

2014 High School Focus Groups

Introduction

In early 2014 CASA staff and SUNY Geneseo students conducted focus groups with high school students. Six Livingston County schools participated in the focus groups with approximately 250 youth in grades 9-12th participating total. Focus groups take place during health and or PE classes. The focus groups are designed to gain further details about the perceptions and attitudes regarding substance use. The goal is to gain descriptive information that builds on information collected through the Prevention Needs Assessment surveys done every other year. The focus groups will be repeated every year between January and March.

Common Themes:

Question: What do you do in your free time?

- **Most Common Responses:** sleep, eat, video games, sports, hang out with friends

Question: What sort of teen activities would you like to see in your community?

- **Most Common Responses:** More places to eat, rec center, movie theater, skate park

Question: When you go out somewhere do your parents ask where you are going and who you will be with? / Do you tell the truth?

- **Most Common Responses:** Most parents do ask and most youth tell the truth, parents often check in with them

Question: What are the rules about alcohol and drugs in your house?

- **Most Common Responses:** Don't do it, don't drink and drive

Question: Where do you get most of your information about alcohol and drugs?

- **Most Common Responses:** friends, school, health class, media, parents

Question: Where would you like to get your information?

- **Most Common Responses:** teachers, books, people with experience, internet

Question: What do you think would keep kids from drinking alcohol or using drugs?

- **Most Common Responses:** more positive activities, scare tactics/show bad experiences/consequences, less media

Question: What do you think about kids your age that use alcohol?

- **Most Common Responses:** It's their decision, stupid, ruining their lives

Question: How about prescription drugs with-out doctor's orders?

- **Most Common Responses :** Bad, desperate, they need help

Question: How about Marijuana?

- **Most Common Responses :** It's their decision, common, more acceptable

Question: Do you feel it is easy for teens in your community to get alcohol/Marijuana/Drugs?

- Most said yes for all- many report that marijuana is the easiest to get

Question: In general where do you think teens obtain them?

- Older siblings and friends, parents (with or without permission)

Question: If people your age in your community drink alcohol, how likely do you think it would be that parents/neighbors/police/teacher would find out?

- Most report parents would know, some said parents wouldn't care, neighbors unlikely unless large party/too loud, police- about half said they would be caught, about half said teachers likely would know

Question: If your parents/friends/teachers heard that you had been drinking, what would they think?

- Parents- most said would be punished, friends- most said wouldn't care, teachers- disappointed, concerned

Question: If your parents/friends/teachers heard that you had been using marijuana, what would they think?

- Parents- most said would be punished, friends- most said wouldn't care, teachers- disappointed, concerned

Question: If your parents/friends/teachers heard that you had been using prescription drugs, what would they think?

- Parents- most said would be punished but more worried/concerned, friends- most said they would get them help, be concerned, think they are stupid/wouldn't be friends anymore, teachers- disappointed, get them help

What kinds of alcohol/drugs do you hear about kids your age most commonly using?

- Beer, vodka, marijuana, pills, cocaine

Question: What percentage of kids your age do you think have used alcohol/prescription drugs without doctor's orders/ marijuana in the past month?

- Most groups reported that alcohol and marijuana use is about the same (between 40-80%), prescription drug misuse lower (most under 30%)

Question: What services or policies could the school and community provide that would help teens with drug use problems and concerns?

- Almost everyone reported drug tests, in addition- more positive activities, rec centers, drug counselors

What do you do in your free time?	nothing, sleep, go outside, games, frolic, text, browse web, sports, pets	video games, sleep, sports, watch TV, eat, read	sleep, hunting, play sports, clubs, eat, drive 4 wheelers, hang out with friends	video games, hang out with friends, hunt, nothing, sleep, lift weights	TV, music, video games, sports, read, hunt, fish, eat, sleep	Eat, play games, airsoft, play music, go shopping	sports, play hockey, hang out with friends, sleep, play video games	video games, read, sports, study, sleep, eat, babysit, hang out at bowling alley	Golf, tennis, hunt, volleyball, music, soccer	sports, friends, TV, 4-wheeler, video games, work, eat, run	shopping, paint, family events, party, sporting events, eat, sleep, hang with friends, minecraft, video games, workout, party
What sort of teen activities would you like to see in your community?	movie theater, bowling, rec center, dart board, pool table, pool, gym center	rec center, more stores, mini malls, outdoor market	football, boxing, public riding trails for 4 wheelers, more places to eat	football, more restaurants, where is the Subway, skate park, ice cream store	walking, drugs, playing hockey, hang out	open gym, skate park, recreation, ski	more fast food, mall gift shops	football, volleyball, movie theater, fitness center, paintball, mall arcade, laser tag, more restaurants	community theater, skate park, skyzone	sports tournaments, concert, food, pool	free food events, festivals, organized indoor sporting events, more food places in walking distance, sports games
When you go out somewhere do your parents ask where you are going and who you will be with?	yes	Yes	Yes, yes, it depends	yes	mixed, mostly yes, sometimes parents check up	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	some ask, some don't
Do you usually tell them the truth?	most of the time	Not all the time, depends on an activity and time of day, sometimes parents check up	it depends	maybe	sometimes parents check up	half tell the truth, communicate by cell phone, it depends on what they are doing	mostly, if not telling the truth, parents would know	yes	most are honest, parents check in	Most tell the truth, parents check in with texts, call	sometimes tell the truth, follow up with texts

