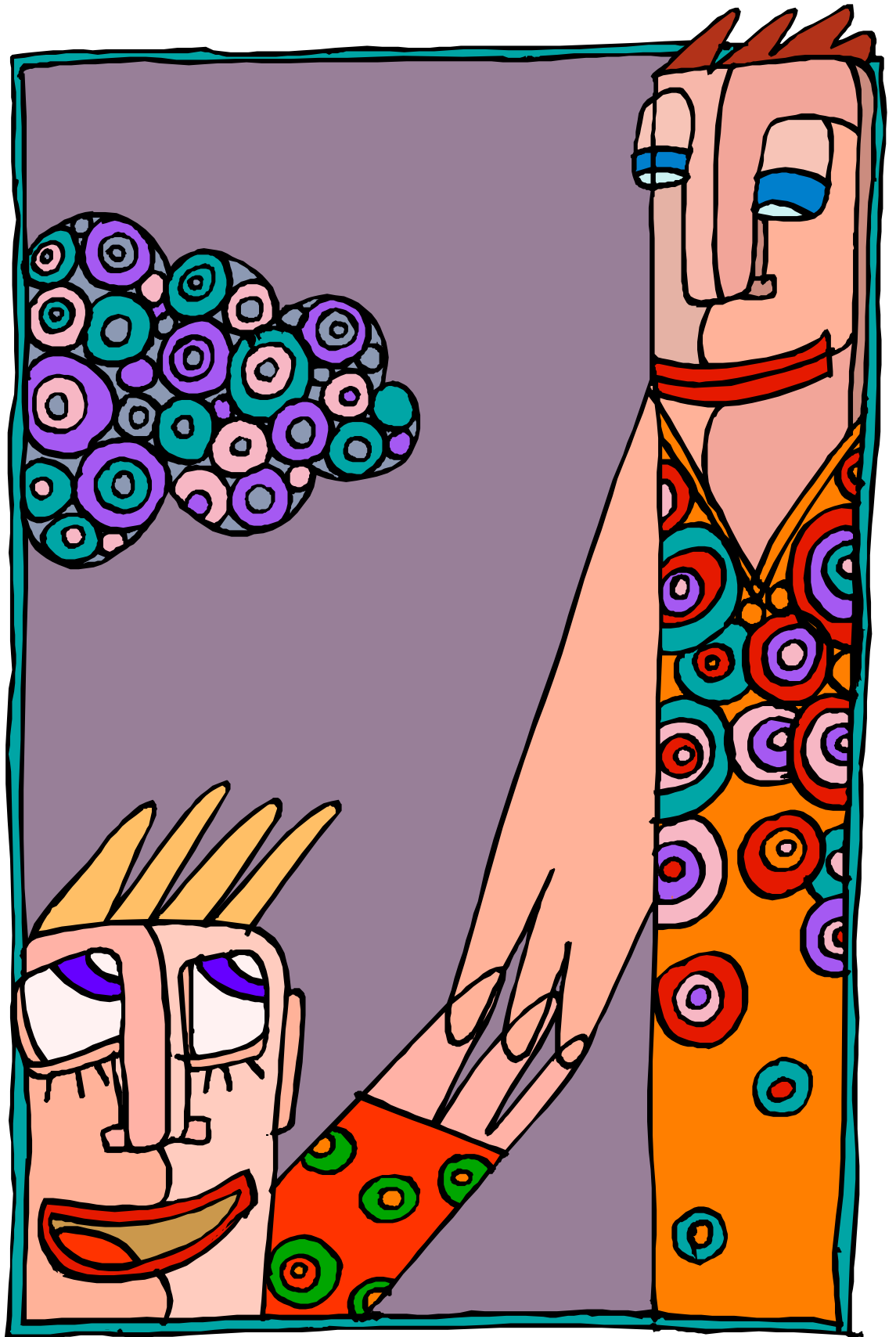


SECTION 3: PARENT RESEARCH FINDINGS



INTRODUCTION



Based on phase 1 and 2 research it was determined that parents have a great deal of influence on their youth's decision to use alcohol. Little existing research exists regarding this topic, so additional focus groups and interviews were conducted with parents.

Phase 1 and 2 research found that parents of middle school and high school youth have a great deal of influence on their children's decisions about alcohol use (Alfonso et al., 2000). This finding supports other research that has been done in this area. For example, in a study with Hispanic and Non-Hispanic White adolescents, Coombs, Paulson, and Richardson (1990) found that the youth identify more strongly with parents than with peers and that parents have significantly more influence on the youth's decisions to use alcohol and other drugs than peers. Studies have shown that parents-based strategies can be effective and should be included in the prevention of underage drinking (Barnes, Farrell, and Cairns, 1986; Jaccard and Turrissi, 1999; Loveland-Cherry, Ross, and Kaufman, 1999).

A limited amount of research exists on parent attitudes toward underage drinking and prevention. The purposes of the current study were to identify parents' attitudes toward underage drinking in Sarasota County; to identify their perceptions of the benefits and costs of four proposed strategies to prevent underage drinking, their ability to use the strategies, and the social norms surrounding the strategies; to identify effective information channels and spokespersons to communicate messages to parents; to identify any additional strategies for preventing underage drinking; and to identify ways to increase parent involvement in prevention efforts.

REFERENCES

Alfonso, M., Bernabe, K., Bryant, C., Christy, J., Landis, D., and McCormick-Brown, K. (2000). Qualitative report: Sarasota demonstration project. Unpublished.

Barnes, G. M., Farrell, M. P., and Cairns, A. (1986). Parent socialization factors and adolescent drinking behaviors. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 48: 27-36.

Coombs, R. H., Paulson, M. J., and Richardson, M. A. (1991). Peer vs. parental influence in substance use among Hispanic and Anglo children and adolescents. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 20(1): 73-88.

Jaccard, J. and Turrissi, R. (1999). Parent-based intervention strategies to reduce adolescent alcohol-impaired driving. *Journal on Studies of Alcohol*, 60(Supplement 13): 84-93.

Loveland-Cherry, C. J., Ross, L. T., and Kaufman, S. R. (1999). Effects of a home-based family intervention on adolescent alcohol use and misuse. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, 60(Supplement 13): 94-102.

