



UNDERSTANDING TEEN DRINKING CULTURES IN AMERICA

RESOURCE MATERIALS FOR
SITE COORDINATORS



Understanding Teen Drinking Cultures in America

Site Coordinator Background Materials

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<http://teenalcoholcultures.gmu.edu>

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Understanding Teen Drinking Cultures in America ***Information for Potential Site Coordinators***

BACKGROUND

George Mason University is conducting research on teenage drinking, with particular attention to the cultures surrounding youths' decisions to use or not use alcohol. This new research initiative incorporates a blend of public health and cultural anthropology, and emphasizes direct contact with youth and adults regarding their perspectives and experiences. "Understanding Teen Drinking Cultures in America" is designed to better understand the psychological and sociological factors that affect adolescents as they make decisions regarding alcohol. This project seeks to better understand the cultures surrounding youths' use and non-use of alcohol, including the influences upon a youth's decision to drink/not drink alcohol, patterns of alcohol consumption, and how adults view youth drinking. Suggestions for educational and public health interventions will be based on these findings.

Funded by a grant from The Century Council and conducted by George Mason University's Center for the Advancement of Public Health (GMU's CAPH), this research includes a wide range of strategies which are highlighted on the project's website. Several methodologies involve site visits to a select number of locations throughout the country.

An important component of this project is gathering insights and perspectives from youth, parents and community leaders. For each site, focus groups and interviews are scheduled to maximize the in-depth information collection opportunity in that location. For most sites, two two-day site visits are planned in order to maximize the data collection from multiple audiences and settings. To gather information from residents of various locations, GMU's CAPH engages a local site coordinator to plan focus groups and interviews. Interview protocols vary from site to site, so specific approaches in a location will vary.

However, from an overall perspective, the following are sought in a site:

- a. 7-8 focus groups with teens ages 13-18.
- b. Discussion groups with parents or community leaders.
- c. Individual interviews with 3-4 teens.
- d. Key informant interviews with 3-5 community leaders.

GMU'S CAPH RESPONSIBILITIES

Researchers from GMU's CAPH will conduct the focus groups and interviews. GMU's CAPH provides:

1. All expenses associated with the site visits.
2. Local travel arrangements (car travel from one site to another).
3. Professional, confidential expertise with conducting the focus groups and individual interviews.
4. Incentives for focus group participants.
5. Funding for snacks and beverages at focus groups.
6. Master copies of advertising to help recruit participants; this can be adapted locally.
7. Human Subjects Board approval documentation for all questions and all protocols. All forms and protocols for this research project have been approved by George Mason University's Human Subjects Review Board (approval #5797).
8. Master forms for youth assent, parental consent, and adult consent.

SITE COORDINATOR ACTIVITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Site coordinators provide direct assistance with organizing activities for focus groups and interviews in each location. Each site coordinator will receive a \$1,000 honorarium for assistance; this may be provided to an individual or to a host organization. Site coordinators are asked to:

1. Recruit participants for the local focus groups, which may be scheduled over two site visits.
 - a. Each focus group includes 8-10 individuals, and lasts approximately 60 minutes.
 - b. Focus group participants will each receive a \$5 gift card; one person will have his/her name selected for a \$25 gift card.
 - c. Diversity in focus groups is desired – age, gender, race/ethnicity
 - d. Focus groups with younger youth (ages 13-15) should be same gender; older youth (16-18) may be mixed gender.
2. Arrange for:
 - a. Meeting locations
 - b. Snacks (to be reimbursed)
 - c. Gathering informed consent forms prior to participation

INFORMATION

More information about the research project can be found at: www.teenalcoholcultures.gmu.edu.

Questions or comments can be addressed by calling GMU's Center for the Advancement of Public Health at 703-993-3697 or emailing tacr@gmu.edu.

Project Co-Directors

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Understanding Teen Drinking Cultures in America Interview and Focus Group Information Sheet

BACKGROUND

George Mason University's Center for the Advancement of Public Health (GMU's CAPH) is conducting a new research initiative about teen drinking and the cultures surrounding teen drinking. This research emphasizes an evaluative approach that draws from youth, parents, practitioners, experts, and community leaders. Funded by a grant from The Century Council, this project involves youth involvement in interviews and focus groups with teens ages 13-18. "Understanding Teen Drinking Cultures in America" is designed to better understand the psychological and sociological factors that affect adolescents as they make decisions regarding alcohol-related behaviors. This project seeks to better understand the cultures surrounding youths' use and non-use of alcohol, including the influences upon a youth's decision to drink/not drink alcohol, patterns of alcohol consumption, how adults view youth drinking, and possibilities for educational and public health interventions.

