



FCD Educational Services Student Attitudes and Behavior Survey

FCD has a long tradition of incorporating the latest research on effective prevention into its comprehensive approach. Based on the documented impact of normative beliefs on levels of use, FCD has developed, in collaboration with one of the pioneers of social norms theory, programs and services that utilize this model to enhance the long-standing effectiveness of our work with students, parents, teachers, administrators, and school communities. The integration of these strategies brings added benefit to our school clients and continues to ensure FCD's place at the cutting edge of school-based prevention.

The social norms model is based on the fact that young people consistently and dramatically overestimate alcohol and other drug use by their peers and elders. At the same time, they underestimate healthy behaviors practiced by their peers (e.g., abstention, limiting consumption). This is disturbing because research shows that normative beliefs (student perceptions as to the prevalence and acceptability of drug use amongst one's peer group and close friends) are a strong predictor of the level of actual alcohol and other drug use in a school community. In other words, the more use students think there is, the more use there will be. Drug use is less prevalent in schools where non-use is recognized as an acceptable and common choice, and where student misperceptions regarding the actual amount of alcohol, tobacco or drug use are corrected.

Compounding the damage caused by mistaken normative beliefs is something known as anticipatory socialization. It's really a form of daydreaming in which young people imagine (anticipate) acting out "normative" roles and behaviors that lie ahead. For example, most kids fantasize about what it will be like when they get their driver's license. Older teens may visualize going to college, having their own apartment, or being in a committed relationship. These future-oriented "psychological videos" are based in large part on normative beliefs (i.e., *all teens get a driver's license; all of my friends are going to college*), and play an important role in maturation so long as the anticipated behavior is healthy and pro-social. Anticipatory socialization can be harmful when the projected behavior is risky, unhealthy, or based on mistaken beliefs. For example, if 10-year-olds think that "all high school students drink," they will imagine themselves drinking well before they become teenagers.

The social norms approach, as applied to students, has two primary components. The first is data collection. Students are surveyed to uncover *actual* behaviors and attitudes concerning alcohol and other drug use, as well as *perceptions* of their peers' behaviors and attitudes. These surveys typically reveal the previously mentioned overestimation of unhealthy behaviors and attitudes, and underestimation of healthy ones. The second component of the social norms model addresses these misperceptions by utilizing data demonstrating positive norms as the basis for normative feedback interventions (e.g., a media or marketing campaign, small group norms classroom activities, etc.). This reinforces positive behaviors and dispels the myth that "everybody" is engaging in unhealthy activities. The interventions, developed with and by members of the school

community, are designed to reflect the singular characteristics of the school and the target audience as revealed by the data collected.

FCD is unique among prevention organizations in having the technical capability to offer online normative belief surveys and interventions to our client schools. Our services include:

- Survey administration and data analysis to assess actual and perceived levels of use within the school community
- Normative belief interventions to reduce student use of alcohol and other drugs
- Small group normative belief classroom exercises
- Workshops for teachers on how to use social norms constructs in substance abuse prevention, classroom work, informal relations with students, and other areas of community health (e.g., bullying, tolerance, diversity).



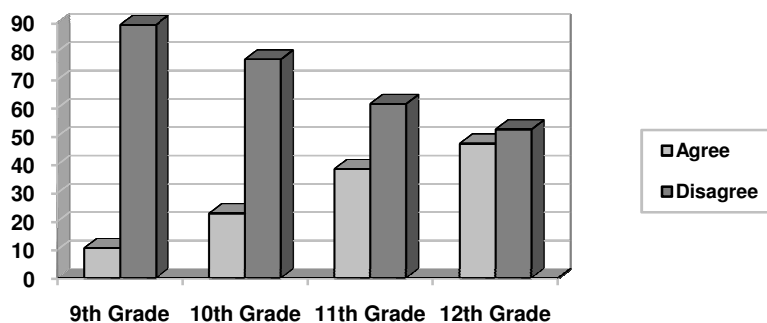
FCD’s survey is a huge hit with school administrators who want to target priorities for prevention and strengthen the health of their school community. The survey, available in Web-based and paper and pencil versions, not only measures student alcohol and other drug use, but also:

REVEALS STUDENT ATTITUDES AND SCHOOL CLIMATE

The FCD survey explores aspects of school climate that can influence use of alcohol and other drugs. For example, in this school, seniors are over four times more likely than 9th graders to believe that the social atmosphere encourages alcohol use.

The social atmosphere at this school encourages alcohol use

| | 9 th Grade | 10 th Grade | 11 th Grade | 12 th Grade |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Total Agree | 10.6 | 22.8 | 38.5 | 47.5 |
| Total Disagree | 89.4 | 77.2 | 61.5 | 52.5 |



Based on such data, FCD would recommend that a school take steps to reduce the social pressure students feel to drink. The following tables show positive changes that occurred in one school, with fewer students in 2008 than in 2006 believing that the social atmosphere at their school encourages alcohol use, or that their peers approve of binge drinking. Both shifts suggest a healthier school climate and the effectiveness of FCD’s survey as a powerful prevention tool.