METHODS

Sample

Community-Based Prevention Marketing Community Advisory Committee members, FPRC staff, and University of South Florida graduate students determined the sample of participants for the study. Participants included parents or guardians of middle school and high school youth in Sarasota County, as well as some community leaders who work extensively with Sarasota County youth in those age groups. Although the sample was one of convenience, an effort was made to have representation from diverse geographic locations and ethnic backgrounds within the county.

Focus Group Participants

There were 35 focus group participants. Two of the focus groups were made up of Non-Hispanic Whites; two were made up mostly of African Americans; and two were made up of Hispanics.

Individual Interview Participants

There were 12 interview participants. Of these participants, nine were Non-Hispanic White and three were Hispanic.

Recruitment

Community-Based Prevention Marketing Community Advisory Committee members and FPRC staff determined the various methods to be used for recruiting participants for focus groups and interviews. Some participants were recruited from the Sarasota County Health and Human Services Business Center through a departmental mailing or word of mouth. Others were recruited through community organizations around the county. For example, participants were recruited through the Laurel Community Center, St. Martha's Catholic Church, Sarasota County Technical Institute's English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes, Booker Middle School, and the Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition. Other participants were acquaintances of CBPM CAC members. It should be noted that recruitment of participants for the study proved more difficult than had been anticipated. For example, one CBPM CAC member contacted 25 friends and neighbors to participate in focus groups, and none of them participated.

Study Questionnaire

Researchers used the same questionnaire for focus groups and interviews. The questionnaire was developed in a four-step process. First, USF graduate students and FPRC staff constructed a draft questionnaire. Second, the USF students and CBPM CAC members pretested the questionnaire. Third, the USF

students and FPRC staff revised the questionnaire. Fourth, CBPM CAC members revised the questionnaire again.

Handout

Community-Based Prevention Marketing Community Advisory Committee members and FPRC staff developed a handout for participants to provide additional comments and suggestions anonymously.

Focus Groups

Focus groups were conducted at four locations. Two of the focus groups were conducted at the Sarasota County Health Department; two were conducted at the Laurel Community Center; one was conducted at St. Martha's Catholic Church; and one was conducted at the Sarasota County Technical Institute. Although some Hispanic participants spoke both English and Spanish, both Hispanic focus groups were conducted primarily in Spanish as per the participants' preference.

Moderators and co-moderators included three USF graduate students, an FPRC staff member, the Sarasota Prevention Marketing Coordinator, and two bilingual Hispanic community leaders from Sarasota. All moderators and co-moderators received training from FPRC staffs on the purposes of the study, the study questionnaire, and how to conduct focus groups. The Hispanic moderator and co-moderator adjusted the study questionnaire and focus group procedures according to the linguistic and cultural norms of the Hispanic participants.

Focus groups were recorded on audiotape, while co-moderators recorded notes on paper. Participants discussed the study questions as a group, and each person completed an information form to capture some demographic data. Participants were given a handout with a self-addressed, stamped envelope to take home with them, on which they could provide additional comments and suggestions and then mail back to the researchers. The information forms and handouts were translated into Spanish for Hispanic participants. Each focus group participant received a \$20 Wal-Mart or K-Mart gift card as an incentive and, when available, a brochure entitled "Keeping Youth Drug Free."

Individual Interviews

Individual interviews were conducted at various locations throughout Sarasota County, depending on what was most convenient for the participant and the interviewer. All interviews were conducted in English.

Interviewers included three CBPM CAC members, the Sarasota Prevention Marketing Coordinator, and an FPRC staff member. Interviewers were trained by FPRC staffs on the purposes of the study, the study questionnaire, and how to conduct individual interviews.

Two of the interviews were recorded on audiotape, while the other eleven were recorded by taking written notes. As in the focus groups, interview participants completed an information form and were given a handout and self-addressed, stamped envelope to provide the researchers with additional information. Each

individual interview participant received a \$10 Wal-Mart gift card as an incentive and, when possible, a brochure entitled “Keeping Youth Drug Free.”

Handouts

Three participants returned handouts to the researchers with additional written comments and suggestions about underage drinking.

Data Analysis

All audiotapes were transcribed. An independent contractor transcribed the tapes from the four groups conducted in English. An FPRC staff member transcribed the tapes from the two groups conducted in Spanish and from the two interviews. The FPRC staff member typed and translated the co-moderators' written notes from the two Hispanic focus groups. A native Spanish speaker reviewed translations for accuracy. Participants' responses from the remaining interviews and the returned handouts were also typed.

A minimum of two people read the transcripts and the typed notes from each focus group, interview, and handout. Readers included two USF graduate students, the Sarasota Prevention Marketing Coordinator, and three FPRC staff members. The readers coded the data by looking for themes that emerged and assigning a code word to each theme. Once the data were coded, an FPRC staff member entered the transcripts, notes, and codes into a computer program called Ethnograph. Using Ethnograph, each code and its corresponding passages from the transcripts and notes were printed out. Then a minimum of two people, including the Sarasota Prevention Marketing Coordinator, an FPRC staff member, and a USF graduate student, read each code and the corresponding passages to determine the main points found within each theme and to find supporting quotes.

RESULTS

Focus groups and individual interviews were conducted with parents in Sarasota County to identify parents' perceptions of alcohol use in Sarasota County, the benefits and costs of various prevention strategies, self efficacy (i.e., their ability to effectively use the strategies), social norms surrounding the strategies, effective information channels and spokespersons to communicate messages to parents, and ways to increase parent involvement in prevention efforts. Parents' responses have been organized into the following themes: (1) general concerns, (2) drinking behavior, (3) parent-based strategies for prevention of underage drinking, (4) other strategies, (5) other promotional recommendations, and (6) caveats for parent-based prevention strategies.

General Concerns

Participants discussed at length their concerns with being parents, including their aspirations for their children, the challenges they face as parents, and what worries them the most.

Parents' Aspirations for their Children

- When asked to discuss their aspirations as parents, they talked about the following dreams they have for their children:
 - Feeling safe and secure
 - Having good physical, mental, and emotional health
 - Having good self esteem and self confidence
 - Getting a good education
 - Feeling that they are cared for by family and community
 - Having positive role models
 - Being happy
 - Having religious faith
 - Having a good relationship with their parents
 - Being independent
 - Having good morals, values, and the ability to make good decisions
 - Having their material needs met

Parents' Challenges and Worries

Safety

- Participants consistently mentioned safety as a challenge they face as parents, as an aspiration they have for their kids, as what comes to mind when they think of underage drinking, and as a motivator for them to prevent underage drinking.

