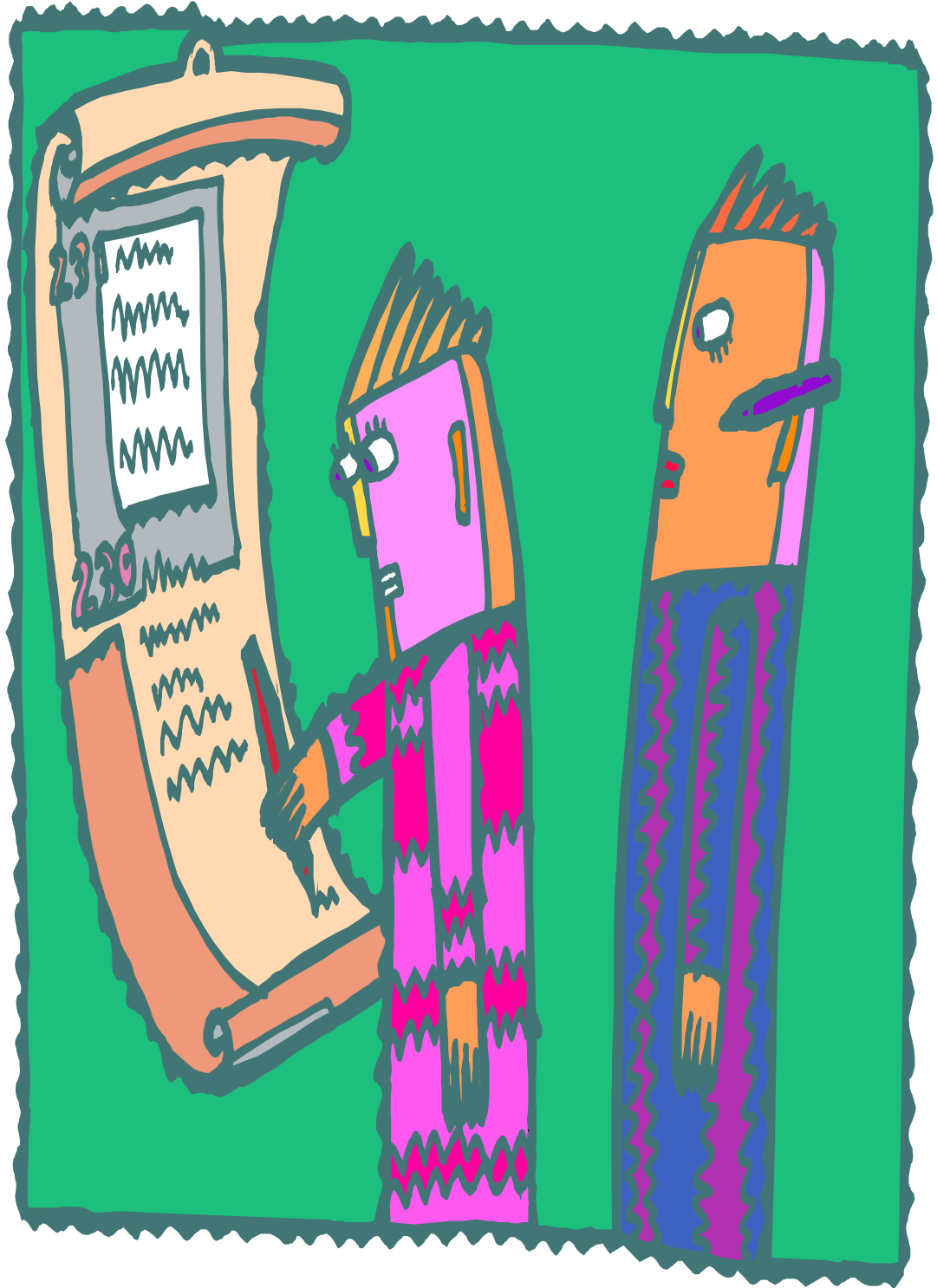


SECTION 1: RESEARCH METHODS



INTRODUCTION



This report will help community members make decisions about how to develop a youth alcohol prevention strategy in Sarasota County

The Sarasota Alcohol Free Youth Demonstration Project is designed to prevent the initiation of drinking among young people in grades 6 through 10. The Florida Prevention Research Center (FPRC) and a collaborative group of 20 community organizations have worked together for approximately two years to select target audiences and conduct consumer research to identify the factors that influence young people's drinking behavior.