Measures of school climate between 2006 and 2008 (percent of students agreeing with statement)

| | 10 th Grade 2006 | 10 th Grade 2008 | 12 th Grade 2006 | 12 th Grade 2008 |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| The social atmosphere at this school encourages alcohol use | 59.6 ¹ | 33.7 | 73.3 | 55.6 |
| Students at this school think heavy or binge drinking is okay | 39.8 | 23.8 | 58.9 | 33.3 |

IDENTIFIES PREVENTION PRIORITIES

In one school, 60% of students said they have a friend with a substance abuse problem. Based on these findings, FCD recommended that the school 1) provide training for students and faculty on recognizing warning signs of substance abuse; and 2) establish early intervention health systems to identify and assist students worried about their own, or their friends' use before it becomes a serious health or disciplinary issue.

SAVES LIVES

At one school, the FCD survey identified student drinking and driving as a major concern. We recommended that the school initiate a comprehensive strategy to educate parents and students on the risks of mixing alcohol and motor vehicles. When we re-surveyed the school two years later, the findings revealed a considerable decline in drinking and driving, as well as students riding in cars with someone who had been drinking: In 2006, 34% of 12th-grade “drinkers” reported driving after drinking. In the 2008 survey, the number dropped to 20%.

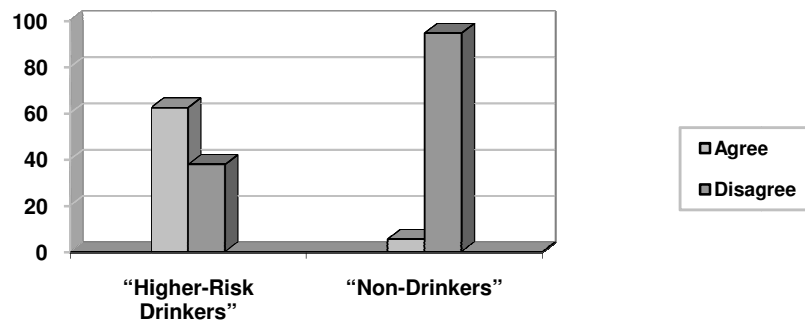
Forty percent (40%) of 12th-grade drinkers in the 2006 survey had been a passenger in a vehicle driven by someone who had been drinking. This percentage fell to 23% in 2008. A decline in drinking and driving was also observed amongst 10th graders from 15% in 2006 to 5% in 2008. Equally noteworthy was the decline in the numbers of occasions on which those who drove after drinking did so. For example, in 2006, 19% of 12th grade “drinkers” drove under the influence on 2 or more occasions. In 2008, this figure dropped to 8%.

QUANTIFIES DIFFERENCES BETWEEN DRINKERS AND NON-DRINKERS

When reviewing survey data, we typically find a group of students whose drinking is of concern. To help schools learn more about these “higher-risk drinkers,”¹ and how they differ from “lower-risk drinkers,”² and “non-drinkers,”³ we conduct a series of analyses. Here you can see the different attitudes “higher-risk drinkers” and “non-drinkers” hold towards getting drunk:

How do you feel about this statement: It is cool to get drunk?

| | Higher-Risk Drinkers | Non-Drinkers |
|----------------|----------------------|--------------|
| Total Agree | 62.3 | 5.4 |
| Total Disagree | 37.7 | 94.6 |



By statistically isolating students who drink heavily and frequently, we can demonstrate to schools the “clustering” of risk factors, i.e., the more a student drinks, the more likely he or she is to experiment with, and/or regularly use other drugs. For example, in one school:

- 75% of “higher-risk drinkers” have used marijuana in the past 12 months.
- 19% of “lower-risk drinkers” have used marijuana in the past 12 months.
- 3% of “non-drinkers” have used marijuana in the past 12 months.

The following table vividly shows the correlation between higher-risk alcohol consumption and use of other substances.

Substance Use Over Past 12 Months

| | Higher Risk Drinkers | Lower-Risk Drinkers | Non-Drinkers |
|---------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| Cigarettes | 70.4 | 12.5 | 2.6 |
| Smokeless Tobacco | 25.0 | 2.1 | 0.8 |
| Marijuana | 75.0 | 19.4 | 3.1 |
| Ecstasy | 16.3 | 0.7 | 0.0 |
| Prescription Drugs | 33.8 | 1.4 | 0.0 |
| Cocaine | 21.3 | 0.7 | 0.5 |
| LSD | 16.5 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Hallucinogens | 38.8 | 0 | 0.5 |
| Inhalants | 16.3 | 2.1 | 1.0 |
| Over-Counter Drugs | 28.8 | 7.7 | 4.7 |

SHOWS RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN VARIABLES

Research on teenage alcohol and other drug use suggests a correlation between increased use and poorer academic performance. This association was revealed when we looked at grades students received in the past 12 months in relation to alcohol and marijuana use.