Last year this community went through a real hard time with three or four accidents with young drivers and stuff, so I always think about that.

There's too many things that can happen when they are drinking. You wake up raped. Or you don't wake up at all.

Parents' concept of safety included such things as:

- Keeping kids safe from crime
- Keeping kids safe from physical harm
- Keeping kids safe from mental and emotional harm
- Keeping kids safe from accidental death or suicide
- Keeping kids safe from car accidents or being hit by a car
- Keeping kids safe from being raped
- Preventing drinking and driving
- Preventing teenage pregnancy
- Keeping schools safe from guns and violence
- Having kids be able to trust the people around them
- Making kids feel secure
- Protecting kids from unfair treatment
- Protecting kids from drugs and alcohol that are available
- Protecting kids from sexually explicit material and messages

Discipline

- The issue of discipline was a major concern for many parents. Parents generally felt that teaching their kids discipline is very important. The idea of discipline included setting and negotiating rules and limits for kids, maintaining control within the home, teaching kids about consequences for their actions, teaching kids responsibility, teaching kids respect, and punishing them.
- Parents sometimes felt they are unable to discipline their children as they would like.

And if you spank him or chastise him, you're behind bars with no questions asked because the kids say it...The parents don't have no say.

Yeah, a lot of parents these days in this century, they feel like, 'Well, I don't want my child to be afraid of me, so I let him do this and that and the other.'

- Many parents felt that teaching kids discipline is an effective way to prevent them from drinking alcohol.

Parents need to hold kids accountable for cleaning their rooms, chores around the house, to help pay for car insurance. If they learn to be accountable and know it is expected of them, they will be accountable when it comes to drinking.

- Difficulty in balancing the need to discipline children and the desire to teach them independence was also a common theme. As a result, some parents are inconsistent as disciplinarians.

I think the fine line between having control as a parent and also being able to give them their freedom that they need to be able to experience the things that they need to experience to grow into a young adult.

Supervision

- Many parents find it difficult to spend as much time with their kids as they would like. Many worry about the amount of time their kids are left unsupervised.

There's just so much in a day's time with so many kids and so many activities and so much homework and so much everything and working three jobs and everything I do. It's like, how can you stay focused? What is happening to all of our families?

- Many parents felt they are competing with outside influences on their children's lives that could undermine the values they have tried to instill in their children. They are concerned about their kids making the right choices.

Sometimes they choose other role models or other parents that do not have the same values that you do.

So at times it's very challenging when you try to instill those values in your child, and they see their peers doing other things than what I'm trying to instill in my child.

Because there are a lot of things around them that make them think they don't count.

- Many Hispanic parents felt it is more difficult to raise their children in the United States than it would have been in their native countries because of the cultural differences.

Other Issues

- Communicating with children
- Instilling children with a sense of self worth and knowledge that they are loved
- Educating children and teaching them to respect them and other adults
- Developing trust and mutual understanding between parents and kids
- Coping with children's social lives
- Coping with the availability of drugs and alcohol on the streets

Drinking Behavior

Parents discussed their views on behaviors related to alcohol use, including the prevalence and acceptability of drinking in Sarasota County, the norms associated with adult drinking behavior, their personal experiences with alcohol as youth, the norms associated with youth drinking behavior, the influence of peer pressure on drinking behavior, their perceptions of the acceptability of underage drinking, and parents' lack of awareness about underage drinking.

Drinking in Sarasota County

- Most parents in the focus groups were concerned about the level of alcohol consumption by youth and adults in Sarasota County. They felt that drinking is generally an accepted behavior in Sarasota County.

It's okay to do that, so people do it...People don't think it's a problem.

Every function that we have in this town has alcohol. Fourth of July, the Grand Prix races. Everything revolves around alcohol in this town.

- Some parents said that the relaxed, resort-like atmosphere and wealth in the county contribute to alcohol use.

It's sort of relaxed, laid back, party...There's that feeling. And I think the kids sort of just get sucked right into that too.

I mean, you got the big old liquor cabinets in the nice homes.

- There was a general perception that drinking is very common among adults, especially in social situations.

Where we go anymore most people are drinking.

The only time I drink is when I have company. And I seem to have company all the time.

It's part of the lifestyle of a lot of people. It's a socially acceptable adult behavior.

- Some parents felt that it is even an expected behavior for adults, and they feel pressure from other adults to drink.

Yeah, I do get people that are baffled that I don't drink.

It's done got to be like a social thing. And a lot of times I tell them, 'No, I don't want one.' 'Oh, come on, come on.' And I'll take it anyway, even though I know in my heart that I didn't want it.

Even though we try not to drink when we take our kids. Others do not feel the same way...It is hard to be different.

Parents' Experiences As Teenagers

- Most parents were exposed to alcohol when they were growing up, and the majority had initiated drinking as adolescents.

I come from an Italian background, and that was a normal thing with the grandparents to always have wine at the table.

Alcohol was available in my home because we are a culture that we could drink wine, wine is available.

We actually had Freak Night in high school...It was just accepted that you went down to the beach, and there was probably liquor there.

- For most parents, their personal experiences with alcohol as adolescents have influenced the way they handle the subject with their children now.

My parents didn't talk to me. And the minute I had freedom, I just blew loose. So to me, I tell [my son] that, 'This is for your own good.'

Half of my drinking was done in my own neighborhood at so-and-so's house because her mother worked at nights...The supervision, I think, for me was the biggest part because [my parents] truly never questioned what I was doing...So some of the things I do with my daughter... I'm like, 'I know.'

I think anything you put too much emphasis on...That's how I was. Anything my momma told me that was not good, I had to see why it wasn't good.

Underage Drinking

- There was a general perception that drinking is common among kids. When asked to estimate the percentage of youth who drink alcohol, parents estimated between 30% and 100%, with 75% being the most frequent response. Some parents were quick to point out that not all kids drink.
- Parents were generally concerned about the influence of peer pressure in their children's lives. The majority of parents felt that peer pressure is a very strong influence on underage drinking. Many parents felt that drinking is a rite of passage that all kids will be confronted with at some time during adolescence.

It's like still a phase of life, a rite of passage that they are going to either be exposed [to] or be confronted with.

For some reason, they think they have to do that...to be cool. To be accepted.

