Sweetwater County

MOST of us®

Youth Survey *Key Findings*

THESE DATA REVEAL THE POSITIVE COMMUNITY NORMS IN YOUR SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY

Alcohol, Youth, and Sweetwater County

This report reveals data about underage drinking in Sweetwater County. As you will read on the following pages, there are two important conclusions that must be recognized: (1) most youth are making good decisions by not using alcohol, have healthy attitudes and share positive family impacts; (2) far too many youth are using alcohol which is both illegal and risky. Both of these conclusions must be addressed in a comprehensive prevention effort.

So, while most high school students in Sweetwater County are making good decisions about alcohol, the negative impacts associated with those who are drinking are devastating. Alcohol related accidents among 15-24 year-olds are the leading cause of death. Alcohol use contributes to poor academic performance, violence, property damage, and sexual assaults.

These data indicate that the work for Sweetwater County is to increase the majority of youth who are making healthy decisions. The role of the community is to address this challenge by establishing clear guidelines and cultivating positive community norms.

Background

The results presented in this report are based on the 2006 Wyoming Prevention Needs Assessment (PNA) and the 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS). The PNA is conducted by the Wyoming Survey and Analysis Center (www.uwyo.edu/wysac) and provides state and county level measures of a wide variety of substance abuse behaviors and attitudes. The PNA results are based on 79 surveys of 10th and 12th graders. MOST of Us acknowledges Eric Canen for his tremendous support in providing the Wyoming PNA results. The YRBS is conducted by the Wyoming Department of Education (http://www.k12.wy.us/HS/yrbs/yrbs.asp). The YRBS results are based on 1,102 surveys of 9th through 12th graders.

SUGGESTED POSITIVE COMMUNITY NORMS MESSAGES

Most Sweetwater County high school students report not drinking in a typical week.

Most Sweetwater County high school students try to do their best at school often or almost always.

Most Sweetwater County high school students believe people risk harming themselves if they have 4 or 5 drinks in a row.

Most Sweetwater County high school students say their family has clear rules about drug and alcohol use.

Most Sweetwater County high school students say they do not ignore rules that get in their way.

What These Data Tell Us

Positive Youth Behaviors

In 2006, 55% of Sweetwater County high school students reported not using alcohol in a typical week. *PNA Q53*

In 2006, 49% of Sweetwater County high school students reported not having five or more alcoholic drinks in a row in the past two weeks. *PNA Q76*

In 2006, 58% of Sweetwater County high school students had never been drunk or high at school in the past year (12 months). *PNA Q32G*

In 2006, 89% of Sweetwater County high school students had never received a minor in possession charge for alcohol in the past year (12 months). *PNA Q32K*

In 2007, 71% of Wyoming high school students did not ride in a car or other vehicle during the past 30 days which was driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol. *YRBS QN10*

In 2007, 84% of Wyoming high school students did not drive a car or other vehicle during the past 30 days when they had been drinking alcohol. *YRBS QN11*

Positive Youth Attitudes

In 2006, 38% of Sweetwater County high school students believed it is wrong for someone their age to drink beer, wine, or hard liquor regularly. *PNA Q30F*

In 2006, 41% of Sweetwater County high school students thought people risk harming themselves if they take one or two drinks of an alcoholic beverage nearly every day. *PNA Q75D*

In 2006, 61% of Sweetwater County high school students thought people risk harming themselves if they have 4 or 5 drinks of an alcoholic beverage in a row. *PNA Q75E*

In 2006, 73% of Sweetwater County high school students said NO to “I ignore the rules that get in my way.” *PNA Q49*

Parents & Families Play an Important Role in Prevention

Research has shown that parents play an important role in their children's choices about not using alcohol or other drugs.

Youth See Positive Family Impacts

In 2006, 78% of Sweetwater County high school students agreed that it is important to be "honest with your parents, even if they become upset or you get punished." *PNA Q110*

In 2006, 80% of Sweetwater County high school students agreed their parents would know if they did not come home on time. *PNA Q117*

In 2006, 76% of Sweetwater County high school students agreed that the rules in their family are clear. *PNA Q118*

In 2006, 76% of Sweetwater County high school students agreed that when they are not at home, one of their parents knows where they are and who they are with. *PNA Q120*

In 2006, 82% of Sweetwater County high school students agreed that their family has clear rules about drug and alcohol use. *PNA Q123*

In 2006, 56% of Sweetwater County high school students believed their parents feel it would be wrong for them to drink beer, wine or hard liquor regularly. *PNA Q108A*

Protective Behaviors and Beliefs

In 2006, 36% of Sweetwater County high school students, if offered by a friend a drink containing alcohol at a party, would either tell their friends no thanks, just say no thanks and walk away, or make up a good excuse to not drink. *PNA Q33*

In 2006, 50% of Sweetwater County high school students believed "most adults in their neighborhood think it is wrong for kids their age to drink alcohol." *PNA Q92B*

In 2006, 67% of Sweetwater County high school students reported getting mostly As and Bs. *PNA Q11*

In 2006, 66% of Sweetwater County high school students reported trying to do their best at school often or almost always. *PNA Q23C*

In 2006, 58% of Sweetwater County high school students had participated a few times or regularly on sports teams. *PNA Q104A*

Next Steps

Several key steps will be unfolding across Wyoming in the coming months. These data (and future data from the Parent Survey, Community Survey, and 2008 PNA) will form the basis of a comprehensive communication plan. The communication plan will include a mix of strategies to share messages designed to close the gaps between misperceptions of behaviors and attitudes and the true, positive norms in the community. In an effort to improve communication with key focus audiences (like youth and parents), it will be critical to pilot test and refine materials prior to implementation.

Key Actions

This report reveals your community's positive norms. However, as with all communities, there are still serious problems that must be addressed. As a community member, your voice matters in helping to close this gap. The best data are only helpful when put into action. Here are key actions you can take:

- Share and discuss this report with coalition members, community leaders, and friends
- Use this information in support of your 7-Core Principles
- Compare these data with other information in your community
- Include these data in policy development decision-making
- Use these data to guide and frame local media and discussions

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