

Town Hall Meeting and Youth Focus Group SUMMARY REPORT Buffalo County, Nebraska

**Prepared for
Buffalo County Community Partners and Positive Pressure Coalition in
support of the Buffalo County 2009 Community Health Assessment and
the Strategic Prevention Framework State Incentive Grant (SPFSIG)**

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**February and March
2009**

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In February 2009 Buffalo County Community Partners facilitated a series of town hall meetings and youth focus groups in Amherst, Elm Creek, Gibbon, Kearney, Pleasanton, Ravenna, Shelton and Sumner/Eddyville/Miller. In March 2009 follow-up meetings were conducted in the same communities to validate what was heard in the initial meetings and to gain consensus on a countywide vision for 2020.

A total of 326 people (adults and youth) attended the initial and follow-up meetings. In the town hall meetings and youth focus groups, residents shared their vision for a healthy community, the major concerns facing their communities and the barriers they encounter addressing their major concerns.

On a scale of one to ten with one being very unhealthy and ten being perfectly healthy, scores discussed in the communities ranged from four to eight with the majority ranking their community a seven. These results indicate that in general residents are positive about their communities but recognize that there is room for improvement. Residents perceive a healthy community as one that is safe, growing and clean. It is a community with adequate and affordable housing and transportation, access to health care and public recreation areas and one where spiritual needs of residents are met. In addition, it is one where residents are responsible, involved, physically active and share a common community vision.

Common themes that emerged related to major concerns facing residents of Buffalo County were housing, community growth, alcohol use, physical fitness, community beautification, safety, recycling and access to healthcare.

Alcohol use was the subject of interest of the youth focus group meetings and also emerged as a priority health concern in the town hall meetings. When asked to rank the factors that contributed most to underage drinking, social access (access through older siblings, parents, older youth, etc.) emerged as the top ranking factor, with favorable community norms and low perceived risk close behind. Retail access was also considered a contributing factor and was ranked fourth.

Common barriers communities face in addressing these major concerns are funding, lack of resident involvement, infrastructure concerns, the economy and limited resources, lack of means to promote their communities, and effective communication among residents.

The town hall meeting and youth focus group process is a component of a full community health assessment being conducted by Buffalo County Community Partners in support of carrying out its mission. The planned outcome of the community health assessment is to identify and reach consensus on county priorities that if addressed would lead to a healthier community/healthier Buffalo County, Nebraska by 2020.

In addition, the town hall meeting and youth focus group process supports the community needs assessment process specific to the Strategic Prevention Framework State Incentive

Grant (SPFSIG) received by Buffalo County Community Partners and its coalition addressing substance abuse, Positive Pressure. The purpose of this planning grant is to identify substance abuse prevention priorities that the Positive Pressure Coalition will focus on based on information gathered from the community needs assessment process.

A full summary report with more detail on the areas discussed above along with consultant's observations and recommendations is contained in this report.

The next steps related to the town hall meeting and focus group process as defined by Buffalo County Community Partners and Positive Pressure Coalition are:

1. Forward the summary findings of the town hall meetings and youth focus groups to the Buffalo County Community Partners Board of Directors and Planning and Measurement Committee to reference as a component of its full community health assessment.
2. Forward the summary report of the town hall meetings and youth focus groups to the Positive Pressure Coalition as a resource for the SPFSIG assessment process

II. SUMMARY REPORT

Introduction

In February 2009 (February 3 - February 11, 2009) Buffalo County Community Partners facilitated a series of seven town hall meetings and three youth focus groups in Amherst, Elm Creek, Gibbon, Kearney, Pleasanton, Ravenna, Shelton and Sumner/Eddyville/Miller. A total of 190 residents (adult and youth) attended the meetings. The purposes of the meetings were to hear residents' vision for a healthy community/healthy Buffalo County and to learn about major concerns facing each community.

In March 2009 (March 23 – March 29, 2009) follow-up meetings were conducted in the same communities to validate what was heard in the initial meetings and to gain consensus on a countywide vision for 2020. A total of 136 residents (adult and youth) attended the follow-up meetings.

The town hall meeting and focus group process is a component of a full community health assessment being conducted by Buffalo County Community Partners in support of carrying out its mission. The planned outcome of the community health assessment is to identify and reach consensus on county priorities that if addressed would lead to a healthier community/healthier Buffalo County, Nebraska by 2020.

In addition, the town hall meeting and youth focus group process supports the community needs assessment process specific to the Strategic Prevention Framework State Incentive Grant (SPFSIG) received by Buffalo County Community Partners and its coalition addressing substance abuse, Positive Pressure. The purpose of this planning grant is to identify substance abuse prevention priorities that Buffalo County Community Partners and the Positive Pressure Coalition will focus on based on information gathered from the community needs assessment process.

Buffalo County Community Partners (Community Partners) is a county wide coalition that formed in 1994. It is governed by a 25 member board of directors made up of stakeholders representing all facets of a community. The mission of Community Partners is to assess, strengthen and promote the health and well being of residents of Buffalo County. Since 1994 Community Partners have facilitated bringing together residents of Buffalo County to identify gaps between what residents believe is a healthy community and concerns their communities face. Once these gaps are identified Community Partners helps mobilize people and resources to address the gaps identified to make Buffalo County, Nebraska a healthier place to live.

