Breathing New Life into College Health Research

Using CBPR Methods to Inform Programming
Presentation Outline

Introduction to CBPR
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Health Depart., State Univ. of New York College, Cortland

CBPR Study on College Student Drinking
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Laura Hnath, BS; Stephanie Santos, BS,
Jude Lalanne, BS; Sara Barrows, MPH
Southern Connecticut State University

Implementation of CBPR on the College Campus
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Southern Connecticut State University
Community-Based Participatory Research

Collaborative approach combining methods of inquiry with community capacity-building strategies to bridge the gap between knowledge produced through research & what is practiced in communities to improve health (Viswanathan et al., 2004)

Image Source: http://www.uthsc.edu/CHEER/gallery-research-housing-policies-.php

Growing Emphasis

• NIH, Office of Behavioral & Social Sciences Research funding support & NIH CBPR SIG

• CDC Prevention Research Centers & National Community Committee

• Kellogg Health Scholars Program

Image Source: http://www.downtownseattle.com/blog/2012/10/01/support-is-growing-for-a-downtown-seattle-public-school/
Alcohol Use & College Health

Feedback interventions intended to alter student perceptions of alcohol use & drinking behavior (Osborn, Thombs & Olds, 2007; Walters & Neighbors, 2005)

Traditional Approach

Few studies engaged undergrads in interactive interviews to gain their perspectives on drinking & alcohol policies & even fewer intentionally solicited feedback on participation using an interactive format (Fromme & Corbin, 2004; Marlatt et al., 1998; Shim & Maggs, 2005; Williams et al., 2002; Wolburg, 2001)
CBPR - College as Community

Using CBPR to conceptualize the college as the target community & solicit undergraduates unique perspectives on alcohol use holds tremendous potential to produce more credible & effective interventions  (Heckel & Moore, 2009; Osborn et al., 2007)

Image Source: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/05/22/college-mental-health-scr_n_865278.html
Case Study: High Risk Alcohol Use

Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU)

- Public Institution, BS/BA, Master’s, EdD
- Urban area (New Haven, CT)
- 11,000 undergraduate students
- 1,500 graduate students
- 3,000 residential students (1,800 freshmen)
CORE Alcohol and Drug Survey at SCSU

- Randomly selected undergraduate courses
- Data collected during class sessions
- 750-1,100 students per year
- Self-reported alcohol and drug behaviors
- Custom questions added in 2012
SCSU Trends: Student Alcohol Consumption Past 30 Days by Gender, 2002-2012

- Males
- Females
SCSU Student Marijuana and Alcohol Use Past 30 Days: 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Freshman</th>
<th>Residential Students</th>
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<td>Marijuana Use</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>78%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alcohol Use</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>28%</td>
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SCSU Student Marijuana and Alcohol Use
3 times per week or more: 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Freshman</th>
<th>Residential Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marijuana Use in 2012</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol Use in 2012</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SCSU Trends: Student Binge Drinking Past Two Weeks by Gender, 2004-2012

Binge = 5+ drinks in one sitting
One drink = bottle of beer, glass of wine
Wine cooler, shot glass of liquor, or Mixed drink
SCSU Trends: Student Driven a Car Under the Influence Within the Past Year, 2004-2012

In 2012:
- 20% of freshman
- 24% of residential students
Driven a Car Under the Influence Within the Past Year, SCSU vs. National Reference Group, 2004-2012

- 2004: Reference Group 31%, SCSU Students 42%
- 2006: Reference Group 32%, SCSU Students 43%
- 2008: Reference Group 27%, SCSU Students 37%
- 2010: Reference Group 22%, SCSU Students 40%
- 2012: Reference Group 24%, SCSU Students 31%
Consequences of Alcohol Use: SCSU vs. National Reference Group, 2012

- Binged: Reference Group 43%, SCSU Average 47%
- Driven Car: Reference Group 24%, SCSU Average 31%
- Police/Authorities: Reference Group 11%, SCSU Average 15%
- Academics: Reference Group 20%, SCSU Average 25%
- Regretted Behavior: Reference Group 34%, SCSU Average 36%
- Hangover: Reference Group 60%, SCSU Average 70%
- Missed Class: Reference Group 26%, SCSU Average 35%
- Argument/Fight: Reference Group 30%, SCSU Average 39%
Alcohol Use in Residence Halls, 2010 vs. 2012

- **Males**:
  - 2010: 58%
  - 2012: 58.4%
- **Females**:
  - 2010: 53%
  - 2012: 57.5%
- **Age 20 and under (both genders)**:
  - 2010: 54%
  - 2012: 53.3%
- **Ages 21+ (both genders)**:
  - 2010: Age 20 & under
  - 2012: Age 21+ 71.2%
So...what did we know?