This collaborative group, the Community Advisory Committee (CAC), uses "Community Based Prevention Marketing" (CBPM) to develop prevention programs to prevent disease and disability. Community based prevention marketing (CBPM) is a community-directed social change process that applies marketing theories and techniques to the design, implementation, and evaluation of health promotion and disease prevention programs (Appendix A – CBPM Process Article). CBPM also blends community organization principles and practices, behavioral theories, and marketing concepts and methods into a synergistic framework for directing positive change.

This report describes the results of the consumer research conducted with youth and parents in Sarasota County. The results of the consumer research will help guide strategic decisions for prevention interventions/ strategies initiated by Sarasota County community organizations and government agencies for use in preventing alcohol initiation among Sarasota youth.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES



Quantitative and qualitative research was conducted with 6th through 10th graders to identify information about alcohol use in youth and strategies to prevent initiation and use.

The purpose of this consumer research was to explore perceptions of alcohol use among 6th-10th grade youth in Sarasota County, Florida (hereafter referred to as “Sarasota youth”).

Specific objectives of the research were to identify:

- the factors that motivate Sarasota youth to use alcohol;
- the factors that deter use of alcohol among Sarasota youth;
- effective information channels and spokespersons for preventing alcohol use among Sarasota youth; and
- effective strategies for preventing alcohol use among Sarasota youth.

RESEARCH METHODS

The study was conducted in three phases:

- Phase 1: Qualitative research (focus groups and individual interviews) with Sarasota youth;
- Phase 2: Standardized survey research in Sarasota middle schools and high schools (hereafter referred to as “the survey research”); and
- Phase 3: Qualitative research (focus groups and individual interviews) with parents of Sarasota youth.

PHASE ONE: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH WITH SARASOTA YOUTH



Phase one was qualitative research with the youth. It consisted of training youth, developing a guide, and recruiting study sites and participants.

Teams comprised of FPRC youth researchers and FPRC graduate assistants conducted focus groups and interviews with Sarasota County youth going into 5th through 12th grades. Sarasota youth researchers were hired to collect qualitative data because the research team realized that youth rather than adults would be in a better position to obtain high quality information from adolescent participants.

Training.

FPRC staff, graduate assistants, USF faculty members, and CAC members collaboratively developed a 60-page curriculum guidebook and training agenda for a two-day FPRC youth researcher training session (Appendix B – Youth Training Article and Form to Receive a Copy of Youth Researcher Curriculum). Eleven youth researchers were trained to conduct focus groups and one-on-one, in-depth interviews.

Guide Development.

Focus group and interview guides were developed by FPRC youth researchers, community members and FPRC staff. The guide included questions about youths' perception of drinking, access to alcoholic beverages, potential spokespersons and strategies for preventing alcohol consumption (Appendix C – Alcohol/Tobacco Interview Guide). Questions concerning perceptions of tobacco use also were asked.

Study Sites and Participants.

CAC members and FPRC staff worked collaboratively to select the age ranges for youth included in this study. The CAC developed a list of local community agencies, community leaders, and other community locations appropriate for recruiting youth to participate in the study. Incentives included movie certificates, pizza parties for youth and, in some cases, art supplies for specific programs that had a high number of participants.

Focus groups and interviews were conducted at schools and program sites throughout Sarasota county that were easily accessible to both eligible participants and FPRC Youth Researchers. When possible, only same grade/same gender groups were conducted. However, if there was a shortage of participants, groups were conducted with



Informed consent was obtained from all youth that participated and their parents. Between July and February 1999, 112 interviews and 22 focus groups were conducted.

males and females no more than two grades apart. Focus groups lasted between 30 and 75 minutes.