What are the rules about alcohol and drugs in your house?	you probably won't like them, don't do it, twisted subject, supervised trying small amounts of alcohol	Don't do it, big no no	not allowed	none, don't know, don't do them ever, don't get caught	half have rules	don't do them or else, grounded	mom does not like it, no drinking until 21, it's bad, not allowed, don't drive while using, be honest	none, don't use them, only use medicine with parents' permission, small amounts of alcohol ok, no riding with seniors past dark	leave situation, don't do them, be grounded from sports, electronics, hunting	Don't use, not in the house, grounded, parents would be disappointed, no trust	I'd get beat, don't take alcohol, don't drink and drive, call for a ride home
Where do you get most of your information about alcohol and drugs?	friends, school, parents, siblings, grandparents	school, everywhere, internet, friends, posters, stores	Health teacher, parents, health teacher, friend, TV, movies, reality	school, health, coaches, parents, friends	school, assemblies, parents, friends	TV, internet, school	health class, internet, social media, parents	Health teacher, school, parents	TV: Weed Wars, Breaking Bad, internet, parents	internet, health class, friend, older family members, social networks	parents, rehab, google, media, peers, not parents, health class
Where would you like to get your information?	scientists, smart people, drug counselors, teachers, experienced people	school, no real parent influence/education	books, health teacher, parents	friend, internet	SRO, parents, teachers-they may know a little more	internet	no real other place	same	same	Doctor	Friends, parents, scientific papers, coach, college students, speakers experienced with drugs
What do you think would keep kids from drinking alcohol or using drugs?	if they were toxic, being illegal, being illegal, education, shoot in foot	If parents were home, different environment, more things to do, the parents have influence	put poison in it, positive activities, activities that would scare	show bad things about them, increase age limit	involved with activities, friendships, telling consequences	understand the effects, the cause	not much for teens to do, school could talk about it, more information	sports, more activities after school	learn physical consequences, academics, less media, religion, reputation	more to do, common sense, future, people with past, less media	nothing, more entertainment, sports

What do you think about kids your age that use alcohol?	can't change them, it's their decision	Don't expect some to use, surprised	ruining future, they are dumb, family problems, don't think	it's their decision, they're the cool kid, don't come to school and brag about it, no one cares	they might have a special reason, stupid	ruining their lives, it's their choice, it's okay if they are not hurting self	it's a way for them to escape from lives	depends on how much- a lot looked at poorly, its ok if it does not affect their grades, not okay but it's their life	not smart, doing it for attention, no future, scummy	they think it's cool, pity them, high risk	nothing, normal, common, depends on group, depends on reputation
How about prescription drugs without doctor's orders?	not going to change them	desperate	they are idiots	their decision, it's not ok	they really need help, get them to rehab	teens need help	bad	don't like it, unaware of dose/consequences, its wrong but it does not affect me	desperate, loose respect, crazy	bad lungs	scumbags, don't take it, don't worry about abuses, bad, stupid, dangerous, couldn't care less
How about Marijuana?	an epidemic, all do it, not true	everybody does it, accepting, main drug	idiots, damaging self	something to do, all their decisions, their choice	parents might use, peer pressure, not informed	it's more acceptable, more use	It's their choice	Everybody goes through it, kids try, experiment, nothing that anyone can do, rather this than drink beer, its unhealthy	rock bottom, lazy, trying to fit in	bad, desperate, don't know what used for	same as alcohol, everyone smokes weed, think they're cool, legalize,
Do you feel it is easy for teens in your community to get alcohol?	yes	yes, maybe	yes	no, yeah	yes	harder than marijuana	easy	no, yes if its stolen from parents	yes	Yes	half say it's easy, half say it depends

