

Don't Open This Campaign

Reducing Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Through Targeted Messaging and Outreach

College-age women are a previously untapped audience for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) prevention work in Oregon. Within this population group, binge drinking and unprotected sex are a dangerous combination that puts them at risk for alcohol-affected pregnancies.

The Oregon Public Health Division, with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, developed a social marketing campaign to support individual-level interventions (motivational interviewing) and a new FASD surveillance system.

Critical to the campaign's success were creating a relevant frame for the issue and delivering the message through trusted, peer-driven channels.

The "Don't Open This" campaign, being implemented now on two Oregon college campuses, plays on the teachable moment provided by the reality of a pregnancy scare and the power of the peer group as an information resource.

RESEARCH

Research included executive interviews, intercept interviews, focus groups and an audit of FASD media coverage and other FASD communication efforts nationwide.

Audience

Based on rates of binge drinking, unprotected sex and childbirth, the target audience for the campaign was identified as college-age women (ages 18 to 24 years old). The CDC directed that the campaign focus on women attending University of Oregon and Western Oregon University, the two campuses where the individual-level interventions were already taking place.

Findings

The most significant finding was that 83 percent of focus group participants said they had experienced a pregnancy scare and either had stopped drinking or would do so if they had another pregnancy scare. This provided our teachable moment—an opportunity to connect with these women when they feel vulnerable.

Other key themes included:

- The majority of the target audience considers "unprotected sex" to be sex without a condom, even if a woman is using other forms of birth control.
- The target audience and the general public know little about the lifelong developmental and cognitive implications of FASD.
- Few people realize that a fetus can be harmed if a woman drinks between the time she conceives and the time she realizes she is pregnant.
- Gynecologists and other health/sex education professionals are not discussing FASD, even when women come in for pregnancy tests.
- Friends are the primary influencers when it comes to drinking and sex.

Forgot to open this?



Then don't open this.



If you've had unprotected sex or missed a period,
**don't drink until you're sure
you're not pregnant.**

www.DontOpenThis.org

DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

Based on the research findings, the campaign focused on educating the target audience that drinking and having unprotected sex—or drinking while pregnant, even before women know they're pregnant—can cause FASD. This differentiates the campaign from other efforts that focus on pregnant women or women contemplating pregnancy.

Strategies:

1. Develop strong, persuasive campaign creative and tools.

- Six creative concepts were tested and fine-tuned with the target audience.
- "Don't Open This" best linked the risks of drinking and unprotected sex in the audience's mind, with the added benefit of being ethnicity and gender neutral, expanding the reach of the message.
- Campaign tools include a fact card, poster, sticker, palm card and website.

2. Raise awareness of the cause, prevention and magnitude of FASD.

- The awareness campaign includes earned media, radio PSAs, ads in bathroom stalls, posters and stickers in bar restrooms and campus gathering places.

3. Directly engage the target audience through existing trusted channels.

- The campaign has recruited more than 15 peer-based campus organizations—student health center, women's athletic association, residence life, Greek system, etc.—to disseminate information and include FASD prevention content in existing outreach.
- Four organizations have received monetary incentives to implement the campaign in a unique way, including special events and grassroots outreach.
- A student coordinator on each campus provides oversight and a trusted peer connection.

EVALUATION

The campaign began in September 2007 on the University of Oregon and Western Oregon University campuses. It will continue through December 2007 and beyond as partners continue implementation. A final campaign report and recommendations for next steps will be completed in December 2007.



Metropolitan Group

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Metropolitan Group, a social change agency, worked with Oregon Public Health Division to develop and implement the "Don't Open This" campaign. For more information on this and our other public health work, please visit www.metgroup.com