



Healthy Missoula Youth
Coalition

MEDIA & OUTREACH

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MEDIA & OUTREACH

Purpose of the Section

- Guide the development of custom prevention campaigns
- Provide tips to make campaigns more effective for students
- Recommend the use of existing media campaigns

What Educators Can Do

- Create a campaign that resonates with their students
- Engage youth in the development of a prevention campaign
- Increase awareness of health behaviors

Why is this important?

Prevention campaigns aim to encourage health behavior change among the general population. They are designed to benefit and protect individual people's health and quality of life by addressing and preventing the root causes of ill health, not just focusing on treatment and cure.

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month: February

Random Acts of Kindness Week: February 14-20

National Drug and Alcohol Facts Week: March 20-26

Alcohol Awareness Month: April

Mental Health Month: May

National Prevention Week: May 12-18

International Overdose Awareness Day Aug. 31

National Suicide Prevention Week: September 10-16

National Substance Abuse Prevention Month: October

Red Ribbon Week: October 23-31

Great American Smokeout: November 16

National Impaired Driving Prevention Month: December

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Developing Custom Prevention Campaigns

How to make custom prevention campaigns reach a wider audience and be more effective.

Five Tips for Effective Media

The key concepts to producing a media campaign that will resonate with the community.

Existing Prevention Media Campaigns

Pre-made and easily accessible prevention campaigns that lift the burden of development from schools.

INTRODUCTION

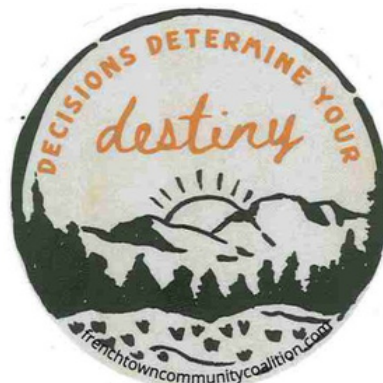
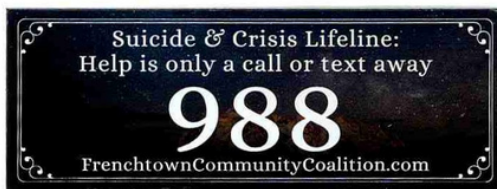
While policy compliance signs are good at spreading awareness of the rules in place, schools should also use supplementary resources to increase the likelihood of the policies being followed. Media and outreach campaigns can be one of the best ways to achieve this, by reaching a wide-spread audience and acting as prevention's voice in the school community. Whether this be utilizing a pre-existing campaign or designing one that is customized to best fit the school district, there are a few effective messaging tactics that are essential to incorporate when dealing with youth.

DEVELOPING CUSTOM PREVENTION CAMPAIGNS

Regardless of the substance that prevention campaigns address, all will incorporate a few key strategies that result in a greater impact. The most effective campaigns communicate through a multi-sensory approach, which means that providing the opportunity for youth to engage and interact with some aspect of the campaign is crucial as well. According to the Frameworks Institute, one of the leading researchers on messaging around many public health issues including underage substance use, these interactive portions of the campaign should not only spread awareness of policies regarding substance use and healthy behavioral norms, but should also strive to:

- Advocate to build widespread support for protective factors
- Break down barriers and pre-existing assumptions
- Steer the conversation around obstacles to increase understanding of the science of prevention.

This could be accomplished by a call to action, but it could also be something that is done within the school as part of a school assembly, or as an in-class activity or group discussion. For example, the Frenchtown Community Coalition's youth committee has developed their own sticker shock campaign. Youth within the committee designed and produced several prevention-oriented stickers that could be given to other students and school staff within their district. Not only did this get youth involved in the campaign, but it also served as advertising of the message of prevention.



FIVE TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE MEDIA

Following these five tips for media and outreach campaigns will produce the greatest impact on the audience, as well as following prevention best-practice.



FIVE TIPS FOR Effective Media

Source: Healthy Missoula Youth Coalition 2023

FIVE TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE MEDIA

VISUAL BRANDING

As the old adage goes, “A picture is worth a thousand words.” But choosing the right picture or image to include can be challenging. When choosing the images associated with the campaign, as well as design, logo, and campaign name, it is best to consider what will resonate the most with the audience.

Be thoughtful with design choices, presenting imagery, colors, fonts, and style to enhance the message, and be mindful of using language with racial equity awareness. This can be particularly crucial when presenting data. Steer away from using photographs of people or youth who live in the community – circumstances may change in the future and someone who once was a representative for the campaign may no longer be appropriate. Instead, the use of graphics, like charts and diagrams, can be helpful in communicating data and may be more effective in communicating information to youth.

Remember that there should be a balance between the information and the “white space” on the page. This blank space is used around the sections of information and allows the page to breathe, which also helps the audience interpret information and lessens the likelihood of them becoming overwhelmed.

For more information on visual branding, check out the CDC’s [Visual Communication Resource](#) page, which provides information on choosing effective resources the audience will understand. The National Library of Medicine has compiled examples of health promotion and prevention campaigns throughout history, which can be seen [here](#).