- \( \frac{3}{4} \) drink (regardless of age)
- \( \frac{1}{3} \) drink 3 times/week or more
- \( \frac{1}{2} \) report binge drinking in the past 2 weeks
- \( \frac{1}{2} \) of residential students (under 21) drink in residence halls
- \( \frac{1}{3} \) drink and drive
- Most students experience negative consequences from drinking
What didn’t we know????

Why do students drink so much?

Is this a problem?

What, if anything can be done?
Qualitative Study on College Student Drinking: Why, Risks, and What can be done
Student Research Team

Kara Pelletier, BS, Psychology
Melissa Richard, BS, Social Work, MSW
Laura Hnath, BS, Public Health
Stephanie Santos, BS candidate, Public Health
Jude Lalanne, BS Sociology
Sara Barrows, MPH (Public Health), ATC
Study Process

• CBPR Qualitative Study
• Spring 2012
• Student Research Team
  – 5 undergraduate students
  – 1 graduate student
  – 1 Faculty research facilitator
• Student team completed all aspects to research design and implementation
Research Questions

• Why do students drink excessively?
• What types of risks and consequences do they experience when drinking?
• What factors contribute to these risks?
• What do students think the university can do to reduce risks and consequences associated with drinking?
Methods

• Volunteer sampling
• Online survey used to screen for eligibility (undergraduate, current student) and availability
• Email and text messaging used to schedule focus groups and send reminders
• Focus group questions were pilot tested
• 10 focus groups completed (with 48 students)
Data Analysis

• Audio-taped and transcribed
• Atlas.ti Software
• Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke)
  – Read and discussed transcripts
  – Dual coded each transcript
  – Reviewed code reports
  – Identified themes, selected representative quotes
Characteristics of Participants

**Race/Ethnicity**
- White: 85%
- Black: 10%
- Hispanic: 5%
- Other: 0%

**Gender**
- Male: 67%
- Female: 33%

**Binge Drinking Past 2 Wks.**
- Yes: 58%
- No: 42%

**Consequences of Drinking: Past Year**
- Injured
- Driven a car
- Fight/argument
- Memory loss
- Vomited
- Hangover
Results

• Why do students drink excessively?
• What types of risks and consequences do they experience when drinking?
• What factors contribute to these risks?
• What do students think the university can do to reduce risks and consequences associated with drinking?
RESULTS:
Why Students Drink Excessively

Major Thematic Categories:

• Inclusion
• Habitual Default
• Maturation Process
**Inclusion: Defined**

Students use drinking as a doorway into:

- Being around their peers
- Feeling comfortable
- Forming connections
Inclusion:
Being around peers

“Everyone is loose. Everyone feels good. The main reason people want to go out is to meet new people. When they meet new people whether they are gay, straight whatever, it is to meet someone you can hook up with or just to be with friends. But you are doing it to be with people. So it is an easy way to be social.”

- Male Junior
Inclusion:
Feeling comfortable with peers

“I think also it breaks down a lot of walls. I feel like the social activity on campus is sort of low. Not a lot of people talk to people they don’t know. I feel like alcohol sort of breaks that down. You are more able to talk to people than if you were sober.”

- Male Junior
Inclusion:
Forming a connection with peers

“When you’re in college you know you are going to have the best times together when you are drinking. Those are the nights you are going to remember for the rest of your life. You don’t want to miss out on making memories.”

- Female Sophomore
“I kind of wish I could not drink excessively, but I was more involved with that type of activity like with the people. I feel like everyone has like their cliques and they all go out on girls night and they have fun and it is just because I don’t drink a lot, so I am not really close with a lot of those girls and I kind of wish I was. This way I could have a group of friends.”

- Female Freshman
Inclusion vs. Exclusion

“Like I said, I think it is part of ‘if you don’t do it you are not part of Southern’. You are someone else. You are an outcast of the main group of Southern students.”

- Male Senior
RESULTS:
Why Students Drink Excessively

Major Thematic Categories:
• Inclusion
• Habitual Default
• Maturation Process
Habitual Default

“Everything has become an excuse for us to drink really. We drink because someone did great on a test, we drink because someone failed one. We drink because the week is over, midterms are over, finals are over, an assignment got turned in...it really doesn’t matter. It just helps release the tension. It is something to do and it becomes a habit.”

- Female Sophomore
Habitual Default: Defined

Process of undergraduate students consuming alcohol as a default activity

- Reward System
- Stress Reliever & Distraction
- Time Consumer
"I think it becomes sort of a routine almost. Like even if you have midterms that aren’t that stressful where you can study maybe an hour before and you ace it. You still feel that sense of, oh my goodness I just had this whole week of hell of tests and exams and papers and projects. And then the week after you go, now what do I do?"

- Male Senior
Habitual Default: Reward System

“I feel that when it is people’s birthdays they just think they should just go crazy and drink everything. Even if it is not their 21st birthday. Just going out and celebrating. Again not knowing their limits. So it is just another reason to drink excessively.”

