

## **MPH 630 Practice Lab Project: Group 1**

PRACTICE LAB GROUP PROJECT (30 points): MPH 630

SOCIAL MARKETING WORKSHEET STEP 5 :

Step 5: ANALYZE TARGET AUDIENCES AND THE COMPETITION

Instructions for this: Complete all steps below and base these on Lee and Kotler, 2016 Chapter 7 and Resnick and Siegel, 2013 Chapter 6. Be sure your reply incorporates readings from both sources. You can consult peer-reviewed articles if you need to determine some real benefits and barriers, but you can discuss theoretical ones if they are realistic. The below should be short-answer; complete a and b first:

a. YOUR PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEM: Adolescent illicit drug use

b. YOUR BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVE: Adolescent abstinence from illicit drug use

### **Barriers**

5.1 Make a list of perceived barriers your audience may have to adopting the desired behavior. These may be physical, psychological, skills, economical, knowledge, awareness, or attitudes. (5 pts)

Some perceived barriers to adolescent abstinence from illicit drug use include:

- Lack of knowledge about danger of drug use
- Peer pressure to use illicit drugs
- Media influence showing drug use as cool and fun
- Drug use viewed as a cultural norm
- High access to drugs in a community
- Drugs viewed as a source of fun or escape from everyday life
- Drugs give adolescents a sense of maturity
- Lack of parental or guardian oversight
- Lack of alternative coping mechanisms for stress or other mental health disorders
- Lack of self-efficacy to say no to drugs or to quit using drugs
- Lack of developmental maturity and affinity for risky behavior

### **Benefits**

5.2 What are the key perceived benefits your target audience wants in exchange for performing the desired behavior? (5 pts)

There are several perceived benefits that adolescents may want in exchange for abstaining from illicit drug use. The first is prolonged life and health. Illicit drugs have the potential to cause several negative health outcomes including impacts on growth and development, the potential development of adult health problems, addiction, and overdose.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, drug use is often viewed negatively in society, so abstaining from drug use can allow them to maintain a positive social image. Adolescents tend to be very image conscious and many drugs could have negative impacts on their physical appearance. Drugs can also

impact their ability to perform in school and sports. Abstaining from drugs can help ensure that they excel in classes and extracurricular activities, which can in turn increase their chances of pursuing college and employment opportunities. In particular, drug use can limit their ability to apply for careers that require drug testing like military, education, and government sector jobs. Abstaining from drugs can also reduce their risk of facing criminal consequences, which they could face if caught possessing or using certain drugs. Abstaining from can also allow adolescents to save money as it can be an expensive habit. Obtaining drugs can also be a dangerous activity since they are not legal and sold on the black market. Lastly, abstaining from illicit drugs can provide adolescents with the freedom from addiction and the ability to live life on their own terms, not controlled by a substance.

#### Potential Motivators

5.3 What does your target audience say will make it more likely that they would do the behavior? (5 pts)

Seeing testimonials or stories from other adolescents that have stopped using drugs and chosen abstinence can show that adopting this behavior is possible. Using someone in their age group and in a similar situation will also be more relatable and acceptable than if the message were to come from an adult or outside organization. Providing adolescents with educational materials on the dangers of drug use and benefits of abstaining could also be motivating. It would be important to ensure that the materials are culturally relevant and in line with current trends to better engage with the target audience. Showing images of the impacts of drugs on the body could also be highly motivating to adolescents. Having peer mentors or support groups to help adolescents abstain from drug use could also be motivating. This would again provide a more accepted source for information than an adult. It would also help increase their self-efficacy and confidence to abstain if they see that their peers have done it and have a support system to help them do the same. A strong community or familial support system could also be motivating if they know that they have people looking out for them and expecting them to make positive decisions. Additionally, having alternative activities that adolescents care about like sports, drama clubs, art classes, or gaming groups could motivate them to abstain from drug use so they can continue to participate and perform in these activities.

#### Competition

5.4. What are the major competing alternative behaviors (ones that are counter to ones you want them to perform)? (5 pts)

The main competition for adolescent abstinence from drug use is adolescent drug use. Other substance use activities like drinking, smoking, and vaping are also associated with drug use and could be competing behaviors. Participating in party culture can also increase the chance for drug use, as can the participation in other risky activities. Media that promotes adolescent drug use as fun, cool, widespread, and risk-free is also competing with efforts to promote abstinence from drug use. Programs aimed at reducing adolescent drug use would also be in competition with efforts to promote adolescent abstinence from drug use.

5.5 What benefits do your audiences associate with these competing (“bad”) behaviors (the alternative ones)? (5 pts)

Benefits associated with these competing behaviors can include increased popularity or social status by giving into peer pressure and meeting perceived cultural norms. Drug, alcohol, and other substance use can also provide an escape from daily stresses or a coping mechanism to deal with mental health challenges. Drinking alcohol, partying, or abusing other substances can also make adolescents feel mature or provide them with a feeling of independence. Substance use and partying can also be fun and provide an outlet for those that like thrill seeking behaviors. These benefits are further promoted through the media where commercials for alcohol are widespread and popular TV and movies show substance use as cool and fun. Adolescents may prefer efforts aimed at reducing substance use rather than abstaining altogether as it would allow them to maintain their current behavior to a certain extent as opposed to changing it completely.

5.6 What costs do your audiences associate with these competing (“bad from your viewpoint”) behaviors (alternative ones)? (5 pts)

Some costs associated with the competing behaviors include the potential for developing substance use disorder later in life from early substance abuse behaviors.<sup>1</sup> There is also the potential for becoming addicted to certain drugs and tobacco products. There are many health consequences associated with substance abuse including adverse physical symptoms, developmental complications, and increased risk for physical harm.<sup>1,2</sup> Tobacco use also has many associated negative health consequences including developing certain cancers, COPD, heart disease, and diabetes.<sup>3</sup> Substance abuse can also lead to participation in other risky behaviors like unsafe or unwanted sex, driving while intoxicated, and fighting or other forms of violence.<sup>2</sup> Use of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco products are expensive habits to maintain. There are potential criminal consequences for underage drinking, drug use, or driving while intoxicated which can have many negative impacts on adolescents. The time lost to recovering from a night of drinking, drug use, or having to take smoking breaks could be spent participating in school or other activities. Substance use can also negatively impact school performance and performance in sports and other activities.

#### References:

1. Teen Substance Use & Risks. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/fasd/features/teen-substance-use.html>. Published: February 10, 2020. Accessed: October 20, 2022.
2. Underage Drinking. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/underage-drinking.htm> Published: April 14, 2022. Accessed: October 20, 2022.
3. Health Effects. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic\\_information/health\\_effects/index.htm#:~:text=Smoking%20causes%20cancer%2C%20heart%20disease,immune%20system%2C%20including%20rheumatoid%20arthritis](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/health_effects/index.htm#:~:text=Smoking%20causes%20cancer%2C%20heart%20disease,immune%20system%2C%20including%20rheumatoid%20arthritis). Published: April 28, 2020. Accessed: October 20, 2022.