It's just like the power of their friends is stronger than anything we can possibly do with them. And what we do is like putting plugs in a dam that's about to bust.

- All parents felt that underage drinking is unacceptable if the kids are unsupervised or if it puts them in danger. Many parents felt that it is unacceptable under any circumstances. Others felt that it is acceptable for teenagers to drink if they consume limited amounts in a supervised or controlled environment.
- Parents were divided in their views about whether children should be permitted to taste alcohol. Some parents felt that letting their children taste alcohol is a means of prevention. Other parents felt that letting children taste alcohol would lead to negative consequences.

I've encouraged him to take a sip to see what it tastes like. And he doesn't like it...And I don't really want him to begin to like it.

Then they realize how good it tastes, and then when you are not looking, that's how I think a lot of kids become addicted to drinking because they are drinking it on Christmas and Thanksgiving when everybody is toasting.

- Many parents believed that it is not uncommon for other parents to serve alcohol to kids.

If the kid's going to do it, some of these parents buy it and put it in the house where they have it.

Some parents out there will allow their children to have parties and have alcohol. And then they have this theory that because they are at their home that it's okay.

- Cultural norms and traditions seemed to play a role in determining the situations in which parents viewed underage drinking as acceptable.

We wish it were never acceptable, but there are situations in which it is permitted.

I don't think it's acceptable anytime, except for maybe if you're with your family and it's a holiday and you're having a glass of wine.

The Hispanic male at times tends to take their boys and might end up having them drink a beer with them at maybe, who knows, maybe at the age of 12...They feel that, to them, that's a way that they can teach their sons to be men.

- A few parents identified age 18 as the age at which it is acceptable to drink alcohol.

Maybe when they are over 18. Otherwise, you can get into a lot of trouble.

We would never support any young, youth teenagers drinking or being allowed to do so. Until you become 18, and then you're allowed to try a glass of wine.

Lack of Awareness About Underage Drinking

- The majority of participants felt that they and other parents need to be educated in order to create an awareness of the problem of underage drinking, to create an awareness of the need for parents to help with prevention, and to give parents the skills and information they need in order to help.

Participants suggested that education of parents include the following:

- Consequences of underage drinking
- Extent of underage drinking in Sarasota County
- Information and skills to use prevention strategies effectively with their kids
- Vocabulary the kids use to talk about issues related to alcohol
- How to work with the community

Parent-Based Strategies for Prevention of Underage Drinking

Parents discussed several strategies in which they are the driving force behind the prevention of underage drinking. The first four strategies (i.e., talking with kids about alcohol, modeling behavior, supervising, and limiting access to alcohol) were supplied by the researchers so that parents could provide their opinions on the benefits and costs of each and their self efficacy (i.e., their ability to use a given strategy). During the course of the research, parents suggested several additional strategies that they believe could be effective.

Talking with Kids About Alcohol

- All parents agreed that talking with their kids is a valuable prevention strategy, and all had talked, or at least had attempted to talk, with their kids about alcohol.

Examples of talking about alcohol that parents provided included:

- Explaining parents' beliefs about underage drinking
- Telling their kids the negative consequences of drinking
- Pointing out examples of people who have had problems because of alcohol
- Sharing their own experiences with alcohol
- Teaching them what responsible drinking means
- Telling their kids that underage drinking is illegal and teaching them to follow the law
- Asking their kids about their beliefs and drinking habits
- Asking their kids about their friends' beliefs and drinking habits

Perceived Benefits

- Talking with kids about alcohol was viewed by almost all parents as effective, particularly when used in conjunction with supervision, parent involvement, or modeling. Even parents who questioned its effectiveness still believed that it was a '*wonderful approach.*'

- Many parents liked educating their children about the effects of alcohol and about appropriate alcohol use. They hope to protect them from dangers associated with alcohol use and abuse.

I explain to them the extent of the damage my alcoholism caused, the destruction of the family, how it was a source of disintegration for the family.

I think you should make children aware of the dangers...and that there will be a time in their life when they're going to try it if they want to try it, but that they're conscious enough to know the pros and cons of the consequences.

- Many parents liked communication as a way to enhance relationships with their kids.

What you're looking for is, you're looking in the words that you tell them, you're looking at trust.

I know what they think because they tell me how they feel when they're with people who are drinking.

Costs

- The majority of parents did not identify any problems with talking to their kids about alcohol. The most common barrier mentioned was time and energy: parents have limited opportunities for relaxed exchanges with children because both they and their children have so many competing demands.

Self Efficacy

- Some parents found it easy to talk to their kids about alcohol, while others questioned their abilities to communicate with children effectively.

That is the easiest for me as well...Education-slash-talking, for me.

I can talk a blue streak, and it's like, 'Are they listening or zoning me out, tuning me out?'

[One of the biggest challenges is] communication, getting them to understand what I am trying to get across to them. Kids do not care and are selective in what they listen to.

Parents have to have the tools to know what to do, how to talk to them.

Recommendations

- Recommendations for making it easier for parents to talk to their kids included:
- Starting the communication process with their children at a very young age
 - Talking with their child's friends

- Knowing their child's attention span
- Waiting until their child initiates a conversation
- Using movies or commercials on television as a springboard for a conversation
- Having a mental health professional facilitate family discussions

Modeling Behavior for Kids

- The majority of parents felt strongly that role models are important because children imitate the behavior they see around them.

Children learn from what they see their parents doing.

Yeah, you have to be responsible about how you drink around your children, or not to drink around your children. They'll thrive on your example, or die by it.

Don't say, 'Do as I say and not as I do.' You can't.

- Many of the participants reported that they strive to model appropriate behavior for their own children and those around them. Some parents felt that other family members and adults could be equally influential as role models for their kids.

You've got to have the whole family involved, not just you...[My son] saw my mother with a drink and Mom said, 'No,...you can't have this until you are an adult...'...Right then and there his first thought of alcohol is, 'Ooh, when I get to be older I can drink this.'

Well, I think it's important that if you don't think you're a good role model, then you find good role models for your kids.

- Some participants believe that in the patriarchal Hispanic culture, it is often more important for the father to model the behavior than the mother.

I see it in the majority of the people that I know that it's more that the father should set the example for the kids because, as she says, she's not going to tell her son, 'Don't drink,' when the father is there with a beer in his hand all the time.