- Female Junior
Habitual Default:
Stress Reliever/Reality Distractor

“It is a way of taking everything you had to go through the whole week and then on Thursday night getting rid of it by having a drink with friends.”

Male Junior
“The reason why Southern students drink is because there is absolutely nothing to do from Thursday night until Sunday. All they do is hang out in their dorms and you might as well get drunk and not remember it or just laugh and have something to do because the time will go by quicker.”

- Sophomore Female
RESULTS:
Why Students Drink Excessively

Major Thematic Categories:
• Inclusion
• Habitual Default
• The Maturation Process
Maturation Process: Defined

The change, if any, in the attitudes and behaviors associated with binge drinking among undergraduate students between their freshman and senior year.
Maturation Process:
Look Mom and Dad, I’m an Adult!

“I think that it’s [drinking] kind of a way for kids who are freshman and sophomores around the age of 18 or 19 to pretend to be adults.”

- Male Senior

• Freedom
• Opportunity
• Accessibility
Maturation Process: The Turning Point

“We have had that whole thing happen, but I think that was all freshman and sophomore year. I think you just kind of hit a plateau. Like freshman/sophomore year you go crazy. Then you just hit a plateau and you are over it. “

- Female Senior

- Change in environment
- Students reach the age of 21
Maturation Process: Phasing Out

“The workload gets a lot harder. I entered my major. Freshman year it was easy stuff...I am interested in teaching...there is just no way I could do it. I look back like...how did I do it? Because I could never now.”

-Female Sophomore

- More responsibility
- Declared major
- Harder classes
- Impending graduation
“I think because I know right now I am trying to get grad school settled. All this other stuff and some of my other friends are still not graduating. I have one friend in particular, she is like, ‘you have four weeks left of college, live it up.’ No I have stuff to do. She is just kind of saying, ‘it is college, you have to drink. You have to go crazy every weekend.’ You do get to the point where it is kind of like all right, grow up and get over the Thursday night parties. I think she is using that as an excuse.”

- Female Senior
Research Questions

• Why do students drink excessively?
• **What types of risks and consequences do they experience when drinking?**
• **What factors contribute to these risks?**
• What do students think the university can do to reduce risks and consequences associated with drinking?
Risks and Consequences

• Throwing up
• Blacking out
• Not remembering what you did
• Relationship conflict
• Humiliation
• Aggressive behavior / getting hurt
• Legal problems
• Academic problems
• Financial problems
• Drunk driving / with drunk driver
Risks and Consequences

- Throwing up
- Blacking out
- Not remembering what you did
- Relationship conflict
- Humiliation
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- Financial problems
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Technology

Desire to Avoid Responsibility

Policy & Enforcement
Technology: Defined

The direct and the indirect roles that modern technological means play in influencing behaviors of college student drinkers

- Exposure / Embarrassment
- Expectations
- Fear of Missing out
- Inadvertent Peer-Pressure
Technology:
Exposure / Embarrassment

“One of the CC’s and RA’s came up and they sent her to the hospital. An ambulance picked her up. That is embarrassing! There were some girls on the floor that weren’t friends with them taking pictures and laughing at her. That sucks. You are in front of [the dorm] and you see everyone is looking out their window at you like ‘who is the drunk girl’?”

- Female Sophomore
Technology: Expectations

“It is understood that drinking is part of college life. You will see on Twitter, on Facebook, or through the movies; stories about drinking in college. Even songs....

- Sophomore Female
Technology:
Fear of Missing Out

“Every student is going to feel like they are missing out. I could be doing something. That is exactly how I feel every Friday and Saturday night if I am not going out. My phone is on 24/7. I am not texting anyone, but I am anticipating or I am trying to find out what is going on. Everyone wants to be wanted so they want to find how they can be with their friends.”

- Female Senior
Indirect Peer-Pressure

“Even like when you are the one that doesn’t want to drink, by even...like seeing pictures online of my other friends at school. Even that peer pressure is like ‘oh these friends are going out.’ I am at school. Should I go out? Should I be doing these things?”

Female Junior
Risks and Consequences

- Throwing up
- Blacking out
- Not remembering what you did
- Relationship conflict
- Humiliation
- Aggressive behavior / getting hurt
- Legal problems
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Technology

Desire to Avoid Responsibility

Policy & Enforcement
Desire To Avoid Responsibility: Defined

Student’s desire to designate someone to watch over and be responsible for them when drinking in order to avoid risky situations and outcomes
Desire To Avoid Responsibility: Babysitting

“I feel when our friend group goes out there are always two people that are less drunk than everyone else. You always have those people who are like... ‘Come here! What are you doing? Stay away from them!’ Nothing ever really happens when we go out. We always have fun.”