Speaking directly with teens will inform the research about how U.S. culture affects teen decision-making about alcohol. This includes information and messages teens receive about alcohol as well as prevention and education strategies and campaigns on alcohol non-use. The research examines how teens get information about alcohol from sources such as parents, peers, schools, communities and other sources.

FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS

The focus groups seek participants' responses to a series of questions. The questions have no "right" or "wrong" answers, and the facilitators encourage honest responses. Each participant may say as little as he/she wants, and may decline to answer any question. Each group consists of 8-10 youth, in groups of similar age (e.g., 16 year olds); these include groups of all males, of all females, and mixed genders. Each group is approximately 60-90 minutes in length and is facilitated by two professional staff members from GMU's CAPH.

Each participant will receive a \$5 gift card, and one group participant will receive a \$25 value incentive through a drawing. Refreshments (food and drinks) will be provided for each group. While the group discussions are tape-recorded, no personally identifiable information is contained or noted.

PREPARATION

To participate, a youth needs to provide a signed parental consent form and an assent form prior to the focus group; similar forms are used for the individual interviews. All forms and protocols for this research project have been approved by George Mason University's Human Subjects Review Board (approval #5797).

INFORMATION

More information about the research project can be found at: www.teenalcoholcultures.gmu.edu.

Questions or comments can be addressed by calling GMU's Center for the Advancement of Public Health at 703-993-3697 or email tacr@gmu.edu.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Will my child be given any information about alcohol?

No, the facilitators ask questions about teen attitudes towards alcohol without engaging in alcohol education. Of course, the facilitators may make referrals to trusted resources for those with questions.

Q. What if my child doesn't know anything about alcohol?

That's fine. We're collecting information on the attitudes of all teens, whether or not they drink.

Q. What if my child does drink?

We are collecting information about teen attitudes and behaviors and about how they perceive others' attitudes and behavior. We are not making judgments about people or seeking to change their behavior.

Q. Will my child be identified?

We do not record names in focus groups or individual interviews, teens are identified only by age and gender.

Q. Will this information be shared with others?

All information from the interviews and focus groups will be reviewed only by research staff at GMU's Center for the Advancement of Public Health. Transcriptions of the tapes will be kept in a locked cabinet. No identifiable information will be noted on the transcripts.

Q. Will my child be uncomfortable or put on the spot?

Teens will be encouraged to share what they know, but may refuse to answer any question. Facilitators will create a comfortable environment for all kids to share their views.

Q. Why is the research being done?

This research is designed to understand the culture of teen drinking; information from teens themselves will help develop alcohol prevention programs that relate to teens.

Q. Who else will you speak with besides teens?

We are interviewing community leaders and those working with teens, such as teachers, principals, counselors, faith community leaders, activity coordinators, and police officers. We are also having focus groups and individual interviews with parents of teens.

TEENS NEEDED

FOR A FOCUS GROUP TALKING ABOUT TEEN DRINKING

PLEASE CONTACT tacr@gmu.edu AND WE WILL
SEND YOU THE REQUIRED PARENT AND TEEN FORMS
GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY'S CENTER FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

SNACKS AND A
\$5.00
INCENTIVE PER
TEEN WILL BE
PROVIDED

WHEN:

WHERE:

THIS RESEARCH
PROJECT AIMS
TO LEARN ABOUT
TEEN DRINKING

CHANCE TO WIN
\$25.00 GIFT CARD

TEENS NEEDED

FOR A FOCUS GROUP TALKING ABOUT TEEN DRINKING

This research project aims to learn about teen drinking.

Contact tacr@gmu.edu to sign up and we will send you the required parent and teen forms.

\$5.00 incentive per teen and
Chance to win \$25.00 gift card.