Positive Pressure is a coalition of Buffalo County Community Partners whose mission is to improve the health and quality of life in Buffalo County by aiding local communities in the planning, coordinating, and integration of resources and use of evidenced based practices to reduce substance use rates and delay the onset of first use in communities. It is made up of representatives from behavioral health, law enforcement, education, media, youth serving organizations, faith, health care, local government, and civic organizations.

The primary deliverables of the town hall meeting and focus group process are:

1. Creation of a 2020 vision for Buffalo County;
2. Identification of common priority health concerns that impact Buffalo County communities and;
3. Identification of one or more substance abuse prevention priorities in concert with other data being gathered as a part of the community needs assessment being conducted by the Positive Pressure Coalition specific to the Strategic Prevention Framework State Incentive Grant.

Process

In January 2009 residents (adult and youth) of Buffalo County were invited by local gatekeepers in their communities to schedule and publicize local town hall meetings and youth focus groups to be held in February 2009.

In February 2009 seven town hall meetings were held in the communities referenced in the **Introduction**. In addition, three youth focus groups were held. Two were with junior high and high school youth in Buffalo County and one was with youth, ages 18-25, attending the University of Nebraska at Kearney. Each of the town hall meetings and youth focus groups were facilitated by a consultant secured by Buffalo County Community Partners. A series of similar questions was asked of each group. (See Appendix A for the town hall meeting script utilized and Appendices B, C and D for the focus group scripts utilized). At the close of each meeting participants were asked to rank the top three major concerns facing their community. Results of each town hall meeting and focus group were summarized by the facilitator following the meetings. (See Appendices E through N for the summary reports of these meetings).

In March 2009 follow-up meetings were conducted in the same communities to validate what was heard in the initial meetings and to gain consensus on a countywide vision for 2020.

Residents' Vision for a Healthy Community/Healthy Buffalo County

Common themes that emerged from the meetings related to residents' vision for a healthy community included the following, not in order of priority:

- A safe community with:
 - Safe routes to schools
 - Responsible drivers
 - Community free of violence and vandalism
 - Handicap accessibility
 - Trained Emergency Medical Technicians
 - Fire departments
 - Law enforcement
- A community that is thriving as demonstrated by growth in businesses, job opportunities and population with:
 - Strong schools
 - Post office
 - Grocery store

- Restaurant(s)
- Convenience stores/Filling stations
- Activities for all age groups – youth, adults and seniors
- Community involvement
- Access to health care
- Clean environment - air, water and neighborhoods
- Access to recycling
- Well maintained, available and affordable housing for all age groups
- Public recreational areas (parks and equipment, ball fields, swimming pools, etc.)
- Transportation
- Spirituality needs met
- Evidence of community pride
- Opportunities for physical fitness
- Communication
- Responsible alcohol use by adults and youth
- Community sense of direction

How Healthy are Communities in Buffalo County

When asked to rate their communities on a scale of 1-10 with one being very unhealthy and 10 being perfectly healthy, scores discussed in the communities ranged from four to eight with the majority ranking their community a seven. These results indicate that in general residents are positive about their communities but recognize that there is room for improvement.

Priority Concerns Facing Communities in Buffalo County

Common themes that emerged related to major concerns facing residents of Buffalo County were the following:

1. **Housing**
 - Access to well maintained, available and affordable housing
 - Options for owners, rentals, seniors and retirement housing
 - Need for removal of dilapidated houses
 - Access to land
2. **Ability to Maintain and Grow Populations and Strong Businesses**
 - Attract/sustain youth after pursuit of higher education
 - Decline in local businesses impacting access to basic necessities
 - Competition from larger neighboring communities
 - Lack of community identification and promotion of unique features
3. **Alcohol Use (Identified as a concern in most communities; subject of interest in the youth focus groups)**
 - Contributing factors (Groups were asked to rank)
 1. Easy social access – older friends and siblings, college students, parents and other acquaintances

2. Favorable community norms – closely associated with easy social access.
3. Low perceived risk
4. Retail access – ranked lowest
4. **Physical Fitness**
 - Need health and fitness areas for all age groups
 - Potential for use of existing community resources such as track fields, schools, etc.
 - Development of hike and bike trails
5. **Community Physical Environment/Beautification**
 - Overlaps in some respects to other concerns identified
 - Relates to maintenance of lots, trash removal, water quality, entrances to communities, etc.
6. **Safety**
 - Need for safe routes to school with pedestrian crosswalks
 - Need for safe drivers – cost of driver education for some is unaffordable
7. **Recycling**
 - Knowledge of how to develop a recycling program
 - Availability
 - Affordability
8. **Access to Health Care**
 - Basic services and screenings

The matrix below shows what each community ranked as their first, second and third priority. This matrix was presented at the March follow-up meetings and validated by those present.

PRIORITIES BY COMMUNITY

	Housing	Community Growth	Alcohol Use	Physical Fitness	Community Beautification	Safety	Recycling	Access to Health Care
Buffalo Co.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧
Amherst	①	②business ③population						
Elm Creek	②		③			① walking		
Gibbon	①		③		② Water Quality			
Pleasanton		①population ②business		③				
Ravenna		③			③		①	②
*Shelton	①		②					
Miller (SEM)	②	③ Youth Retention		①				
Kearney			①					

* Shelton's third priority was to secure grant funding for specific projects.