Perceived Benefits

- Many parents thought that modeling is the most effective strategy for preventing underage drinking.

[The most effective strategy is] modeling because other strategies are not effective if you're not modeling. You can't ask someone to do what you are unable to do.

- Some parents said they like modeling because they believe that as kids grow up, they will fall back on the behavior they saw as a child in order to cope with problems.

Yeah, because when you're under stress, you're going to fall back on what you saw and knew as a child.

- Most parents said that modeling reinforces the messages they give their kids about not drinking.

And if I'm not being a role model, then how can I teach my child to do it if I'm not practicing what I preach?

- Many parents said they like modeling because it sets a standard of behavior for the kids.

It sets a standard and establishes certain rules and regulations in your household.

Costs

- Although modeling was recognized as effective, it was also viewed as one of the most difficult strategies for parents to use. Some parents felt that modeling behavior was no guarantee that kids would not drink and that it did not have an immediate effect on kid's drinking behavior.

[The most difficult is] modeling because it challenges a parent's own values and behavior to the core, and behaviors are hard to change.

The only thing with modeling behavior is, unfortunately, I think that it may take a while for that to catch on. It may not help with the very young. It may be something that they look back on and use as an older teen [more] than they do maybe as a younger teen.

- Some parents did not want to have abstain from drinking alcohol.

Then you have to be good all the time.

I just feel like I'm grown and I can do that. I've worked hard and they done got on my nerves and I can do that.

Self Efficacy

- Some parents had already successfully changed their behavior to become good role models for their kids.

But what happened was we had two children, and we thought it over that we would not drink anymore because we had children, and we wanted to give them the benefit of the doubt.

- Some parents said they have no problem modeling behavior.

It wasn't hard for me. I don't know about other parents.

It's not hard for me to do it.

- Others thought it is a good idea, but they choose not to use it as a strategy or couldn't because their spouse would not cooperate.

As long as they see what their father is doing, you don't have control over how to get their attention.

- Some parents mentioned that peer pressure and social and cultural norms contribute to the difficulty of modeling behavior for their kids.

Even though we try not to drink when we take our kids. Others do not feel the same way...It is hard to be different.

Because all they do is see us sit around talking, socializing, but we're drinking beer. So I don't want them to grow up thinking, 'Well, this is how you socialize.'

Supervision

- Parents generally felt that supervision of their kids is very important in preventing them from drinking alcohol.

Parents provided numerous examples of what supervision means to them, including:

- Knowing what their child is doing at all times: where the child is, what the child is doing, and whom the child is with
- Knowing the parents of their child's friends
- Talking with the parents of their child's friends if their child is going to their house or spending the night
- Knowing their child's friends
- Directly supervising the kids' activities
- Having kids come over to their house instead of letting their child go to others' houses
- Deciding who their child can be with
- Taking and picking up their child from school and other places
- Smelling their child's breath
- Staying up until their child comes home to see what state they are in

Benefits

- The majority of parents felt that supervision is an effective prevention strategy. A few parents suggested supervision as a way to limit their child's access to alcohol.
- Supervision was seen as a part of parenthood and the responsibility of protecting one's child from harm.

That's your job to say who your child should be around and who your child should not be around. You have to do that.

I feel better if I know where they are and what they are doing. That is my responsibility as a parent.

You gotta know when your kid goes over to Suzy's house whether Suzy's parents think it's okay to drink. And if you don't know that, then you don't have control.

- Some parents felt that supervision helps them to establish good relationships with their kids.

It continues to establish a positive relationship between your children and yourself.

She is not afraid to talk to me.

- Parents also mentioned supervision as a way to establish discipline and let kids learn how to make good decisions.

If you say, 'What time are you coming home?' and you take note of how they come home and what state they're in when they get home, they know that they don't have the opportunity.

Parents can serve as a backup and give feedback, letting kids make mistakes, but in a controlled environment.

Costs

- Parents generally agreed that supervision takes a lot of time and effort.

Like you said, the supervision of the home they're in, and that takes a lot of work... That's the most work for a parent.

Too many kids and not enough Mom to go around.

- Parents also mentioned that kids may feel the parents are invading their privacy, being overprotective, or do not trust their children.

It has its ups and down because, you know, a child will always feel that you're invading in their privacy.

That makes him feel that the trust that you instill in him is not there.

- Parents also mentioned the monetary and career sacrifices that must be made to supervise their children.

I actually quit my job there because I felt that I could not be on top of him when I was working. And I started cleaning houses so I could have my own schedule so I could be there.

And we spend more than we can afford on computer stuff for him so that he will have all this stuff other kids want to play with so they'll come over to our house so I can supervise who he is with. And we're going broke.

Self Efficacy

- Although some parents report that they find supervision easy, most felt that it is difficult to do well. In a world with such diverse opinions, it takes courage to talk with other parents about their views on drinking and how they supervise their children.

Because no matter how well you think you know that other parent, you don't know what that other parent's going to do. I have had parents cover up for my daughter.

- Several parents said that it gets more difficult to supervise as kids get older.

This is the tricky part when they get older because you want [to know] what is going on but not get into their business.

Social Norms

- A few participants felt that other parents do not care about supervising their own kids.

Some of these kids leave home at 8:00 in the morning and they go home when this building closes at 9:00...What do you think your child is doing for 12 hours when you don't know where they are?

The parents do not pay attention to their children, and they let them go to parties without knowing whom they're with, and the parents do not know what time their children come home.

- A few participants also felt that other parents do not want to be told about their children's behavior.

Now you can't just act neighborly, go and say, 'I saw Joe in the road drinking a beer or smoking a cigarette today.' You'll get cussed out.

- One parent discussed the difference in cultural norms regarding supervision. She feels the Hispanic culture in which she grew up was more conducive to supervision than the US culture.

Our dances were with chaperones, and the parents sat away from the young crowd, but there were always adults around. And we didn't mind, we danced and we partied and we had a lot of fun...Direct supervision of youth groups [is the most difficult strategy] because America is a society that has allowed youth organizations to create parties without supervision. That's not part of the upbringing of the cultural component of it.