- Female Sophomore
“When you are the sober one of the night, it is not fun. Like it is better to just drink and have fun and not be the sober one because babysitting is just ridiculous.”

- Male Sophomore
“One time I was taking care of one of my friends and she got really drunk. She ended up throwing up all over my car. Then the next morning she was like can you bring my pack of cigarettes to my house? I am like why would I do that? You threw up all over my car. We are not friends anymore.”

- Male Sophomore
Desire To Avoid Responsibility: Babysitting as Unreliable

“We went to a concert and the designated driver for the other car got drunk. She was in the bathroom throwing up and left those four people without a ride. Stuff like that happens all the time.”

- Female Freshman
Desire To Avoid Responsibility: Babysitting as Unreliable

“The worst is when you have to take care of a drunk friend when you’re drunk. One time, my friend was drunk to the point that I had to put her in the shower and she was throwing up in the shower. I put her to bed and every couple of minutes she had to get up to throw up. I finally just couldn’t take it anymore. I went to sleep and just hoped I could wake her in the morning.”

- Female Freshman
Risks and Consequences

- Throwing up
- Blacking out
- Not remembering what you did
- Relationship conflict
- Humiliation
- Aggressive behavior / getting hurt
- Legal problems
- Academic problems
- Financial problems
- Drunk driving / with drunk driver

Technology

Desire to Avoid Responsibility

Policy & Enforcement
Policy & Enforcement: Defined

The additional risks and consequences experienced by students in response to the types of alcohol policies

• Excessive drinking as rebellion
• Incentive to hide the behavior
• Unsafe transportation
Policy & Enforcement: Excessive Drinking as Rebellion

“This whole thing with ‘now Southern is a dry campus.’ It is like if you get caught with alcohol, regardless, you deal with the cops. You don’t deal with your RA. And I just think that is going to lead to these reckless behaviors and this desire to kind of rebel and drink a lot and just be like ‘screw what Southern wants...I’m going to drink because I am in college.’ Because Southern is kind of making a big deal out of drinking... the kids are going to make a big deal of drinking.”

- Female Sophomore
Policy & Enforcement:
Incentive to Hide Behavior

“One time she was so bad she couldn’t even stand up. We live in Wilk (name of a residence hall). We have to walk in. I was like, oh no, she’s going to get detoxed. So we go to McDonalds and she is throwing up inside and outside of the car. My friend is so bad but I can’t go back to Wilk. I was really scared. It was nuts. Finally, I don’t know how, but she pulled herself together and we walked right in the building and shot up the stairs. God, it was scary, like checking on her all night to see if she was breathing, laying her on her side...”

- Female Senior
Policy & Enforcement:
Unsafe Transportation

“I feel the school in general refuses to acknowledge the fact that students drink. It is almost like ‘nobody drinks here. They are not allowed to.’ But they don’t offer any services or help to the students. Like the shuttle that goes out. If so many thousands of students go downtown every Thursday night and it is a high crime area, they should have some sort of safe transportation. But as far as the school is concerned, nobody drinks.”

- Female Sophomore
Policy & Enforcement: Unsafe Transportation

“Like I said before, when people get drunk their judgment goes out the window. So let’s say you’re drunk out at a bar downtown or something like that, and the people you’re with are all drunk too, and they want to go home, and you need a ride home. Sober you wouldn’t get in the car with them – but drunk you is ‘I got to get home and I don’t want to pay for a taxi by myself’, so you just get in the car and go with them.”

- Male Junior
Research Questions

- Why do students drink excessively?
- What types of risks and consequences do they experience when drinking?
- What factors contribute to these risks?
- What do students think the university can do to reduce risks and consequences associated with drinking?
What Students think the campus can do to reduce drinking risks

• Programs, especially on weekends
• Easy access to information about programs (immediate options)
• Safe, affordable transportation options
• Safe way to get help for over intoxicated friends (Good Samaritan Clause)
• More lenient policy and enforcement
Summary of Results

Why do students drink excessively?
- Inclusion, habitual default, the maturation process

Risks and consequences experienced?
- Typical of previous generations

What factors contribute to these risks?
- Technology, desire to avoid responsibility, policy and enforcement

What do students think the university can do?
- Better programming, better communication, harm reduction policies and services
Benefits of using CBPR for College Health

• Community members (students) add great value to the research process
• Building the capacity of our students is consistent with our academic mission
• New types of data are needed to inform programming on many college health issues
Resources Required

• Faculty/Staff Facilitator
  – Explore release time grants, internal research funds

• Student Researchers
  – Explore sources: Graduate Student Affairs, Student Government, Residence Life, Programs Council, Student Affairs Division, Research Fellowships and Assistantships

• Other (Depending on type of design)
  – Transcription, digital recorder, computer/software, copying/printing, participant incentives