Social Norms

In the Rapidly Changing Social Ecology of Legal Marijuana

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CPWI/ 2-24-16
Overview

1. Marijuana Legalization and Social Norms
2. Marijuana Legalization Narrative
3. Practicing Social Norms approach in the new Marijuana Landscape
4. Coalition Leadership & Impact
Learning Goals/ Take-Aways

1. Terms: types of norms
2. Identify role of norms across the social ecology
3. How norms help tell the story/narrative
4. Understand basics of normative messaging
5. Understand risks of social norms messaging
6. Understand concept of leveraging the majority
1. Marijuana Legalization Challenges WRT Community and Individual Norms

1. Youth access to hi-po marijuana, edibles, concentrates; paraphernalia
2. Prevention funding centralized around state/federal dollars: advocacy difficult
3. Enforcement frustrated, inconsistent, mixed messages from feds
4. Youth exposed to advertising: disinformation, misinformation, media bias
5. Concept of medical marijuana
6. Highly visible industry: Green cross, “living” sections of youth-friendly periodicals, social media
7. Difficult to judge rapidly changing norms and attitudes
Need to Rethink Prevention Strategy?

- Norms
- Access
- Enforcement
Social Norms Theory

1. Our behavior is influenced by our perceptions about how other members of our social group think and act.

2. Youth and adult behaviors often based upon misperceptions about what is normative; unhealthy behaviors are typically exaggerated.

3. Correcting misperceptions by messaging actual normative data can influence decisions about engaging in high risk behaviors... “well, actually, if most of my peers aren’t doing it, then maybe I won’t take a hit of XYZ...”

4. Central to the effectiveness of the social norms approach is addressing the discrepancy between one’s own views and/or behaviors and those of others.
Practical Social Norms Concepts

Two types of norms to consider (Caldini 1990):

**Descriptive Norm:** the perception of other’s quality and frequency of behavior XYZ, based largely on observations (*the norms of “is”*)

**Injunctive Norm:** the perceived approval of behavior XYZ, based largely on perceived moral rules of the peer group (*the norms of “ought”*)
Practical Social Norms Concepts

Peer Influence: If students perceive others’ use to be higher than their own, reductions in drinking are unlikely because personal use is viewed as less risky than the social norm. Conversely, if the students perceive personal use to be higher than the norm, then re-evaluation of personal drinking habits is likely. (Perkins, 2002)

Gaps: wrt social norms work, the “gap” between real and perceived norms; minimal gap suggests nothing to change (implication: know your data)
Social Norms Theory Background

Mixed Results: Historical results varied wrt social norms marketing campaign, largely studied on college campuses (reductions in drinking: Hains, Spear 1996; no change Werch et al. 2000)

Individual vs. Community Norms: both important, individual normative interventions and community norms messaging

Marijuana: unique substance compared to alcohol wrt to social norms impact

2. Community Norms: Importance of Influencing the Marijuana Narrative

How do we become co-authors of a health-(not problem) saturated outcome of the Marijuana narrative (story) in our communities?
Narrative: What's the Marijuana “Story” for Our Youth?

Working with Social Norms or the Positive Community Norms (PCN) framework involves influencing the community narrative/story/ “the river”:

- Join the Conversation
- Deconstruct problem using Data, Local Examples
- Co-create a positive, health-based narrative using normative messaging
- Evaluate and refine messaging

Positive Community Norms ref: Dr. Jeff Linkenbach & the Center for Health and Safety Culture, Montana State University
Legalization Narrative Exists at All Levels Across the Social Ecology

Narrative: Messages to Youth Culture
Narrative: Public Health

MARIJUANA: Safer than alcohol... and football.
Narrative: Public Safety
Narrative: Family Values

YES on I-502
Strict Penalties for Selling to Minors
Narrative: Family/ Medical Institutions
Narrative: Community Culture
Narrative: Regional Culture
Narrative: State Culture
What is the Dominant Narrative of the Stream (Community) Regarding Marijuana?

Influencing perceptions of COMMUNITY NORMS makes a difference in the "river."

Ohanapecosh River Mt. Rainier National Park
Questions?
3. Practicing Social Norms Marketing in the New Marijuana Landscape

Considerations/ Risks...

1. How fast is the MJ narrative/perception/attitudes changing?
2. Is my data still relevant? Adequate?
4. Need to compliment social norms messaging with social marketing to fill basic info gaps?
5. Assessing capacity for adequate dosage & inimizing competing messages.
6. Complimenting community norms with individual norms?
7. Old parent attitudes from 60’s and 70’s coming back on line; should I message to parents? What data do I need?
8. Is my prevention portfolio robust enough or over-reliant on information dissemination?
9. MJ/MMJ camps; understand norms and community transformation.
Working with the Narrative: Local Data

HYS Data:
- Descriptive: past 30 day use, lifetime use
- Injunctive: peer or parent attitudes

Matched Perceptual Data: questions stems that ask both how much one uses and how much they perceive their peers use (or other referent group). Own surveys?

