



# Defensive Line

## What Works for Impaired Driving Prevention Programs

**L**ike most problems, impaired driving in this country is a complex issue with complex solutions. Peer education groups need to join with campus and community agencies and organizations to raise awareness about the dangers of impaired driving and the tragedies that can result. To address impaired driving and other alcohol abuse issues, the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA)<sup>1</sup> recommends a 3-in-1 framework that targets:

- (1) Individuals, including at-risk and alcohol-dependent drinkers
- (2) The student population as a whole
- (3) The college, including faculty, staff and administrators, and the surrounding community

A successful impaired driving prevention program needs to include several different strategies. To address the problem of impaired driving in a truly comprehensive way, it is important to understand methods that have been shown to be effective. Strategies identified as effective or promising by the NIAAA include:

- Challenging students' expectations of the effects of alcohol
- Increased and highly visible enforcement of alcohol policies and laws
- Marketing campaigns to correct student misperceptions about alcohol use
- Peer education programs
- Provision of safe ride programs
- Formation of campus/community coalitions

Campus peer education programs can be instrumental in implementing strategies that affect the student population as a whole, the environment on campus, and the surrounding community by:

- Creating an impaired driving task force that includes campus and community members
- Providing health promotion programs and events discussing both risks and norms
- Using media, such as posters, newspapers, the Internet, and peer theater presentations, to get the message out as many times as possible to target populations

Peer educators can implement many types of programs to prevent impaired driving. Some ideas for awareness campaigns, social activities, and educational programs are:

## Awareness Campaign Ideas

- Hang posters in residence halls and academic buildings advertising the increased Driving Under the Influence (DUI) enforcement during high-risk times, such as Halloween, three-day weekends, or athletic events
- Distribute information about campus and community alcohol laws/policies to on- and off-campus residences
- Make public service announcements at campus events and on-campus radio and TV stations
- Conduct social norms marketing campaigns for your campus
- Send out emails with impaired driving prevention messages on student listservs
- Set up information booths in well-traveled spots on campus
- Develop an awareness campaign educating students on how to spot and report impaired drivers

## Social Activity Ideas

- Hold mocktail contests where students create non-alcoholic drinks
- Offer weekly alcohol-free events, such as dance lessons, movie night, casino night, open-mic night, etc.
- Sponsor an Impaired Driving Prevention Olympics and invite the participants to wear impaired vision goggles while performing physical activities
- Bring an impaired driving simulator to campus or have students navigate an obstacle course while driving a golf cart and wearing impaired vision goggles
- Work in conjunction with your student government to initiate policy change on your campus to reduce impaired driving, such as offering safe ride options or developing responsible tailgating policies at athletic events
- Invite the community impaired driving prevention coalition to meet on your campus

## Educational Program Idea

- Bring in a person who has been a victim of an alcohol-related crash or has been convicted of driving impaired to speak to students
- Present impaired driving information and facts to classes
- Invite law enforcement to educate about state laws and enforcement issues
- Design a peer theater presentation to perform at an assembly or orientation program

There are health models and theories that also provide valuable information when planning and implementing campus programs. These theories and models include:

- **The Health Belief Model:** Belief patterns are used to explain and predict preventive health behavior.
- **The Social Cognitive Theory:** The interaction of personal factors, behavior, and environment and their influence on the expectations of behavioral outcomes are used to examine behavioral choices.
- **The Stages of Change Model (Transtheoretical Model):** The five stages people tend to go through to successfully change behavior are defined and the methods to help people through each stage are described.
- **The Social Norms Model:** A variety of methods are utilized to correct the misperceptions of students (usually overestimations of use) and to identify, model, and promote healthy, protective behaviors that are the actual norm in a given population.

Create successful prevention programs by becoming familiar with these theories and models. Remember, for campus-based prevention programs to be effective and have impact, they must be comprehensive, year-round, and utilize a variety of models, strategies, and activities.

1. NIAAA (2002). *A Call to Action: Changing the Culture of Drinking at U.S. Colleges*. Retrieved on July 30, 2004 from the World Wide Web: [www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov](http://www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov).



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