Barriers Faced by Communities in Addressing Concerns

Common themes that emerged related to barriers faced by communities in addressing community concerns were:

1. **Funding for feasible ideas**
 - Knowledge of how to secure funding
 - Knowledge of how to develop a good business plan
 - Knowledge of model programs

2. Resident Involvement

- For many the small communities are bedroom communities i.e. people live in community but work elsewhere, travel to Kearney and larger communities for groceries, healthcare services, entertainment, etc., thus lack of involvement in their local community
- Need for engagement of residents in solving issues

3. Infrastructure

- Old infrastructure
- Lack of adequate infrastructure
- Landlocked

4. Economy and Limited Resources

5. Lack of Promotion

- Signage on main highways promoting unique offerings of community
- Failure to identify strengths of community and promotion of strengths

6. Open Communication and Dialogue

- Primary communication vehicle in some communities is the newspaper
- Need for better participation in forums offered

The table below shows commonality of barriers by community.

BARRIERS BY COMMUNITY

	Funding	Resident Involvement	Infrastructure	Economy and Limited Resources	Promotion	Communication
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Buffalo County						
Amherst	X	X	X		X	
Elm Creek	X	X				
Gibbon	X	X	X		X	X
Pleasanton	X		X	X		
Ravenna	X	X	X			X
Shelton	X	X		X		
Miller (SEM)	X	X		X		
*Kearney						

*Meetings held in Kearney were specific to alcohol use and did not address other barriers to a healthy community

Next Steps

The next steps related to the town hall meeting and focus group process as defined by Buffalo County Community Partners and Positive Pressure Coalition are:

1. Forward the summary findings of the town hall meetings and youth focus groups to the Buffalo County Community Partners Board of Directors and Planning and Measurement Committee to reference as a component of its full community health assessment.

2. Forward the summary report of the town hall meetings and youth focus groups to the Positive Pressure Coalition as a resource for the SPFSIG assessment process

Consultant's Observations/Recommendations

It is apparent from participating in all of the town hall meetings and youth focus groups that there is opportunity for the communities in Buffalo County to work jointly in solving common concerns. This could take the form of:

1. Forming coalitions similar to the Buffalo County Housing Senate with representation from each community in Buffalo County to work to resolve a specific concern. Such coalitions could identify models already working within Buffalo County or other areas of the country, develop new models or tweak existing processes to work in concert with one another to improve the health of communities in Buffalo County specific to the concern being addressed.
2. Developing business plans to assess ideas proposed by the coalitions.
3. Jointly funding a grant writer to pursue grant funding for implementation of feasible business plans. Generally prerequisites to funding are a demonstrated need, evidence of collaboration and a feasible, sustainable action plan.
4. Defining what is unique about each community in Buffalo County and marketing this through community specific and county wide signage, advertisement and other promotion to help grow populations and businesses in communities.
5. Seeking out and better utilizing resources already available within and outside Buffalo County communities to address specific concerns. An example cited in the meetings was exploring the recycling model being used in Kearney to address recycling issues in Ravenna, Pleasanton and other communities.

In May, 2008 Community Partners and Positive Pressure conducted an adult focus group meeting in Kearney relative to the topics discussed in this report. In addition Community Partners has conducted two Migrant Parent meetings with findings relative to the topics discussed in this report. Findings from these meetings are available by contacting the Community Partners office at the address or phone number shown on the cover page of this report.

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APPENDIX A: Town Hall Meeting Script

**Buffalo County Community Partners
Town Hall Meeting - _____
For
2009 Community Health Assessment and SPF-SIG Grant
February __, 2009 at _____ am/pm @ _____**

Welcome by Board Member (See page 15 for separate script)

Facilitator's Introductory/Welcoming Remarks

Good *morning/afternoon/evening*. As XXXX indicated, my name is (Name of Facilitator). I have been asked by Community Partners to conduct a series of focus groups and town hall meetings related to the health of our community, specifically the communities in Buffalo County, Nebraska. Thank you for joining us. Before we begin, I would like to have you:

- Introduce yourself; and
- Share with us what brought you here today

Meeting Purpose

1. To hear your vision for a healthy Buffalo County.
2. To learn from you what you think are the major issues facing your community

Planned Outcomes

1. To create a summary report of the common themes that emerge from our discussion today;
2. To combine these results with the results from other town hall meetings
3. To reach consensus on the county's current pressing issues
4. To develop a 2020 plan for Buffalo County that addresses these issues.

Ground Rules

1. Only one conversation at a time.
2. Listen with respect to each other
3. No side conversations.
4. All thoughts and ideas are valued
5. There are no wrong or right answers.

Adhering to these is important for the following reasons:

1. We have a lot of things to talk about and we'll need to stay focused to get through our agenda.
2. This process is to help us come to a consensus on what we need to address to make Buffalo County a healthier community/county for adults and youth.
3. It's the golden rule and the right thing to do.

Questions

1. When you think of healthy community what comes to mind?
(Prompts: What does it look like? What are its attributes? How are you defining health in your community?)
2. On a scale of 1-10 (1 being very unhealthy and 10 being perfectly healthy) how healthy is your community?
3. What are specific issues in your community that you think, if addressed, would improve the overall health of the community?
Record on flipchart pages. Post pages on the wall as they are filled up.
4. What are barriers to addressing these issues?
On separate flip chart pages record barriers by issue.
5. If you could solve only three of the issues we've discussed which three would they be?
(Give each participant 3 colored dots. Ask them to go up to the flipchart pages with the issues listed and place their dots on the 3 they feel should be prioritized).