Individual interviews were semi-structured and lasted approximately 20 to 30 minutes. When possible, interviews were conducted by researchers of the same gender as the interviewee.

Informed Consent. The University of South Florida Institutional Review Board approved all consent forms and procedures (Appendix D – Youth Informed Consent Form). Parents were sent a letter home explaining the project and requested to complete and sign the informed consent form (Appendix E – Sample Parent Letter).

Demographics. Between July 1999 and February 2000, FPRC Youth Researchers conducted 71 interviews and 17 focus groups. Graduate assistants conducted 41 interviews and 5 focus groups (see Table 1 for information on number of interviews and focus groups according to site).

Table 1		
Focus Groups and Interviews Conducted by Site		
Research Site	Interviews Conducted	Focus Groups Conducted
Venice Middle School	6	2
Fruitville Boys and Girls Club	17	5
NorthPort Boys and Girls Club	11	2
Girls Inc.	3	3
McBean Boys and Girls Club	5	1
Sarasota Middle School	5	3
McIntosh Middle School	10	4
YMCA	4	2
TRIAD North	20	-
TRIAD South	18	-
Venice High School	13	-
TOTALS	112	22

Two hundred and six youth participated in focus groups and interviews at 11 sites throughout Sarasota County. The majority of participants were white (75%), female (62%), and between the ages of 11 and 13 years (6th to 8th grade) (67%), with a mean age of 12.6 years (see Table 2 for a breakdown of the focus group and interview participants by age and Appendix F for a summary of interviews and focus groups by gender and grade).



Data was transcribed, entered into a computer, analyzed for recurring themes and interpreted. Youth researchers assisted with interpretation

Table 2 Percent of Focus Group and Interview Participants by Age		
Age	Number	Percent
10	11	6
11	53	30
12	38	22
13	28	16
14	14	8
15	14	8
16	10	6
17	8	5
19	1	1
Total	177	100

Of the 206 youth interviewed, 136 completed demographic information sheets that asked questions about alcohol initiation and use. Over half of the youth (60%) reported having ever had a drink (other than a few sips), almost 1 in 5 (18%) had their first drink at the age of 9-10 years, and 7% had had an alcoholic drink within the last 30 days.

Data Analysis. Data from focus groups and in-depth interviews were transcribed and entered into a computer. Using special software to analyze qualitative data (*Ethnograph*) the transcripts were read to identify themes. USF staff and community members identified recurring themes and the range of diversity in responses, made summary and interpretive statements, and marked passages worthy of quotation. FPRC youth researchers then reviewed all results and assisted with interpretation.

PHASE TWO: SURVEY RESEARCH WITH SARASOTA YOUTH



Phase 2 included quantitative survey research with the Sarasota youth. A survey was developed to help identify a number of factors related to youth alcohol use in Sarasota. The survey was pilot tested with over 500 youth prior to distribution.

Survey Development. Using other surveys (specifically the Florida Youth Tobacco Survey and the CDC's Youth Risk Behavior Survey), published literature on alcohol and tobacco use and youth, and the qualitative data collected, a 147-item survey was developed to identify the factors that motivate Sarasota youth to use alcohol and tobacco; to identify the factors that deter use of alcohol and tobacco among Sarasota youth; to identify effective information channels and spokespersons for preventing alcohol and tobacco use among Sarasota youth; and, to identify effective strategies for preventing alcohol and tobacco use among Sarasota youth. The final survey (Appendix G) included questions related to demographic background, tobacco behaviors, alcohol behaviors, perceptions of norms related to tobacco and alcohol use, attitudes and beliefs regarding tobacco and alcohol use, parental tobacco and alcohol use, perceived quality of parent child relationships, school connectedness, psychological distress, delinquent behaviors, and involvement in various school and community activities. The CAC approved the content for the final survey.

Pilot Testing Survey. The survey questions were pilot tested with approximately 300 students in grades 6 through 10. Classes selected for pilot testing were **not** included in the survey implementation. The purpose of pilot testing was to make sure that students could read the questions and responses and that the meaning of the questions for youth matched the intentions of the research team.

