change more clearly specifies the relationship between the causal relationship between family communication and decreased consumption.

- **If** parents' knowledge, skills, and attitudes about how and when to have conversations about alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs increases, **then** the percentage of youth reporting family communication around drug use will increase.
- **If** the increased family communication around drug use include elements related to parental disapproval, **then** the percentage of youth reporting perceptions of parental disapproval will increase.
- **If** perceptions of parental disapproval increases, **then** the percentage of youth reporting [prescription drug use/underage alcohol use] will decrease.

By adding an additional intervening variable based upon data, the EBP believes that media campaigns such as SAMHSA's "Talk. They hear you." and Ohio's "Start Talking!" campaigns can be more effectively localized.

The EBP also encourages SPF-PFS sub-recipients to consider the following factors when designing media campaigns focused on the variable family communication around drug use:

- **Community readiness to impact the additional intervening variable.** Community readiness is a key consideration in designing the media message that is culturally relevant and effective for any given community. If a community is in denial about the problem of practice, there may need to be supporting messages that need to be developed and delivered along with the message to share conversations about substance use.

- **Inclusion of additional caregivers in the message.** In many Ohio communities, families are led by grandparents, guardians, step-parents, foster parents, etc.; as such, the EBP Workgroup recommends that SPF-PFS sub-recipients consider the demographic data of their communities and tailor messages accordingly.
- **Additional community-level data about adult perceptions of the problem of practice.** SPF-PFS sub-recipients are encouraged to review existing community data related to adult perceptions of the problem of practice. Community health assessments may provide insight into adult consumption patterns and behaviors as well as attitudes and/or beliefs about substance use.
- **Parental knowledge, skills, and attitudes about the problem of practice.** SPF-PFS sub-recipients are encouraged to consider knowledge, skills, and attitudes related not only to having conversations about drug use but also those relevant to the problem of practice itself – particularly if the outcome of interest is a consumption variable. Parents may need more information about the problem of practice or a shift in attitude related to the problem of practice for a campaign on family communication around drug use to be successful.
  - **Underage Drinking Example:** If parents are delivering the message “it’s okay to drink alcohol as long as everyone gives me their keys and spends the night” then it is unlikely that alcohol consumption will decrease – although the consequence of drinking and driving may decrease.
  - **Prescription Drug Misuse Example:** If parents are delivering the message “it’s okay to share prescription drugs as long as they aren’t opiates” then it is unlikely that the indicator of 30-day “misuse of prescription drugs” (because the indicator does not specify opiates) will decrease.
- **Non-verbal communication and/or modeling behaviors.** SPF-PFS sub-recipients are encouraged to explore the need to add components to campaigns related to non-verbal communication and/or modeling behaviors. Parents may need to be given guidance on how to navigate issues such as low-risk drinking as well as setting a good example.
- **An approach that includes messaging for caregivers and youth.** Depending on the additional intervening variable selected, it may be appropriate to include parallel messages for youth in the media campaign. For example, if the additional intervening variable is “perception of risk or harm”, then it may be appropriate to have a youth component of the campaign that reinforces the risk that caregivers are being encouraged to discuss with them.