

Alcohol Intervention

'Never Have I Ever' Durham Students' Union

This campaign was devised to target student drinking safety and to help to create an attitudinal shift among the student population.

Description of the Intervention

The main objectives of this campaign were:

- To identify the main protective factors associated with safe drinking in the Durham student population
- To build the campaign by working directly with students to understand their feelings around such a sensitive issue
- To use positive messages about Durham students, instead of negative 'scare' tactics
- To collect data over each year of the campaign in order to measure attitudinal change as a response to the campaign

Strategy

Magpie, a communications agency based in Leeds, was chosen as a collaborator on the campaign. A mixture of creative communication approaches, to spread the message of the campaign, and recorded survey data from students before and after the campaign, was used throughout the three year period. The campaign was promoted to students via our weekly email and on social media.

Additionally, a Social Norms Survey disseminated to students beforehand helped inform the approach taken. Protective factors were identified through this preliminary student survey and then guided the marketing campaigns key messages.

Methods of communication included:

- Print (Posters, Flyers, Bus Stop Advertisements)
- Pop-up events (Photo Booths, Freshers Fair Stall)
- Bar Visits
- Social Media competitions and games
- Video
- Promotional objects (Coasters, Vinyls, Mirrors, Playing Cards, Bottle Openers, Shopper Bags)

The campaign was purposefully student-led, involving Durham University students as Campaign Managers, Photographers, Videographers and Actors.

The main messages used in the survey were:

- Never Have I Ever...
- Been "that friend" who's too drunk to get into the club.
- Let my friends walk home alone.
- Walked home alone.
- Left my drunk friends alone and hoped for the best.

Main Findings

The surveys gained an overall high response rate (1,300 in 2017). These sets of data compare attitudes before the campaign (2015), during the campaign (2016) and after the campaign (2017).

There was an increase in the amount of Durham Students who thought about getting home safely. The main changes in the data present in the campaign were related to getting home safely, and there was a shift in attitudes towards taking care of friends and oneself when already 'drunk'. There was a big increase (+14.9%) in students choosing not to walk home alone after a night out. The data also suggested that there was a big increase (+9.7%) in the amount of students who plan how they are going to get home after a night out.

There was a positive change (+9.7%) in the amount of students who chose to eat before drinking.

There was a slight increase (+2.9%) in the amount of students who say they make sure their friends get home safely and 'look after their friends on a night out' (+2.7%). However, the amount of students before the campaign who agreed with these statements was already high (95.2% and 92.5% respectively) leaving less room for a drastic change compared to previous statistics.

There has been a decrease in the amount of Durham Students who drink responsibly according to NUS Alcohol Impact guidelines. On the other hand, there was a decrease in the amount of students who drink once a week or less (-6.6%), a decrease in the amount of students who stay safe by choosing not to pre-drink some of the time (-8.9%), and a decrease in the amount of students who agree that it is a good idea to alternate alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks (-0.5%).

Limitations

- The data cannot differentiate between the change in attitudes due to the tragic deaths of students, which resonated throughout the University and local community, and the changes that occurred as a result of the campaign itself.
- A number of colleges ran their own outreach and awareness campaigns during the timescale of the SU campaign. However, one of the major themes of the SU campaign was about 'getting home safely', and there was a radical change in student attitudes concerning this measure (+15.6%). Therefore, it is reasonable to at least partly attribute this drastic change to the SU campaign.
- The survey may not be comprehensive enough to capture a holistic picture of students' attitudes. For example, the survey asks about the frequency of alcohol drinking ('Do you drink once a week or less...') but does not ask about the amount of units of alcohol

consumed while on a night out. Therefore, it is unclear whether students are drinking more units in total, or are drinking fewer units on average per night out.

Strengths & Future Research

- A strength of this campaign is the ability of the survey research to inform future work.
 - The data which suggests negative shifts in student attitudes, such as a decrease in the amount of students who think it's a good idea to alternate alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks, is valuable for informing future campaigns.
 - There is also no significant change in students who choose to pre-drink, potentially suggesting that students are prioritising financial savings over responsible drinking and that future research and campaigns should focus on this aspect of student drinking.
 - Alternatively, the direction of future campaigns could focus on the increased frequency of student drinking, exploring the motivations behind this to see if student drinking is becoming less focussed on 'getting drunk' and more focussed on drinking minimally more frequently, which would be more in line with Drinkaware guidelines.

Photographs