If alcohol is not suggested as a priority issue then one or more of the following questions will be asked:

1. Do you feel you have alcohol-related problems in your community? If yes, what are they?
2. What are the general attitudes about drinking in your community?
3. In your community, is it okay to provide alcohol to someone who is underage and if so, under what circumstances?
4. To what extent do you think community norms contribute to the misuse of alcohol?
5. From groups that we have been visiting with there are four contributing factors that seem to be emerging related to underage alcohol use. They are:
 - a. Easy social access such as older siblings and parents
 - b. Favorable social community norms, in other words it is culturally acceptable for youth to drink
 - c. Low perceived risk on the part of youth
 - d. Easy retail access*(Ask the participants to rank order these)*

Transition back to review of top priorities

Now I would like to transition back to the health issues we discussed earlier in the meeting and take a look at what you collectively have prioritized as the top three issues you would try to solve if you could only work on three.

Review results.

6. Any surprises?
7. Do you have any other thoughts you would like to share before we close?

Thank participants and reiterate next steps.

Next Steps

In March you will be invited to attend a follow-up town hall meeting in (Name of Community) to:

1. Validate the findings from today's meeting;
2. Hear common themes that have emerged from the other focus group and town hall meetings; and
3. Seek your input on a county wide 2020 plan that will be in the early stages of development

We hope you will be able to come. Thank you for participating today.

2009 Buffalo County Community Partners
Town Hall Meetings

Board Welcome

Good afternoon/evening.

My name is XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX and I am the (*Give your title and the organization you work for*).

I am a member of the Buffalo County Community Partners Board of Directors. The Community Partners is a county wide coalition that formed in 1994. The mission of Community Partners is to assess, strengthen and promote the health and well being of residents of Buffalo County. Since 1994 they have facilitated bringing together residents of Buffalo County to identify gaps between what residents believe is a healthy community and the issues their community faces that keep their community from being the healthiest community possible. Once these gaps are identified they help mobilize people and resources to address the gaps identified. To date they have tackled, with community members, major issues such as affordable transportation, teen tobacco and alcohol use, and availability of assisted living and Alzheimer units, to name just a few, and have made a positively impacted these areas making Buffalo County, NE a healthier place to live.

I serve on the Partners Board of Directors because I believe in the mission of the group and have a passion for creating a healthier community.

In February we are conducting town hall meetings in all communities in Buffalo County to hear your vision for a healthier Buffalo County and to learn about major issues your community is facing.

We have asked Joan Lindenstein to facilitate our town hall meetings. Joan is from Gibbon, Nebraska and was one of the founders of Community Partners. She will guide you through a series of questions, then following the meeting, summarize what you have told us. We will merge what we learn from you today with common themes that emerge from other town hall meetings and focus groups being conducted in Buffalo County and from this information develop a 2020 plan for Buffalo County that focuses in on what residents feel are the most pressing issues. In March you will be invited back to a follow-up town hall meeting. We will share the themes that have emerged from our town hall and focus group meetings and ask for your input on a countywide 2020 plan that will be in the early stages of development.

Thank you for coming today. I will now turn the meeting over to Joan.

APPENDIX B: Youth Focus Group Script – Buffalo County Youth Advisory Council

Buffalo County Community Partners Script – YAB Youth Focus Group For 2009 Community Health Assessment and SPF-SIG Grant (February 15, 2009)

Introduction and Welcome

Good afternoon. As (INSERT Name of person who welcomes group) indicated, my name is (INSERT Name of Facilitator). I have been asked by Community Partners to conduct a series of focus groups and town hall meetings related to the health of our community, specifically the communities in Buffalo County, Nebraska. An area that Community Partners would like me to explore with you is underage drinking. It is not news to you that this has been and continues to be a high risk health behavior for youth in Buffalo County and it is evident that you are working on this health concern. I see billboards, hear ads on the radio and see other signs that you, as youth are proactively trying to prevent alcohol use among young people. The good news is the rate of youth binge drinking has gone from a high of 38.7% in 9th through 12th graders in 2000 to 23.2% in 2007. The bad news is that approximately one out of four youth in your communities still binge drink which, when they do, they drink five or more drinks in a row in a couple of hours.

The Community Partners selected your group to be a part of this assessment process because you represent not only youth but all the communities in Buffalo County. I am happy to have the opportunity to visit with you today.

To begin I would like you to:

- Introduce yourself
- Where you are from; and
- Share with us your “spark”. If that term is unfamiliar to you please share why you care about being on the Youth Advisory Board

Meeting Purpose (*Record on a flipchart page*)

To explore youth substance abuse with you, specifically alcohol use.

Planned Outcomes (*Record on flipchart page*)

1. To listen for and capture the common themes that emerge from our dialogue today;
2. To combine what we hear from you with what we hear in other focus group and town hall meetings;
3. To develop a county wide action plan that will focus on how to prevent alcohol use among youth and young adults in Buffalo County.

Before we begin with the questions I would like to ask you I would like to go over some ground rules for our time together today.

Ground Rules (*Record on third flipchart page*)

1. Only one conversation at a time.
2. Listen with respect to each other
3. No side conversations.
4. All thoughts and ideas are valued
5. No member should be put down because of their opinions.
6. There are no wrong or right answers.

Adhering to these is important for the following reasons:

1. We have a lot of things to talk about and we'll need to stay focused to get through our agenda.
2. Your input is very valuable to the planning process that is underway; and.....last but not least;
3. It's the golden rule and the right thing to do.