- The majority of “non-drinkers” received “mostly A’s” for their last years’ grades.
- The majority of “higher-risk drinkers” and daily marijuana users received “mostly B’s.”

Grades Received in Relation to Alcohol and Marijuana Use in Past 12 Months

| | Non-Drinkers | Higher-Risk Drinkers | Daily Marijuana Users | All 10 th -12 th Graders |
|-------------------|--------------|----------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Mostly A’s | 54.3 | 32.5 | 29.6 | 51.2 |
| Mostly B’s | 41.8 | 58.8 | 59.3 | 44.7 |
| Mostly C’s | 3.9 | 8.8 | 11.1 | 4.2 |

1. A “higher-risk drinker” is someone who consumed 5 or more drinks of alcohol on 3 or more days within the past 30 days.
2. A “lower-risk drinker” is someone who reports typically having a whole drink of alcohol 1-2 times per year.
3. A “non-drinker” is someone who has either never had a drink, or not had a drink within the past year.

CORRECTS MISTAKEN NORMATIVE BELIEFS

Our survey consistently reveals that students grossly overestimate alcohol and marijuana use on the part of their peers. Research shows that these misperceptions can lead to greater or riskier use. When mistaken normative beliefs are corrected and students realize that they are a “healthier” group than they thought, use declines.

To identify this gap between perception and reality, we first ask students about their own behavior, and then about their peers’ behavior. The following table shows the dramatic margins by which students overestimate alcohol use on the part of their classmates. For example:

- 58% of 10th graders say that they typically “never” drink.
- Yet, only 5% of 10th graders believe their classmates typically “never” drink.
- 20% of seniors typically drink once a week or more.
- Yet, 62% of seniors believe their classmates typically drink once a week or more.

How often do you typically have at least one whole drink of alcohol?

How often do you think students in your grade typically have at least one whole drink of alcohol?

| | Actual 9 th Grade Norm | Perceived 9 th Grade Norm | Actual 10 th Grade Norm | Perceived 10 th Grade Norm | Actual 11 th Grade Norm | Perceived 11 th Grade Norm | Actual 12 th Grade Norm | Perceived 12 th Grade Norm |
|-------------------------|--|---|---|--|---|--|---|--|
| Never | 66.9 | 22.2 | 57.9 | 5.4 | 45.0 | 2.4 | 35.1 | 2.2 |
| 1-2 times a year | 19.9 | 41.5 | 23.4 | 24.2 | 20.7 | 9.7 | 15.6 | 2.2 |
| Once a month | 6.4 | 20.9 | 9.9 | 27.2 | 17.0 | 23.6 | 16.6 | 11.8 |
| Twice a month | 4.5 | 10.9 | 3.8 | 22.5 | 9.0 | 25.0 | 12.1 | 21.7 |
| Once a week | 0.7 | 3.2 | 2.3 | 13.4 | 3.4 | 26.0 | 8.9 | 37.1 |
| Twice a week | 0.7 | 0.3 | 1.3 | 5.7 | 3.8 | 11.8 | 10.3 | 22.8 |
| Daily | 0.9 | 1.0 | 1.3 | 1.7 | 0.7 | 1.4 | 1.5 | 2.2 |

REVEALS THE ROLE OF PARENTS

High levels of parental involvement and limit-setting are strong protective factors. Our survey findings suggest that the more a student drinks, the more likely he is to believe his parents approve of teenage drinking.

Which statement about teenagers drinking alcoholic beverages do you feel best represents the most common attitude of your parents?

| | Higher-Risk Drinkers | Lower-Risk Drinkers | Non- Drinkers |
|--|-------------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| Teenage drinking is never a good thing to do | 32.9 | 55.0 | 70.5 |
| Drinking is all right, but a person should not get drunk | 31.7 | 35.7 | 21.6 |
| Occasionally getting drunk is okay as long as it doesn't interfere with academics or other responsibilities | 26.6 | 7.9 | 6.0 |
| Occasionally getting drunk is okay even if it does interfere with academics or other responsibilities | 3.8 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| Frequently getting drunk is ok if that's what an individual wants to do | 3.8 | 0.7 | 0.7 |

MONITORS CHANGES IN BEHAVIOR

The FCD survey also tracks changes in student use of alcohol and other drugs. The following tables show that within one school, use of marijuana declined for 10th graders from 2006 to 2008, but increased for 12th graders. FCD uses findings such as these to individualize its teaching programs to the needs of each school community.

Marijuana Use Comparisons for 10th and 12th Graders from 2006 and 2008

| | 2006 10 th Grade | 2008 10 th Grade | 2006 12 th Grade | 2008 12 th Grade |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Lifetime Use | 15.8 | 11.8 | 22.0 | 37.5 |
| Past 12 Months Use | 13.0 | 10.9 | 17.6 | 34.7 |
| Past 30 Days Use | 5.4 | 4.0 | 8.8 | 18.3 |