Do you feel it is easy for teens in your community to get marijuana?	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes- a lot	potheads in town, no age limit, sold person to person, not in stores	easier	yes	easier than alcohol	harder to get marijuana	really easy, easier than alcohol
Do you feel it is easy for teens in your community to get drugs?	yes	yes, don't really know	yes	yes	yes	easy, share it	fairly easy	yes	yes	no	easier than alcohol, ruffies, molly
In general where do you think teens obtain them?	parents, older adults, siblings	friends, older siblings or friends, depends on parent, older friends	friends, dealers, steal, friends, parents, older siblings	other people around town, sneak alcohol from home	older friends, strangers (drugs), parents, parties, older siblings and friends	alcohol: sneak it from parents, older friends Marijuana: friends, other people	siblings or parents, friend's home	parents, graduated seniors, other people, a lot of former students that live in area and are well known	Alcohol: parents with or without permission, siblings, older friends. Marijuana: city, dealers	eventually	older kids, siblings, parents, kid's parents who don't care
If people your age in your community drink alcohol, how likely do you think it would be that parents would find out	pretty likely, some don't care	parents know, don't care, might help	very likely	slim to none	don't care, maybe get caught	some would be okay, some would not, excuse it because they did it	50/50 chance	pretty likely but it depends	yes	maybe if you are outside	likely- school tells parents
If people your age in your community drink alcohol, how likely do you think it	wouldn't care, try to avoid them	not really	it depends, they don't care, notice a trend	not likely, if the music was too loud	maybe, some neighbors are nosy	no thought unless they are obnoxious, be worried	yes- they would find out	no, unless they are nosy	yes	yes, looks/smell	likely, people chat, Facebook

would be that neighbors would find out											
If people your age in your community drink alcohol, how likely do you think it would be that police would find out	less likely than parents	not really, probably, if there is a party or incident	yes, not really, if a party is thrown	pretty easy	yes (overwhelming)	would be caught, it depends	do not think so unless it is public	not likely	not likely, only if large party	depends	likely because of SRO
If people your age in your community drink alcohol, how likely do you think it would be that teachers would find out	not very likely	many assume but may not know for sure	they know everything	pretty easy because kids talk	no, they could, they are not stupid	no (some laughter)	no, not really	not likely, unless it is a health teacher	yes	depends	involved in sports get caught, people are clueless- kids walking around high
If your parents heard that you had been drinking, what would they think?	be dead, grounded, wouldn't care	sit down and talk, disappointed, very much grounded	Pow!, I would die, severely punished	disappointed, yelled/talked to	take action, belt would come out, need to go to boot camp or Alaska	hurt, loss of respect	grounded for life, disappointed	kill me, not a fan, I'd be in a lot of trouble	not trustworthy, disappointed	someone else, ask where you got it	don't care, grounded, depends on parents
If your friends heard that you had been drinking, what would they think?	would want to be invited, wouldn't care	don't care, depends on friend, disappointed	not care, sometimes report it, depends on friend	why didn't you ask me	would not care, maybe shocked	it would not matter	would not be friends, friends would be influenced	shun me, not a fan	not friends anymore	wouldn't care	don't care

If teachers heard that you had been drinking, what would they think?	disappointed, detention, talk with SRO or parents, rehab	tell on me, bad kid, grew up in bad home, lose respect	just another thing, welcome to our school	not do it on campus, curious, shock	surprised, try to help, look the other way	might get judged, wouldn't care	disappointed, would not care	disappointed, look at me differently	disappointed	blame parents, call cops	coaches would care, concerned, depends on teacher
If your parents heard that you had been using marijuana, what would they think?	it would be over, wouldn't want to go home, would be sick	not sure, be in trouble, freak out	would not be living, 6 feet under, don't even want to talk about it	depends on the situation, if it was the first time, no big deal	some don't care, why waste money, get kicked out	druggies, kick you out	grounded	take a drug test, kill me	not trustworthy, disappointed	worse consequences	pissed, parents would kill me, depends on parent
If your friends heard that you had been using marijuana, what would they think?	wouldn't care, would want to be invited	not sure, don't care, not a big deal	where did you get it?, you are dumb	not really care	might not care, think it's cool	worried or want to do it to	no big deal	shunned, little bit lost respect, look at differently	not friends anymore		some wouldn't care
If teachers heard that you had been using marijuana, what would they think?	disappointed	assume other drugs, would tell, suspicious	immature	look at you different	disappointed	not even notice, would not like it	disappointed, rat you out, get help, expelled	ashamed of you	disappointed		worried, judge more
If your parents heard that you had been using prescription drugs, what would they think?	send to psych ward, disappointed	smack me, they would think I'm stupid	freak out, disappointed, upset, grounded for life	disappointed, more of a high	worried, distrust	more worried, more risk of harm	stupid, more concerned	be in trouble, huge consequences, a lot of trouble	not trustworthy, disappointed		a lot worse than marijuana, line is drawn, more serious
If your friends heard that you had been using prescription	get you help, not care	stop talking to smack me	stupid, ask for some	ask where you got it from	disappointed, avoid you, won't have friends	give me some, most kids would not care	stupid, more concerned	wouldn't be friends anymore, shunned	not friends anymore		not be okay, concerned,