Questions

Now I am going to ask you some questions around drinking alcohol. You will **not** be asked questions about your own behavior, but rather your views about what youth your age in your community think and do.

1. When you think about people your age who drink, where do you think that they usually obtain alcohol and how easy is it to get alcohol from these sources?
Prompts: a liquor store, a grocery store, a bar, a restaurant, friends, parents, other family members, strangers.
2. Where are youth your age most likely to drink?
Prompts: your house, someone else's house, a park, a field, in the car
3. From groups that we have been visiting with there are four contributing factors that seem to be emerging related to underage alcohol use. They are:
 - a. Easy social access such as older siblings and parents
 - b. Favorable social community norms, in other words it is culturally acceptable for youth to drink
 - c. Low perceived risk on the part of youth
 - d. Easy retail access*(Ask the participants to rank order these)*
4. If people your age drink alcohol, how likely do you think it would be that people would find out?
Prompts: parents, other family members, the police, teachers at school, employers
5. How much do you think that people would disapprove if people your age were to drink?
Prompts: their parents, other family members, friends, teachers, employer

6. How much do you think that drinking and driving is a problem for people your age?

7. How much do you think that people would disapprove if people your age were to drink and drive?

Prompts: parents, other family members, friends, teachers, your employer

8. If you drink and drive, what do you think would happen to you?

Prompts: the police would catch you, you would get a ticket and pay a fine, your parents would find out and punish you in some way, anything else?

9. Do you have any other thoughts you would like to share before we close?

Thank participants and discuss next steps.

Next Steps:

In March we will be holding follow-up town hall meetings in each of your communities to:

1. To feed back what we heard in the focus group and town hall meeting; and
2. To seek input on the county wide action plan that is being developed.

We would like to invite you to attend one of these. We would encourage you to bring your parents, your pastors, other mentors in your life and others you think have a passion for helping to prevent underage drinking. Thank you for participating today.

Hand out the tentative schedule if available.

APPENDIX C: Youth Focus Group Script – Kearney Public School – DAFY Group

Buffalo County Community Partners Script – DAFY Youth Focus Group For 2009 Community Health Assessment and SPF-SIG Grant (February 11, 2009)

Introduction and Welcome

Good afternoon. As (INSERT Name of person who welcomes group) indicated, my name is (INSERT Name of Facilitator). I have been asked by Community Partners to conduct a series of focus groups and town hall meetings related to the health of our community, specifically the communities in Buffalo County, Nebraska. An area that Community Partners would like me to explore with you is underage drinking. It is not news to you that this has been and continues to be a high risk health behavior for youth in Buffalo County and it is evident that you are working on this health concern. I see billboards, hear ads on the radio and see other signs that you, as youth are proactively trying to prevent alcohol use among young people. The good news is the rate of youth binge drinking has gone from a high of 38.7% in 9th through 12th graders in 2000 to 23.2% in 2007. The bad news is that approximately one out of four youth in your community still binge drink which, when they do, they drink five or more drinks in a row in a couple of hours.

The Community Partners selected your group to be a part of this assessment process because you represent youth in your community. I am happy to have the opportunity to visit with you today.

To begin I would like you to:

- Introduce yourself; and
- Share with us why you became a member of DAFY

Meeting Purpose (*Record on a flipchart page*)

To explore youth substance abuse with you, specifically alcohol use.

Planned Outcomes (*Record on flipchart page*)

1. To listen for and capture the common themes that emerge from our dialogue today;
2. To combine what we hear from you with what we hear in other focus group and town hall meetings;
3. To develop a county wide action plan that will focus on how to prevent alcohol use among youth and young adults in Buffalo County.

Before we begin with the questions I would like to ask you I would like to go over some ground rules for our time together today.

Ground Rules (*Record on third flipchart page*)

1. Only one conversation at a time.
2. Listen with respect to each other
3. No side conversations.
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Adhering to these is important for the following reasons:

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2. Your input is very valuable to the planning process that is underway; and.....last but not least;
3. It's the golden rule and the right thing to do.

Questions

Now I am going to ask you some questions around drinking alcohol. You will **not** be asked questions about your own behavior, but rather your views about what youth your age in your community think and do.

1. When you think about people your age who drink, where do you think that they usually obtain alcohol?
Prompts: a liquor store, a grocery store, a bar, a restaurant, friends, parents, other family members, strangers.
2. How easy is it for people your age to get alcohol from these sources?
Prompts: Reflect sources they mentioned in Q1.
3. Where are youth your age most likely to drink?
Prompts: your house, someone else's house, a park, a field, in the car
4. If people your age drink alcohol, how likely do you think it would be that people would find out?
Prompts: parents, other family members, the police, teachers at school, employers
5. How much do you think that people would disapprove if people your age were to drink?
Prompts: their parents, other family members, friends, teachers, employer
6. How much do you think that drinking and driving is a problem for people your age?
7. How much do you think that people would disapprove if people your age were to drink and drive?
Prompts: parents, other family members, friends, teachers, your employer

8. If you drink and drive, what do you think would happen to you?
Prompts: the police would catch you, you would get a ticket and pay a fine, your parents would find out and punish you in some way, anything else?
9. From groups that we have been visiting with there are four contributing factors that seem to be emerging related to underage alcohol use. They are:
- a. Easy social access such as older siblings and parents
 - b. Favorable social community norms, in other words it is culturally acceptable for youth to drink
 - c. Low perceived risk on the part of youth
 - d. Easy retail access
- (Ask the participants to rank order these)*
10. Do you have any other thoughts you would like to share before we close?