WHEN:

WHERE:

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY'S CENTER FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Teen Drinking Cultures

Draft 4/1/08

Teen Focus Group Questions

CURRENT DESCRIPTION

1. How would you describe you and your friends? What do you do for fun? How do you spend your time?
2. What do you know about teen drinking behaviors? Do you think teens drink today as much as they did 10 years ago?
3. What are differences about teens that drink and don't drink?
4. What is the most common alcohol to drink by teens? Where are they drinking? Who are they drinking with?
5. How many people at your school are drinking? What percentage? What percentage is drinking beer? Wine coolers? Liquor?
6. Where are teens getting their alcohol? Is it difficult to buy alcohol? If you wanted to get alcohol, who could you count on to help get it?
7. What do your parents think about teen drinking? How have they talked to you about drinking?
8. What have you heard about teen drinking?
9. What do you think is normal drinking for a person your age? What is too much? What makes it too much?
10. Who offered you your first alcoholic drink, and where were you?
11. Have you or your friends ever been caught drinking? If yes, what happened?
12. How popular are drinking games? Can you describe the most popular?
13. What is the most extreme thing you have seen a teen do while drinking?

REASONS/INFLUENCES

14. What is the reason you think teens drink alcohol? What influences them to begin drinking?
15. At what age did you or your friends start drinking? If you did, what influences if you start to drink and how much you do drink?
16. What happens when you are encouraged to drink and you say "no"? How is the decision to not drink viewed by other teens? How do you view teens that do and do not drink?
17. Have you ever been allowed to drink any alcohol with your parents? Or friend's parents? Relatives?
18. What role do parents play in the decision to drink or not drink?
19. Does your school have alcohol education programs? If so, what have you learned?
20. When should youth be introduced to alcohol education?
21. What other things influence teen's alcohol behavior?

FUTURE

22. What happens if you drink a lot? What are the consequences?
23. What are the punishments associated with underage drinking? Parents? Law? School?
24. What could change teen drinking behavior?

Understanding Teen Drinking Cultures in America Focus Group
Parent or Guardian Consent and Information Form

You have been asked to allow your child to participate in a focus group conducted by George Mason University and sponsored by The Century Council. The purpose of this research is to understand teen attitudes to underage drinking and abstinence and to contribute to general knowledge in this field.

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

With your permission, your child will join a small group (about 8 to 12) of other students from his or her community in a group research meeting that will last about 60-90 minutes. The meeting will take place in a convenient community setting (such as a library, recreation center, or meeting room in a public building). One or more members of the research team will lead a discussion about teen drinking and abstinence. The session will be audio-recorded.

BENEFITS AND RISKS

The expected benefits of this research are to provide insight into teenagers' risky behavior with alcohol. There are no direct benefits to participants for participating in this research. Incentives will be worth no more than \$5. Potential risks are that your child might feel uncomfortable sharing opinions in a group setting. There is the risk that other teenagers in the group will talk about the research outside of the group.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The names of individuals participating in this study will not be released by the researchers, unless required by law (e.g., child abuse). No names of individuals will be published, printed or shared in connection with this research.

PARTICIPATION

Participation in this study is voluntary. You or your child may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason. Refusal to participate or withdrawal will not adversely affect your child and will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to you or your child.

PAYMENT TO SITE

Modest donations or stipends for site coordinators will be used to facilitate recruitment to focus groups.

CONTACT

This research is being conducted by Dr. David Anderson, Professor of Education and Human Development and Director of the Center for the Advancement of Public Health at George Mason University (703-993-3697, danderso@gmu.edu), and Hugh Gusterson, Professor of Anthropology and Sociology at George Mason University (703-993-4084, hgusters@gmu.edu). You may contact them if you have questions about this research or to report a research related problem. You may contact the George Mason University Office of Research Subject Protections at 703-993-4121 if you have questions or comments regarding your rights as a participant in the research. This research has been reviewed according to George Mason University procedures governing your participation in this research.

CONSENT

I have read this form and willingly consent to allow my child to participate in this study.

Signature of Parent or Guardian

Date of Signature

Understanding Teen Drinking Cultures in America Focus Group
Youth Assent and Information Form

You have been asked to participate in a focus group conducted by George Mason University and sponsored by The Century Council. The purpose of this research is to understand teen attitudes to underage drinking and abstinence and to contribute to general knowledge in this field.

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

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CONSENT

I have read this form and agree to participate in this study.