Recommendations

Recommendations for making supervision easier included:

- Doing things as a family
- Starting supervision at a young age so the kids become accustomed to it
- Having parties in the household that include both kids and adults
- Having joint events with their children's friends' families
- Supervising when the kids are unaware

Limiting Access to Alcohol

- Parents knew of several ways in which youth can access alcohol, including:
 - Stealing it from the refrigerator or liquor cabinet at home
 - Having older kids buy it for them
 - Having adults buy it for them
 - Having their parents provide it to them
 - From public/community functions such as concerts
 - Buying it with fake IDs
 - Learning other ways from the Internet

Benefits

- The majority of parents felt that limiting access to alcohol was part of the solution but that it was not an effective strategy by itself. Some parents liked limiting access to alcohol because it serves as a barrier between supply and demand.

Any barrier between the supply and the user has the potential to keep SOME kids from drinking it.

[I like it because there is] no easy access.

Self Efficacy

- Most parents who believed in limiting access to alcohol in the home feel that they are able to do so.

We don't keep alcohol in the house very often, but when it is,...it's accountable...And if I go in the refrigerator and I see that there was five there and now there's four, there's a problem.

To me, the easiest one of those to me would be limiting access. Because that's something I can choose to do that doesn't involve other people...That's something I can do on my own.

I don't drink, so not having it in my house, I don't have a problem with it.

- Some parents felt that it is difficult for them to limit kids' access to alcohol because the parents want it in the house for themselves.

[What makes it difficult is my] own personal preference.

Limiting access [is difficult] because a lot of parents drink, and they want it for themselves.

- However, almost all parents felt that it is unrealistic to expect that they could limit their children's access to alcohol completely.

If they want it, I mean, it's easy. It's not that difficult to have access to those things.

How do you limit it? It's everywhere.

I don't see how you can monitor it. I try...And I really feel that I am a pretty strict parent at home, but they find ways.

Recommendations

Suggestions for what parents can do to limit children's access to alcohol included:

- Not having alcohol in the house
- Only having alcohol for special occasions
- Keeping it high above, out of reach or locking it up in the house
- Knowing what they have and keeping track of it
- Knowing the parents of their child's friends, how they feel about underage drinking, and how accessible alcohol is in their house
- Confronting store owners who sell alcohol to kids with fake IDs
- Uniting with other parents in a campaign to get stores to be stricter about selling to kids with fake IDs
- Getting police to enforce laws to keep stores from selling alcohol to minors
- Supporting existing programs to keep kids from drinking
- Talking with their kids about alcohol (e.g., telling them that the alcohol is not for them, showing them the consequences of drinking, teaching them respect for personal property)
- Supervising their kids (e.g., knowing where their children are and whom they are with)

Educating Youth

Benefits

- The majority of parents felt that educating youth about alcohol is an integral part of prevention. It was discussed in relation to many other strategies, including talking with kids, modeling behavior, supervision, structuring kids' time, community, treatment centers, school, media, policy, and other recommendations. Most parents felt that education of children about alcohol should start at a young age and be constantly reiterated. Age recommendations for starting school-based programs ranged from 3 to 8 years old. Education within the home was suggested to start as early as birth.

Examples of educating youth included:

- Teaching kids the negative consequences of drinking and driving
- Teaching kids the physiological damage caused by drinking
- Teaching kids what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior
- Teaching kids to decipher messages about alcohol in the media that make it seem appealing
- Teaching kids to make choices in their lives
- Teaching kids to do things in moderation

Recommendations

Parents had many suggestions for educating their children:

- Having an expert come to the school or church and have an information session with the kids
- Watching movies on television with their kids and talking about what happens to the characters because of drinking
- Talking with them
- Modeling appropriate behavior for them
- Having MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving) mothers show videos of the consequences of drinking to students after sports events before they go out to celebrate
- Showing them the wrecked cars from drinking and driving accidents
- Having kids volunteer in a hospital where they would see families having to deal with the trauma of a drunk driving accident
- Having programs in schools that teach kids to make choices
- Having programs in schools that teach kids the effects of drinking alcohol
- Taking them to a treatment center
- “Scared Stiff”

Structuring Kids’ Time

- Another recommendation that many parents suggested to help prevent underage drinking was to structure kids’ time.

Examples of structuring included:

- Keeping kids active
- Giving them something to focus on (e.g., a hobby)
- Controlling how kids spend their time
- Controlling where kids go to school
- Involving them in positive social activities (e.g., extracurricular school activities, sports, scouting, after school programs, clubs, organization-sponsored weekend activities, and church)
- Providing them with challenging ways to spend their time

Benefits

- Parents generally conceived of structuring their kids’ time as a way to supervise and keep them out of trouble.

Yeah, that they don't have a lot of down time, time they can get into trouble. It's down time. Once you come home, they're not doing that stuff anymore.

- A few parents mentioned that activities in which kids do things for other people increase kids' self esteem.

Because they not only have fun but they do other things for other people, which I think helps them to feel good about themselves when you are doing stuff for other people.

- Some parents felt they could influence who their kids spend time with by influencing the school they attend and activities in which they participate.

I think sometimes when they are within a group of peers that are all thinking the same, then they have a tendency not to want to go out and do other things like that.

Costs

- Several parents mentioned that the price of activities can be prohibitive.

Now it seems like you have to have a couple hundred dollars for your child to participate in a sport.

Yeah, who can afford that? Every time you go somewhere, it costs you for your family to go there, then you can't go.

- Others mentioned the time and energy required to create and maintain activities in which kids can participate. Many parents mentioned that their schedules prevent them from structuring their kids' time.

Our church consciously started a youth group about eight years ago...It's been a lot of work for the parents.

And you have to be available to drive them back and forth and back and forth.

Self Efficacy

- Parents generally felt that there is a lack of structured activities and places for their kids to go, particularly for high school students.

And after school programs for children after they get out of middle school are pretty hard to find that would be anything that would be challenging enough.

There doesn't seem to be any place where the kids are allowed to assemble.

- Some parents felt they could not structure their kids' time because their kids are too old.

If you wait to the age where they are a preteen, it's too late. 'It's not cool, I don't want to do it, it's too hot outside, I'm lazy.'

And they don't want to be in the after school program when they are that age. There's no way.

Recommendations

Recommendations for making structuring time a more viable strategy included:

- Making after school programs more challenging, fun, and cool for kids
- Getting the school board to pay for transportation for kids to go to after school activities
- Scheduling activities during hours when parents are available
- Paying parents to create and maintain activities for kids so they do not have to take money away from their own families to do it
- Having separate activities for boys and girls
- Having activities where the parents and kids can do things together

Other Strategies

Faith

- Faith-based activities were suggested as a way to provide role modeling and supervision for kids and to structure kids' time.