Thank participants and discuss next steps.

Next Steps

1. Reiterate “Planned Outcomes”
2. Ask if group would be interested in providing input into the plan to address underage drinking being developed by Positive Pressure.

APPENDIX D: Youth Focus Group Script – UNK Students

Buffalo County Community Partners Script – University of Nebraska at Kearney (UNK) Youth Focus Group For 2009 Community Health Assessment and SPF-SIG Grant (February 3, 2009)

Introduction and Welcome

Good morning. As (INSERT Name of person who welcomes group) indicated, my name is (INSERT Name of facilitator). I have been asked by Community Partners to conduct a series of focus groups and town hall meetings related to the health of our community, specifically the communities in Buffalo County, Nebraska. An area that Community Partners would like me to explore with you today is underage drinking, binge drinking and alcohol impaired driving. Underage drinking has been and continues to be a high risk health behavior for youth and young adults in Buffalo County. The good news is that, with focused attention to this issue, the rate of youth binge drinking has gone from a high of 38.7% in 9th through 12th graders in Buffalo County in the year 2000 to 23.2% in 2007. The bad news is that approximately one out of four underage youth in our communities in Buffalo County still report that they binge drink, which by definition is drinking five or more drinks in a row in a couple of hours.

The Community Partners selected your group to be a part of this assessment process because as a student at UNK you represent a unique community within Buffalo County, many who are underage when you enter and attend college. You may or may not be a resident of the County but this is your home away from home while you pursue your education so we would like to seek your input on this subject.

I am happy to have the opportunity to visit with you today. Before we begin with I would like to get a sense of the group.

Could each of you please:

- Introduce yourself
- Tell us where you are from; and please
- Share something about yourself that others would not know about you.

Meeting Purpose (*Record on a flipchart page*)

To explore underage youth substance abuse with you, specifically alcohol use.

Since our topic relates to underage drinking you are either currently underage or were at one time underage. Can I have a show of hands please to get a sense of what portion of the class is under 21. Thank you. This will be helpful as I phrase my questions.

Planned Outcomes (*Record on flipchart page*)

1. To listen for and capture the common themes that emerge from our dialogue today;
2. To combine what we hear from you with what we hear in other focus group and town hall meetings that are being conducted this month; and ultimately

3. Develop a county wide action plan that will focus on how to prevent alcohol use among youth and young adults in Buffalo County.

Before we begin with the questions I would like to ask you I would like to go over some ground rules for our time together today.

Ground Rules (*Record on third flipchart page*)

1. Only one conversation at a time.
2. Listen with respect to each other
3. No side conversations.
4. All thoughts and ideas are valued
5. No member should be put down because of their opinions.
6. There are no wrong or right answers.

Adhering to these is important for the following reasons:

1. We have a lot of things to talk about and we'll need to stay focused to get through our agenda.
2. Your input is very valuable to the planning process that is underway; and.....last but not least;
3. It's the golden rule and the right thing to do.

Questions

Now I am going to ask you some questions around drinking alcohol. You will **not** be asked questions about your **own** behavior, but rather your views about what others your age in the community think and do.

1. When you think about people under age who drink, where do you think that they usually obtain alcohol?
Prompts: a liquor store, a grocery store, a bar, a restaurant, friends, parents, other family members, strangers.
2. How easy is it for underage people to get alcohol from these sources?
Prompts: Reflect sources they mentioned in Q1.
3. Where are underage drinkers most likely to drink?
Prompts: your house, someone else's house, a park, a field, in the car
4. When underage people drink alcohol, how likely is it that other people will find out?
Prompts: parents, other family members, the police, teachers at school, employers
5. How much do you think that those people would disapprove of people under age drinking?
Prompts: their parents, other family members, friends, teachers, employer
6. How much do you think that drinking and driving is a problem for people your age?

7. How much do you think that people would disapprove if people your age were to drink and drive?

Prompts: parents, other family members, friends, teachers, your employer

8. If you drink and drive, what do you think would happen to you?

Prompts: the police would catch you, you would get a ticket and pay a fine, your parents would find out and punish you in some way, anything else?

9. Do you have any other thoughts you would like to share before we close?

Thank participants and discuss next steps.

Next Steps:

In March we will be holding follow-up town hall meetings in each of your communities to:

1. Feed back what we heard in the focus group and town hall meeting; and
2. Seek input on the county wide action plan that is being developed.

We would like to invite you to attend these if you can. We will share the schedule for these with your instructor when it is finalized. The dates, times and locations will also be publicized in the Kearney HUB. Thank you for your participation today.

APPENDIX E: Town Hall Meeting Notes – Amherst

**Buffalo County Community Partners
Town Hall Meeting – Amherst, NE
For
2009 Community Health Assessment and SPF-SIG Grant
February 7, 2009 at 11:30am @ Amherst Community Center**

22 attendees

Welcome: Denise Zwiener, Director, Buffalo County Community Partner

Facilitator: Joan Lindenstein

Other Community Partner Staff Present: Lacrica Olson, Community Coalition Coordinator; Michelle Lindner, Administrative Assistant

Meeting Purpose

1. To hear your vision for a healthy Buffalo County.
2. To learn from you what you think are the major issues facing your community

Planned Outcomes

1. To create a summary report of the common themes that emerge from our discussion today;
2. To combine these results with the results from other town hall meetings
3. To reach consensus on the county's current pressing issues
4. To develop a 2020 plan for Buffalo County that addresses these issues.