Name

Date of Signature

Teen Drinking Cultures

Draft 4/1/08

Parent Focus Group Questions

CURRENT DESCRIPTION

1. How many children do you have (that you are the primary caretaker for) and what are their ages? Are you married?
2. What is your view on alcohol in general? What is your attitude towards adult drinking? How knowledgeable are you about teen drinking?
3. How common do you think teen drinking is? What are teens drinking? With whom? How often? How much? How do teens get access to alcohol and what are obstacles may they encounter?
4. At what age do you think most people have had a drink? Has this changed since you were growing up? What age is acceptable for drinking?
5. Under what conditions is teen drinking acceptable (if any)? Is it acceptable for parents to provide "safe" drinking options for teens? Why or why not?
6. Where do parents get information about teen drinking? Whose information is trustworthy? How do parents pass on teen drinking information to their children?
7. Have you ever disciplined your child or one of your child's friends for alcohol-related behaviors? What were the circumstances and what was the outcome?
8. Do you feel safe if your teenage goes to a party at another parent's house? What do you think about parents who allow teenagers to drink in their home?

REASONS/INFLUENCES

9. What influences a teen to drink heavily compared to those who drink occasionally, or to not drink alcohol at all?
10. What alcohol-related behavior concerns you most? Why?
11. What roles do parents play in teens' decisions to drink or not drink? Do parental discipline, communication with and education of children make a difference when it comes to teen alcohol-related behaviors?
12. How do siblings and other family members shape a teen's decision making when it comes to alcohol?
13. Do schools, communities and after-school involvement make a difference in teen drinking? What about local and national laws and their enforcement?

FUTURE

14. Would you change anything about your community teen drinking policies? What would be your goal if you did make changes?
15. If you could describe the ideal culture surrounding alcohol for teens in this country, what would it look like? What changes would you like to see by the time your children are adults? How could state/federal organizations/agencies assist in making these changes?
16. Do you believe punishing parents for underage drinking will change the teen drinking culture? Whose responsibility is it when teens drink, and how should the laws be changed or enforced?

Understanding Teen Drinking Cultures in America Focus Group
Adult Consent and Information Form

You have been asked to participate in a focus group conducted by George Mason University and sponsored by The Century Council. The purpose of this research is to understand teen attitudes to underage use and non-use of alcohol, and to contribute to general knowledge in this field.

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

With your permission, you will join a small group (about 8 to 12) of adults from your community in a group research meeting that will last about 60-90 minutes. One or more members of the research team will lead a discussion about alcohol use and non-use among teens. The session will be audio-recorded.

BENEFITS AND RISKS

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CONSENT

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Name

Date of Signature

Teen Drinking Cultures

Draft 3/24/08

Adult Focus Group Questions

CURRENT DESCRIPTION

1. In what capacity are you involved with teens and current teen issues?
2. How would you describe teen alcohol use? What are they drinking, how much, where are they drinking and with whom? How are they getting the alcohol, and from whom?
3. Do you think teen drinking is different for boy vs. girls, different cultures, social classes or age?
4. What most worries you about teen drinking?
5. Can there be such a thing as safe teen drinking? Why?
6. How do teens make decisions concerning alcohol and who or what influences these decisions in either a positive or negative way?

REASONS/INFLUENCES

7. What motivates teens to partake in risky drinking behavior? What motivates teens not to drink or partake in risky drinking behavior? What motivates teens to partake in low-risk alcohol behavior?
8. Why do some teens become involved in risky drinking behavior?
9. How do Parents affect teen's alcohol decisions? Peers? Schools? Community? Other?
10. Are you aware of any efforts to address youth and or parents about teen drinking behaviors and if so how have they made an impact?
11. In your capacity working with teens how do you (or your organization) shape or not shape a teen's alcohol decision-making?

FUTURE

12. How is teen drinking behavior changing?
13. Are you aware of any current trends in teen's alcohol related decision making? What strategies would be helpful to assure teen's ability to make safe decisions for themselves and others?
14. How could you or your organization help create an environment for positive teen alcohol decisions?
15. Where do you get your information about teen drinking? Do you feel you have enough information?
16. Would you advocate any change in the current laws for teen drinking? What and why?

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Adult Consent and Information Form

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Name

Date of Signature