Normative Messaging: developing messages around when a significant gap exists between use rates and attitudes
Working with the Narrative: State Data

Total Driving Cases Show Increase in THC and Carboxy THC after legalization

Nov. 5, 2013 WA State Toxicologist Report DUID-MJ
Working with the Narrative: National Data

Percentage of U.S. 12th Grade Students Reporting Daily Marijuana Use vs. Perceived Risk of Regular Marijuana Use

Perceived Risk

Daily Use

SOURCE: University of Michigan, 2010 Monitoring the Future Study
Awareness/Messaging Efforts

Dr. Leslie Walker, MD, Seattle Children’s Hospital:

“Most kids don’t use. And I’ll tell you, most kids that are real athletes, or that are getting scholarships... don’t use either.”
Community-based Messaging

MOST of Us
MI Parents Draw the Line
Students say: 7 out of 10 MI parents discuss rules about alcohol.
Community-based Messaging

84% of all parents strongly agree to talk to your kids about not using marijuana.
Community-based Messaging

MOST (97%) ISLAND PARENTS DON'T WANT STUDENTS USING MARIJUANA
ABOUT 1 IN 6 TEENS WHO USE MARIJUANA WILL BECOME ADDICTED.
School-based Messaging

PCN campaigns reflect an attempt to adjust to a broader narrative that “it’s medicine.”

MJ messages back to middle school even though the gap is small.
Messaging Details/ Positive Community Norms Framework

Considerations
Pilot Testing Image
Pilot Testing Message
Citing Data
Intercept Surveys/Refine Message
Placement
Dosage
Dear Mercer Island High School Senior,

You are being invited to participate in a new project being conducted by Mercer Island High School in conjunction with the University of Washington, the Mercer Island Community Coalition, and Mercer Island Youth and Family Services.

Why are we doing this project?
The purpose of the Mercer Island Personalized Feedback Project is to provide MHS 12th graders with personalized information regarding alcohol and marijuana use. Participation does not mean that you use alcohol or marijuana or have used alcohol or marijuana-related consequences.

What would I be doing?
You are being asked to complete a 12–20 minute online survey about your use (or non-use) of alcohol and marijuana and your perceptions of use among Mercer Island High School students in general. After you complete the survey, you will immediately receive some personalized information about alcohol and marijuana. After reviewing this information, you will be asked to fill out a very brief survey about your reactions to this information. If you choose to participate, you will have the opportunity to be entered into a drawing to win a $100 gift card. If you have completed your participation, you can enter the drawing by filling out and mailing the project postcard provided to you with this invitation. The drawing will be held July 30, 2015.

Are my answers kept confidential?
All the information you provide for this project is strictly confidential. This means that no one but the University of Washington project staff will be able to see your answers. Your answers are anonymous and will not be shared with your parents/guardian(s), year teachers, school, or anyone else. All questionnaires will be completed online using a secure server supporting 128-bit encryption, which provides the highest level of protection of confidentiality. You can access the survey and your personalized feedback by entering the link provided below into your web-browser. Your data will only be identified with a personalized identification number (PIN), and your answers to the survey items will be anonymous. Participation is completely voluntary and you do not have to participate unless you would like to.

What do I need to do?
To begin your participation in the Mercer Island Personalized Feedback Project, please enter the survey URL below into your web-browser to access the survey and view your personalized feedback. You can access the survey and feedback until June 30, 2015. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or experience any technical difficulties by calling (206) 440-8193 or by emailing MHSIF@uw.edu.

Link to the Survey:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/secure/Mercer_island/PDF/PDFview.aspx?SMR_Name=Personalized_Feedback_Project

Thank you,

[Signature]

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Partnership with University of Washington/CSHRB/Dr. Kilmer

Using normative survey data to inform personalized normative feedback protocols for high school seniors
PCN Compliments Other Coalition Efforts

1. PCN model a framework that includes social norms messaging interventions.
2. Additional role for PCN/Social Norms framework across multiple strategies for community change (i.e. CADCA’s Seven Strategies)
3. Challenges coalition leaders to consider their frame of reference and to know their own misperceptions
Questions?
4. Coalition Leadership & Impact

Considerations...

1. Has MJ legalization changed prevention interventions and the level of the social ecology where they are needed? *(Yes and No)*
2. Understand limits/ strengths of approach. *(Avoid boomerang effect.)*
3. Are there new opportunities to share normative messages? *(Yes. MJ legalization has opened the narrative about public health norms in local communities—if prevention doesn’t help tell the real story, the MJ industry will... and is.)*
Derek: “I am not without hope. The fact that a majority of our population, over 90%, does not use marijuana reminds me of the sizeable reservoir of untapped healthy community attitudes and behaviors largely ignored in the prohibition vs. legalization narrative.”

Roger: “I’m glad you mentioned the majority who don’t use marijuana. It also needs to be said that large percentages of people, both youth and adults, either don’t consume alcohol or other drugs or, if they are consumers, do so without adverse consequences.”
Majority Positive Norms Still Exist

... And Coalitions Can Foster Their Growth in Communities

- Majority of population still do not use
- Majority youth still do not use
- Majority of parents still disapprove of underage use
- Majority of youth still perceive risk/harm
- Majority of peers still disapprove of regular use

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Thank You / End

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