Well, another thing that we promote is church activity. And that has a lot to do with role modeling and supervising and all those things.

God's Kids-God's Way

- Faith-based organizations were suggested as places for parents to have a forum to discuss issues related to underage drinking, for getting information to parents, for recruiting other parents to get involved in preventing underage drinking, and for finding a spokesperson to communicate messages to parents.

We have the luxury of having our Sunday school classes revolve all around parents of teenagers. And these are some of the topics that we talk about.

- While participants from all ethnic backgrounds mentioned faith-based strategies, it should be noted that the church serves as a social glue in the Hispanic community.

Community-Based Strategies

- While parents generally felt that prevention of underage drinking must start within the home, they also felt the community as a whole must support parents' efforts. Many parents stressed the need for community-based

strategies involving parents, kids, businesses, county politicians, schools, and community organizations working together.

Where I've seen it the most effective is...where a lot of them come together and say, 'This is the image, this is the message we want to promote, and how are we going to promote it on all levels, whether that be at the school, or with counseling, or with public health, whether it's in business.'

You've got to change the community norms. And you've got to figure out a creative way of doing that. And it can't be a Band-Aid thing.

- Parents mentioned some organizations that are currently involved in prevention efforts and some services they provide to the community:
 - Jewish Family Services – Education and counseling for kids as an alternative to school suspension
 - Teen Source – Teen theater group that performs educational plays for a variety of audiences
 - YMCA – Teen Scene parties for youth twice a month in an alcohol/tobacco/drug-free environment; annual high school graduation party where kids stay all night
 - Alcoholics Anonymous, Alanon, and Alateen – Support and counseling services for alcoholics, recovering alcoholics, and their family members; education for the public about alcohol and alcoholism
 - First Step – Education about drugs and alcohol for parents and kids

- Other community-based strategies that parents suggested included:
 - Places for the youth to hang out and have fun in an alcohol-free environment, preferably supervised by adults
 - Community events, games, and activities in which the whole family can participate
 - Free or inexpensive activities that everyone can afford
 - Dramas in the community presented by kids
 - A “safe house” for kids with alcohol or drug problems, in which trained parents would be paid to work with the kids, and the kids would be paid to work as tutors for younger children
 - Big Brother/Big Sister and other mentoring programs
 - Volunteer opportunities for the youth
 - Community policies to discourage the sale and advertisement of alcohol at community events and sporting events
 - Changes in business practices to make it easier for parents to be involved in their children's lives and to participate in community events
 - Additional efforts within the Hispanic community through the Hispanic American Alliance

Treatment Centers and Professional Counseling

- Several parents suggested treatment centers and professional counseling as methods of prevention and intervention. Parents felt the treatment centers and counselors could provide various counseling services as well as education to kids about the effects of alcohol.

- Some parents discussed these as an alternative to school suspension, in which case a child caught for drug, alcohol, or tobacco use at school would be sent to mandatory counseling for the amount of time she or he would have been suspended from school.
 - Another strategy mentioned was to take kids to a treatment center to learn about the effects of alcohol.
- Some parents suggested that a law be passed to make treatment centers lower their prices so that more people can afford them. Another recommendation was to get funding through grants for non-profit organizations to offer counseling services to students, either in the schools or separately.

School-Based Programs

- Several parents felt that schools contribute to the lack of discipline because they do not hold kids accountable for their behavior and because they interfere with what the parents are trying to teach their children. Schools were also criticized for the early dismissal of classes that contributes to difficulty in supervising them.
- Many parents felt that schools could educate kids about alcohol through programs on the consequences of drinking, programs about making choices in their lives, and through placing wrecked cars in front of the schools from drunk driving accidents. Some parents suggested starting alcohol education in the schools in Kindergarten or First Grade.
- Schools were often mentioned in terms of providing supervision and structure for kids' time through after school programs, clubs, sports, band, etc. One parent proposed having mandatory after school programs. Some parents suggested that after school programs need to be fun, challenging, cool, and affordable.
- Many participants suggested educating parents through the schools. Strategies to do this included having alcohol-related presentations at parent meetings, providing forums for parents to discuss alcohol-related issues, having elementary school children talk to their parents about what they were learning about alcohol, and having kids take alcohol-related information home for their parents to sign and return.
- Some parents discussed having schools provide alcohol counseling instead of suspension for kids caught drinking, smoking, or exhibiting other inappropriate behavior.
- A few parents said there should be an evaluation to find out what current alcohol education programs exist in the schools and why they are not working.

- Most parents thought that schools need more money for teachers and programs to improve the quality of children's education and prevention of underage drinking.

Media

- Many parents felt the prevalence of alcohol in advertisements, music, television shows, and movies contributes to the perception of drinking as a social norm. The media were criticized for making drinking look glamorous and fun and teaching kids how to break rules.
- Most parents discussed the media in terms of how it could be used in a campaign to prevent underage drinking. For example, some Hispanic parents suggested advertising in the Hispanic community's newspapers and magazines, radio, and television stations.
- Some parents discussed ways in which the media could help to change the perception of drinking as a social norm. A few parents suggested reducing or prohibiting advertisements for alcohol on television. One suggested eliminating prevention messages from television completely.

Other Promotional Recommendations

Policy

- Parents made suggestions for policies at all levels of local and state government. Some policy suggestions were related to schools, community, treatment centers, and media. Other policies included:
 - Stricter laws for underage drinking and the sale of alcohol to minors
 - Harsher punishments for underage drinking and for enabling the sale of alcohol to minors
 - Lowering or eliminating the legal drinking age
 - Prohibiting the sale of alcohol in general

Spokespersons

- Participants were asked whom they thought would be a good spokesperson to communicate prevention messages to parents. Almost all participants recommended that the spokesperson have experience in dealing with alcohol use and underage drinking.
- Several parents thought that other parents would make the best spokespersons, particularly if the spokesperson has been through problems with underage drinking with their own children. One parent preferred to have a parent who has successfully raised their kids to not abuse alcohol.
- Several parents suggested that a teenager would be the best spokesperson to communicate with parents, particularly a teen who has experience with underage drinking or who has suffered negative consequences, such as being involved in a drunk driving accident.