Questions

1. When you think of healthy community what comes to mind?

- Healthy people
- Normal weight
- Care and concern for others
- People know each other by name
- Elderly stay in homes as long as possible
- Safety – kids can play openly
- Business growth
- Strong main street
- Strength through neighboring communities
- Community leadership
- Access to funds
- Community leadership
- Community beautification
- Growing population
- Fire department
- School
- Law enforcement
- Ability to get what you need at home

- Families – out and about and active
- Quiet place to live

2. On a scale of 1-10 (1 being very unhealthy and 10 being perfectly healthy) how healthy is your community?

- Scores discussed ranged from 4 to 7; **Consensus ranking of 7**

Discussion Related to Scores:

- **Score of 4 or 5**

- Dead town
- Stagnant – nothing happening
- Nutrition wise – eating too much; not getting enough calcium, obesity is a problem

- **Score of 5 or 6**

- Have a good start but need more; Positive aspects sited:
 - * New school
 - * Fire department
- Housing is an issue and impacts attracting new families

- **Score of 7**

- Positives sited:
 - * New school
 - * Sense of community
 - * Active churches

3. What are specific issues in your community that you think, if addressed, would improve the overall health of the community?

- Need a convenience store or grocery store – no place to buy necessities – grocery store closed in 1984
- Alcohol
 - Youth are drinking during off season and between sports
 - Access – parents and retail
 - Easy access to alcohol - local functions, church events, graduations
 - See kids drinking
- Housing
 - Affordable, adequate housing hard to find
- -Cleaner town (develop model similar to Ravenna – designate specific day for trash clean up)
- Limit on number of dogs
- How to showcase Amherst and entice new residents to live in community
 - People looking for a nice, quiet, place to live vs. industrial environment found in Kearney
- Increase tourism
 - Agriculture
 - Keep businesses like Harvest Moon
- Preventing vandalism in public park and vacant homes
 - considered an issue but not a major issue
 - associated with parenting

-Driving Distance for Law enforcement– Example cited: 3 hour wait for vandalism call

- Engaging community in solving issues
- Upgrades to existing buildings/infrastructure
- Workforce development

4. What are barriers to addressing these issues?

- At a crossroads for housing – many elderly who are over 80 stay in their homes until their passing. This is often times the only opportunity to build new homes
- Funding for feasible ideas
- Knowledge on how to secure funding
- Mentality – would rather stay at home than attend events in the community
- Identification of something distinctive
- Road between Amherst and Mason City is not paved
- Competing gas sales – Big Flag and Pump and Pantry
- Assessing feasibility of a convenience or grocery store
 - Goods are cheaper in Kearney
 - Would people shop in Amherst?
 - May bring alcohol and tobacco sales

5. If you could solve only three of the issues we've discussed which three would they be?

- Increase adequate housing (20)
 - Demolish vacant housing
- Improve the downtown – more businesses (19)
- Attracting families to Amherst (8)

Other issues receiving votes:

- Community beautification (7)
- Engage community members (5)
- Nutrition (3)
- Amherst road paved to Mason City (3)
- Upgrades to existing buildings/infrastructure (2)
- Increase Ag tourism (2)
- Youth access to alcohol (1)
- Preventing vandalism (1)
- Workforce development (1)

Alcohol Questions

1. Do you feel you have alcohol-related problems in your community? If yes, what are they?

- Youth obtaining alcohol from older individuals (parents and retail)
- Small town; more kids drink – nothing else to do

2. What are the general attitudes about drinking in your community?

- Considered a “rite of passage” for youth
- Many students go to Kearney to access alcohol – college students
- More drinking during off season or between sports
- Majority of parents – watch out for each other and their youth to reduce access

3. In your community, is it okay to provide alcohol to someone who is underage and if so, under what circumstances?

- New residents were surprised at the availability of alcohol at graduation parties, etc.

4. To what extent do you think community norms contribute to the misuse of alcohol?

- To a great extent
- School tries to monitor alcohol usage but kids make their own choice
- When parents model behavior – youth take notice

5. From groups that we have been visiting with there are four contributing factors that seem to be emerging related to underage alcohol use. They are:

- a. Easy social access such as older siblings and parents
- b. Favorable social community norms, in other words it is culturally acceptable for youth to drink
- c. Low perceived risk on the part of youth
- d. Easy retail access

(Participants asked to rank order these)

Discussion:

(c) Ranked highest – cycle has been around for centuries, low perceived risk; if it’s against the norm, then you do it

(d) Ranked high, but clarified the problem is not in Amherst but in Kearney Further discussion clarified that kids are getting alcohol more from social settings rather than purchasing alcohol from retail establishments.

Review results.

6. Any surprises? None expressed

7. Do you have any other thoughts you would like to share before we close? None expressed.

Next Steps

In the latter part of March a follow-up town hall meeting will be held in Amherst to:

1. Validate the findings from today’s meeting;
2. Hear common themes that have emerged from the other focus group and town hall meetings; and
3. To seek your input on a county wide 2020 plan that will be in the early stages of development

All are invited back.