drugs, what would they think?											
If teachers heard that you had been using prescription drugs what would they think?	disappointed, report it, try to take it	get help, tell on me	ask where you are getting them, irresponsible	disappointed, frown upon	shocked, loss of respect		stupid, more concerned	off sports team, disappoint	disappointed		tell to stop, get parents involved
Why do you think teens use alcohol and other drugs?	to be cool, it's available, something is missing, home life, makes them feel better	depression, for fun, rebellion, bored, stress, peer pressure, curiosity, not knowing the effects of drugs	cool, fit in, peer pressure, get away from problems, have a good time	to be cool, bad home situation, escape problems, curious	because they can, relief of stress, bad home life, peer pressure	bored, depressed, rebel, curious, peer pressure, stress, anxiety, family issues	bad home, escape, trying to be cool, there is not a lot of pressure	problems, pressure, be cool, friends, curiosity, taste, don't feel good	look cool, rebel, get away, fit in	to be cool, escape, school, family, feel good, fit in	pressure, they want to do what they want to do, fun, cool, they are sad, because they can
What kinds of alcohol/drugs do you hear about kids your age most commonly using?	beer, vodka, whiskey, scotch, rum, coolers, molly, meth, MJ, heroin, cocaine	marijuana, cocaine	beer, weed, cocaine	beer, vodka, pills, morphine, codeine	marijuana, cocaine, cigarettes, crack, beer, heroin, bath salts	bud light/beer, marijuana-the most, prescriptions, cocaine	beer, marijuana, Adderall, crack, acid	marijuana, pain killers, some prescription drugs, not so much alcohol	beer, mushrooms, OxyContin, marijuana	beer, liquor, marijuana, cocaine	molly, alcohol, prescription drugs-Vicodin, oxy, bourbon, marijuana, beer, LSD, ecstasy
What percentage of kids your age do you think have used alcohol in the past month?	60-85%	60-80%	15, 25, 35, 45, 50%	37%, 50%, 75%, 80%	60-98%	25, 37, 40, 60, less than 50%	40, 70, 50,60, 80%	45%	40%, 50%, 65%, 70%	10%, 20%, 30%	less than 50, 80-85%, 95%, 75%, Freshman- 90%,
What percentage of kids your age do you	10-13%	15%, 25%, 40%, 52%	5-15%, have never heard of it	not a lot, 14%, 25%, 30%	10, 30,50, 5, 35, 60, 0	15, 20, 30%	30, 40, 50, 60%	10, 25, 20%	5-10%	5, 25-30%	less than 10, 15-30%, 0, 30, 26%

think have used prescription drugs without doctor's orders in the past month?											
What percentage of kids your age do you think have used marijuana in the last month?	50-95%	30%, 70%, 75%	30, 70, 30, 55%	40%, 75%, almost 100%	98, 100, 80, 99, 55%	7%, 30%	15, 10, 3, 20%	30%, 50%	10-15%, 20%, 30%, 79%	1-2%	99, 50-85%, 90, 99%
If you did not come home on time would your parents know?	maybe not, except days they work late	yes, no, don't know, probably	yes	no, yes, depends on how late	yes, they stay up	most would, kids curfew, come in and check, look at clock, parents don't sleep until home	parents would know, they would try to call, be safe, check in	yes, they would call	yes	yes- they ask questions, call if going to be late, doors locked	parents are at work, they stay up and wait, siblings tell, mad, no curfew, have to text
What services or policies could the school and community provide that would help teens with drug use problems and concerns?	punish, but it might not work, random drug testing, better eye on drug dealing, more community events	weekly drug tests, drug counselor, AA, help programs	drug tests, teachers can drug test, teachers should be drug tested, assembly with past users, locker checks	football, counselor, drug tests for sports teams	Bring in CASA, something to do, all take drug tests- especially athletes	more laws and rules, won't stop, more safe environment, more positive things, school can't do everything, parents watch kids more	involve teens, community events (dances in the park), more positive things, teen hang out, gym based center, some people	afterschool sports, more indoor soccer, policies are okay, search students, okay to be a pain, bring dogs in, check lockers	smoke free parks, help depressed people	Rec center, pool, drug tests	more activities, drug testing, peer teaching, legalize marijuana, success stories, in school suspension

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