That would hit us more so than hearing it from a peer because we now don't see someone else's child, we see our own child...And we don't want our child to go through what this individual has gone through, so we tend to set things in motion.

The teens. Because they can say to you, 'I know what your child is doing because I'm there.'

- Some parents said that experts such as university professors, counselors, psychologists, or other professionals who work in the field of drug and alcohol abuse would make good spokespersons. It was particularly important to many of the Hispanic parents that the spokesperson have some kind of credential.
- Many Hispanic parents felt that a religious leader (e.g., Padre Celestino from St. Martha's Catholic Church in Sarasota) would be an effective spokesperson to communicate messages about underage drinking to them.
- Other spokespersons recommended by participants to communicate with parents included:
 - Recovering alcoholic adult
 - Celebrities (e.g., country musician Tim McGraw)
 - Dynamic speaker
 - People who have to deal with children's problems (e.g., teachers, school counselors, pastors, judges)
 - Wife or husband of an alcoholic

Information Channels

- Recommended information channels included:
 - Television and radio
 - Parent meetings at school, work, church or neighborhood associations
 - Small discussion groups
- Some parents suggested having their children bring messages to them (i.e., educating the children in school so they will start a conversation with their parents at home and teach their parents).
- Some Hispanic participants felt that bilingual/bicultural Hispanic parents could be reached through mainstream channels. For Hispanic parents who speak primarily Spanish in the home, recommended information channels included:
 - Public service announcements in Spanish on SNN-Channel 6 and Univisión
 - Pamphlets written in Spanish
 - Spanish speaking parent groups (e.g., church discussion groups, or gatherings similar to a "Tupperware party" in which a small group would meet in someone's home and a bilingual/bicultural health educator or neighbor would bring educational materials and lead a discussion)
- Most Hispanic participants emphasized the importance of having promotional messages that include Hispanic cultural values. Some of these values

include the importance of family and the importance of *respeto* (i.e., respect for life, adults, policies).

- Other recommended information channels to reach parents included:
 - Community organizations (e.g., Hispanic American Alliance, Alcoholics Anonymous)
 - Youth groups who take information to churches, schools, and criminal detention centers
 - Hospitals
 - Other forms of media
- Many parents felt that having kids bring home literature from school for parents to read was an ineffective channel.

Caveats for Parent-Based Prevention Strategies

While the majority of parents may believe in preventing underage drinking, some caveats should be kept in mind when considering strategies based on parent efforts. The first caveat is the proven difficulty of getting parents to actively involve themselves in prevention efforts. The second is the lack of consensus among parents about the effects of various strategies.

Parent Involvement

- Parents acknowledged that parent involvement is essential to the success of the prevention strategies they discussed. However, most parents felt that getting parents, including themselves at times, more involved in their kids' lives and in the community is extremely difficult.

You can't get parents involved across the board. And it's not economic, it's not color, it's not anything. You just can't get parents to be involved.

- Parents identified several barriers that they feel prevent themselves or other parents from getting involved in their children's lives or in community activities:
 - Parents do not have enough time and energy because of competing demands
 - Parents do not care enough about their children; they are not willing to make sacrifices for their kids
 - Activities are not held at times that working parents can attend
 - Parents do not realize that their children need them
 - Parents will not come to some organizational meetings because of the organization's political agenda
 - Parents have not seen any results from participating in things in the past
 - Linguistic barriers for Hispanic and other non-English speaking parents

Recommendations

Recommendations for increasing parent involvement included:

- Bringing the agenda to an already existing meeting instead of creating another meeting for parents to go to

- Parents getting other parents do things through “leg work” and “word of mouth”
- Educating parents about the statistics on underage drinking, the need for them to be involved in prevention, etc.
- Improving the school system and school programs so that parents will want to be a part of them
- Offering transportation to meetings
- Offering incentives to parents (e.g., money, food, insurance discounts, or other rebates)
- Ordering parents to spend documented time with their child if their child is brought into the court system
- Having activities in the workplace
- Having meetings after church services
- Having activities at more parent friendly times (e.g., after dinner)
- Arranging neighborhood meetings or tenant meetings
- Having meetings at the schools
- Not having meetings at the schools
- Asking parents to come and educate each other and debate the issues
- Not making parents feel forced to do it
- Making business practices more family friendly so that parents can spend more time with their kids
- Having programs and activities in Spanish that are culturally sensitive
- Making the results of programs, studies, and other community efforts known to the public
- Publicizing successful efforts in an attempt to get others to join in
- Looking for what other communities have done in the past to get parents involved

Lack of Consensus

- Some parents felt that various prevention strategies discussed could have unintended consequences. Though they were in the minority, their concerns should be noted when choosing strategies. Areas of disagreement included talking with kids about alcohol, educating youth, modeling behavior, limiting access, and structuring kids' time.
 - One parent worried about the impact that talking about alcohol would have on her relationship with her son.

At that time I think it put a strain on me and my son's relationship. It's hard for a parent to tell their kids what to do because you turn around and you're contradicting everything that you're telling them to do.
 - One parent felt that educating kids about alcohol is counterproductive because it would entice them, not deter them.
 - One parent reported that, because drinking is considered a masculine behavior within the Hispanic culture, a Hispanic male might feel that he were sacrificing a part of his masculine image if he did not drink.

It's something that Hispanic males, not all Hispanic males, but that's in the culture... They feel that...[drinking is] a way to teach their sons to be men.

- A few parents mentioned that having a negative role model could actually have a positive effect.
- A few parents felt that trying to limit kids' access would increase their curiosity and make them want it more.

The more you keep it away from them, they going to find out, 'Well, why is she keeping this from me? I want to know what it is.'

You can try to limit your child's access to alcohol,...I feel that you're still going to put that curiosity in them...if you try to limit it.

- A few parents also felt that limiting their kids' access would prevent them from learning how to make choices and deal with situations related to alcohol.

I want my children to see everything. Because that's the real world that we living in...So the only way you know how to deal with things unless you are put dead in that spot and you have to deal with it.

- A few parents mentioned that activities involving only the youth take away time that parents can spend with their kids.

Make it a family fun day where you can bring the parent and the child and do something together instead of sending your children and you stay home.

- A few parents mentioned that trying to structure their children's time can cause conflicts with their children, especially if the children think the activities are nerdy.

Even my daughter now is having a fit because I want her in an after school program.

They don't want to be taken care of anymore. 'You don't trust me.'