Informed Consent. Parental passive consent through the Sarasota County Schools was obtained (Appendix H – Passive Consent Letter). Any child whose parent did not want them to participate was excused from the activity. Fewer than 10 students were excluded from survey administration due to lack of parental consent.

Research Participants. The survey was conducted among youth in grades 6 to 10 in Sarasota County. The sample of 6th- 8th grade youth was drawn from the 10 middle schools, exceptional schools, and alternative schools that included at least 1% of the county's 6th- 8th grade public school population. The sample of 9th-10th grade youth was drawn from the four public high schools in Sarasota



A total of 16 schools participated in the survey. A total of 113 classes, comprised of 2,407 students were surveyed.

County. A CAC subcommittee on research and survey design contributed to and approved the sampling process. Information in Appendix I provides a summary of the participating public middle schools and proportion of the target population for each school.

Thirteen private schools with at least 50 students from the target population were invited to participate in the survey research. Among the 13 private schools invited to participate, 9 declined. One of the remaining four schools participated in the research; the remaining three schools expressed a willingness to participate if participation could be postponed until Fall 2000.

Classes were randomly selected until the number of students enrolled in selected classes was approximately 480 students per grade. A random cluster sample of classrooms was selected based on the proportion of Sarasota students in each school. A total of 16 schools participated in the survey research (15 public schools and 1 private school). Within these schools, 113 classes were selected to participate in the survey and 2,407 students within these classes completed the survey. See Appendix J for sampling details.

Table 3 summarizes the characteristics of survey respondents included in the data analysis. Overall, 51% of survey respondents were male; 49% were female. Eighty-one percent of respondents reported their race as white, 7% as black, and 12% as American Indian or Native American, Asian or Pacific Islander, or other. Ten percent of the survey respondents reported being of Hispanic or Latino origin. Students reported their academic performance, with the mean for all responses being “Mostly B’s.”



FPRC staff worked closely with the Director of Pupil Support Services to implement the survey in the school system.

Survey Administration. FPRC staff worked closely with the Sarasota County Schools in administering the survey. FPRC staff members and a Sarasota County School employee (Sherri Reynolds, Pupil Support Services, Director) met with every principal to discuss the project and to determine classroom selection for survey administration. FPRC staff coordinated scheduling of survey administration to accommodate participating schools and teachers. FPRC staff and graduate students administered surveys. Appendix K includes more details regarding survey administration.

Each school designated a survey contact person with whom to

work. Following survey administration, school contacts and participating teachers with whom classes were used in the survey received a thank you letter and a short questionnaire about the survey administration process. Teachers and school contact persons received a Wal-Mart merchandise card as an incentive for completing the questionnaire.

Table 3	
Characteristics of Survey Respondents	
Demographics	
Gender	
Males	51%
Females	49%
Race	
White	81%
Black	7%
Other	12%
Hispanic Origin	10%
Grades	Mostly B's
Alcohol Use	
Have you ever had a drink of alcohol (more than a few sips)?	67%
In the past 30 days, have you ever had any alcohol to drink?	33%
In the past year, have you had five or more drinks of alcohol in one day?	25%
Mean age at first drink	10 years

Data Analysis. Surveys were evaluated to determine whether they would be usable for analysis purposes. Two survey questions were included to aid in this evaluation process (G28 and G37). Question G28 asked students about use of a fictional substance (“Black Butterfly”), and G37 asked students to rate the extent to which their survey responses were truthful. Students who reported use of the fictional substance and those who reported that they were truthful half of the time or less were excluded from the analysis. Also, some surveys included enough missing or invalid responses to be unusable for analysis (i.e., greater than 50% responses missing or invalid in any one section of the survey). These surveys also were excluded from the analysis. Altogether, 86% (2,079) of the surveys administered were included in subsequent analyses.