FIVE TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE MEDIA

TELL COMPLETE STORIES

Advocates for prevention can improve the effectiveness of their media efforts by utilizing stories to frame the prevention message. It is important to note that this is different from people with life experience giving testimony, or campaigns that use moral appeals to evoke emotion in their audience, which do not work towards long-term or sustainable change. A complete story doesn't need to be long, but it will prevent the audience from creating their own negative or stereotyped ending.

When using stories to frame the message of prevention consider if the communication does the following¹:

- Explains why adolescent substance use is a problem from a developmental perspective.
- Explicitly states why addressing the issue is important for all Americans, and what is at stake if action is not taken.
- Explains risk factors and protective factors.
- Describes the developmental effects of substance use and how those effects impact everyone, not just those immediately involved.
- Provides concrete and public solutions and explains how they result in improved outcomes for adolescents.

FIVE TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE MEDIA

POSITIVE CULTURAL FRAMEWORK

Utilizing a positive cultural framework when creating the messaging for a prevention campaign is crucial.

“Experts repeatedly emphasized the role of cultural context in promoting and preventing adolescent substance use. They argued that, in order to achieve meaningful reductions in adolescent substance use, cultural norms must shift so that substance use is no longer viewed as a “rite of passage” for all young people but instead as a health issue that requires early and sustained intervention [...]”²

Youth’s perception of the “norm” for their community greatly influences what actions they take. By promoting the message that most youth don’t use substances, prevention campaigns can begin to shift this ideology. Integrate phrases that promote a message of sustainable health and safety like:

- “___% of teens in Missoula County don’t use marijuana.”
- “___ out of 10 MCPS students choose to respect drinking laws by NOT consuming alcohol.”
- “Most Missoula teens won’t ride with an impaired driver.”
- “I know how to resist negative peer pressure.”

FIVE TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE MEDIA

INCLUDE A CALL TO ACTION

A call to action is a brief statement that encourages the audience to take a specific action. The inclusion of this in a prevention campaign is important because it asks youth to engage with the message and become involved. Not only does this interaction help spread the message, but it increases the likelihood of the audience remembering the content. Call to Action Statements may look different depending on the method of media dispersal.

GENERAL EXAMPLES

- "Like and Share the Message"
- "Click or Call for More Information"
- "Contact the Healthy Missoula Youth Coalition to Join Today"
- "Talk to Your Family Today"

WELL KNOWN EXAMPLES

- Drive Safe Missoula's: "Buckle Up Montana"
- US Forest Service's Smokey Bear Campaign: "Only You Can Prevent Wildfires"
- Netflix: "See What's Next"
- Allstate Insurance: "So, get Allstate. You can save money and be better protected from mayhem like me!"

FIVE TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE MEDIA

BE CREDIBLE

All messaging that relates to data, research, or facts should be supported by the appropriate citations and resources. Use data that relates to the school or community in which the audience participates. Specific information will increase the likelihood of audience buy-in and the use of trustworthy sources adds value and integrity to the campaign.

For more resources on effective messaging tactics and guidance on how to develop a customized campaign for your school, check out:

- [PTTC's Cannabis Conversations: A Toolkit](#)
- [PPTC Prevention Practitioners Guide to Social Media](#)
- [Reframing Adolescent Substance Use Playbook 2018](#)
- [FrameWorks Institute: Telling Stories that Explain](#)
- [Mapping the Gaps on Adolescent Substance Use](#)
- [Turning Down the Heat - New Frames for Adolescent Substance Use](#)

EXISTING PREVENTION MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

While using a customized campaign for the school district may create more buy-in and produce better results, there are also some well developed pre-existing campaigns that can help ease the burden on schools to send a message. The majority of these ready-to-use campaigns are available free for schools to use as well. A variety of campaign examples are:

- HIDTA's [Mind the Message](#) campaign
- SAMHSA's [Talk. They Hear You](#) campaign against underage drinking
- SAMHSA's [Mental Health Awareness Month](#) campaign
- PG Creative's "[No Joke](#)" alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana prevention campaign for teens
- [Natural High](#) substance use prevention campaign for adolescents and athletes
- [Red Ribbon's Drug Prevention Campaign](#)
- World Health Organization's [World No Tobacco Day](#).

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Conclusion

Utilizing a prevention media campaign in school is one quick and easy way to reach a broad level of students. There are existing campaigns available for schools to utilize, but involving students in the creation of a custom campaign may be more effective in creating a message that will resonate stronger with youth.

Action Items

- **PLAN** campaigns well in advance of the highlighted event or time period. Be aware of important dates or national prevention weeks.
- **INVOLVE** your administration and student voices.
- **CONTACT** the Healthy Missoula Youth Coalition for assistance or recommendations.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [HIDTA's Mind the Message campaign](#)
- [SAMHSA's Talk. They Hear You campaign against underage drinking](#)
- [SAMHSA's Mental Health Awareness Month campaign](#)

1: [O'Niel et al., 2016](#)
2: [Volmert et al., 2016](#)