86% of the surveys were included in analysis. Data were analyzed to identify the determinants of alcohol behaviors, segments of the population with differing determinants and those groups at highest risk for the target behavior.

Frequency distributions, cross tabulations, and logistic regression analyses were performed using SAS statistical software. Audience segmentation analyses were performed using the *AnswerTree 2.1* program produced by SPSS, Inc. The main purpose of the survey data analysis is to identify the determinants of tobacco and alcohol behaviors and to identify population subgroups for whom the determinants of the target behavior may be different and to identify the population subgroups at highest risk with respect to the target behavior. Appendix L includes more details on the survey data analysis.

PHASE THREE: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH WITH SARASOTA PARENTS



Phase three of the research included qualitative research with the parents or guardians of middle and high school youth in Sarasota. Six focus groups and 12 interviews were conducted.

After reviewing the qualitative data it became evident that parents were a potential source of information for youth, as well as role models based on their choice to use or not to use alcohol. Evidence of the impact of parents on youth attitudes is seen in the following quotes:

“My mom drinks wine on some occasions and my dad comes home from work and he’s all hot and sweaty, he’ll take a shower and then sit down and have a beer or something like that.” (6th grade male)

“When the parents are not home, they just go to the house and drink.” (9th grade male)

Target Audience. The community Based Prevention Marketing Community Advisory Committee (CBPM CAC) members, FPRC staff, and University of South Florida graduate students determined that the target audience should be 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 the age groups of interest. 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 six focus groups with 35 participants in all. The participants in two of the focus groups were comprised of Non-Hispanic Whites; participants in two other groups were comprised of primarily blacks; and the participants of two groups were comprised of Hispanics.

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

Recruitment. CBPM CAC 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 by 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



Recruitment of parents was very challenging, with many refusing to participate.

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 all refused.

Parent Interview Guide. Researchers used the same questionnaire for focus groups and interviews (Appendix M – Parent Interview Guide). The questionnaire was developed in a four-step process. First, USF graduate students and FPRC staff constructed a draft interview guide. Second, the USF students and CBPM CAC members pretested the interview guide. Third, USF graduate students and FPRC staff revised the interview guide. Fourth, CBPM CAC members finalized the interview guide based on pretesting results.

Informed Consent. The University of South Florida Institutional Review Board approved all consent forms and procedures (Appendix N – Adult Informed Consent Forms).

Handout. CBPM CAC members and FPRC staff developed a handout for participants to provide additional comments and suggestions on an anonymous basis (Appendix O – Parent Comment Form). Three participants returned handouts to the researchers with additional written comments and suggestions about underage drinking (Appendix P – Parents' Suggestions).



Focus groups were conducted in Spanish and English. Interviews were conducted in English. Incentives were provided to encourage participation in the research.

Focus Groups. Focus groups were conducted at four locations that were convenient for the participants. 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 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 staff members on the purpose of the

study, the interview guide, and how to conduct focus groups and one-on-one interviews. The Hispanic moderator and co-moderator modified the interview guide and focus group procedures to tailor them more appropriately for the linguistic and cultural norms of the Hispanic participants.

Focus groups were recorded and transcribed, while co-moderators took notes. Participants completed an information form (Appendix Q – Parent Demographic Form) to capture some demographic data. Participants were provided a take-home form (Appendix N) along with a self-addressed, stamped envelope to provide additional comments and suggestions and return to the researchers. Information forms and handouts were translated from English to Spanish for Hispanic participants. Each focus group participant received a \$20 Wal-Mart or K-Mart merchandise 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 mutually 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 staff regarding the purpose of the study, the study questionnaire, and how to conduct individual interviews.

Two of the interviews were audiotaped, while the other eleven were recorded by taking written notes only. As with the focus group participants, 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.”

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 also were typed.



Data was transcribed, coded, entered into a computer, analyzed and interpreted. Spanish data was reviewed by a Spanish speaking translator for accuracy.

Subsequently, at least 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*. With *Ethnograph*, each code and its corresponding passages from the transcripts and notes were printed out. Subsequently, at least 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 identify supporting quotes.