APPENDIX F: Town Hall Meeting Notes – Elm Creek

**Buffalo County Community Partners
Town Hall Meeting – Elm Creek, NE
For
2009 Community Health Assessment and SPF-SIG Grant
February 10, 2009 at 7:00pm @ Elm Creek Fire Hall**

8 attendees including 1 media representative

Welcome: Denise Zwiener, Director, Buffalo County Community Partners

Facilitator: Joan Lindenstein

Other Community Partner Staff Present: Lacrica Olson, Community Coalition Coordinator; Michelle Lindner, Administrative Assistant

Meeting Purpose

1. To hear your vision for a healthy Buffalo County.
2. To learn from you what you think are the major issues facing your community

Planned Outcomes

1. To create a summary report of the common themes that emerge from our discussion today;
2. To combine these results with the results from other town hall meetings
3. To reach consensus on the county's current pressing issues
4. To develop a 2020 plan for Buffalo County that addresses these issues.

Questions

1. When you think of healthy community what comes to mind?

- Less alcohol access
- Safe drivers – many have taken driver education classes
- Positive citizen involvement – proactive vs. reactive and waiting until there is a problem
- Community is thriving
- Restaurants/Filling stations
- Not too busy
- Swimming pool
- Activities for youth – 4-H, scouts, etc.
- Community support
- Room for growth
- Strong school
- Clean/fresh air
- Nice parks and recreational areas
- Safe routes to school
- Community is safe and free of violence

2. On a scale of 1-10 (1 being very unhealthy and 10 being perfectly healthy) how healthy is your community?

- Scores discussed ranged from 6 to 8; **Consensus ranking of 7**
- Strengths sited:
 - Centrally located between I-80 and highway 30
 - Close to larger communities (Kearney, Lexington and Holdrege) providing access to more services and jobs
 - New school – approximately 350 students K-12
 - Safe environment
 - School has a track used as a means of physical activity by the community
 - Job opportunities for youth
 - Three active churches
 - Friendly community – some differences expressed between those who grew up in the community and those who moved into the community regarding degree of friendliness and acceptance
 - Strong Emergency Medical Technicians and fire services
 - Making strides to make a better community:
 - Swimming pool built
 - Track and field built by volunteers
 - Firehouse
 - Football seats – received from Mile High Stadium in Denver

3. What are specific issues in your community that you think, if addressed, would improve the overall health of the community?

- Safety issues
 - Need safe routes to school with a pedestrian crosswalk
 - Major access point (Example Bosselman's) for strangers; need to educate parents and youth about dangers
 - Safe drivers - cost of driver education training – for some it is unaffordable
- Less alcohol access- have 3 bars in the community
- Park on the south side
- Flood issues
 - Concerns with the proposed “Lake Project” and the saturation and water problems that may be a result of the project; may affect drinking water, create flood issues and waste water
 - NRD is making all the decisions; community does not have a voice; the proposed purpose is for habitat, boating and recreation with the exception of motorboats
- Housing Issues
 - Need for affordable housing – not a large selection
 - Housing and land hard to find for acreages
 - Problems with streets and sidewalks in the new area – currently gravel, no concrete
 - Need additional senior housing
 - * Maple Manor (12 units) but does not provide meals

- * No nursing home; a care home was voted against
- * No assisted living facility
- No Senior Center – Seniors gather in their churches
- No Youth Center – questioned value; would have to compete with activities available in Kearney
- A portion of the youth drink
- Many youth need to work to help support the family resulting in more focus on the job and less focus on school
- Fuel prices had an impact on the community
- No movie theatre

4. What are barriers to addressing these issues?

- Resident involvement in coming to consensus on what changes are needed and why they are needed
- Public support
- Funding
- Lack of involvement
 - Older residents are not getting involved
 - Others wait until a plan is in motion to become involved
 - Sited low attendance at school bond meetings
 - Satisfaction with the way things are – why change now
 - Bedroom community – some individual and families just live in the community but work elsewhere; those who do not have school age children are not as active in the community
- Public support of NRD

5. If you could solve only three of the issues we've discussed which three would they be?

- Safety issues
 - Need safe routes to school with a pedestrian crosswalk
 - Major access point (Example Bosselman's) for strangers – need to educate parents and youth about dangers
 - Safe drivers - cost of driver education training – for some it is unaffordable
- Housing issues
 - Need for affordable housing – not a large selection
 - Housing and land hard to find for acreages
 - Problems with streets and sidewalks in the new area – currently gravel, no concrete
 - Need additional senior housing
 - * Maple Manor (12 units) but does not provide meals
 - * No nursing home; a care home was voted against
 - * No assisted living facility
- Underage drinking

Other Issues Receiving Votes

- Park on south side (1)
- Saturation levels – Lake (1)

Questions Related to Alcohol

1. Do you feel you have alcohol-related problems in your community? If yes, what are they?

- Issue with some of the kids in the school

2. What are the general attitudes about drinking in your community?

- Community is split
 - Some parents are role models
 - Some parents provide alcohol to youth
- School is a positive asset – encouraging especially with new students

3. In your community, is it okay to provide alcohol to someone who is underage and if so, under what circumstances?

- In some instances parents provide alcohol i.e. at parties
- Graduation parties

4. To what extent do you think community norms contribute to the misuse of alcohol?

- To some extent i.e. graduation parties

5. From groups that we have been visiting with there are four contributing factors that seem to be emerging related to underage alcohol use. They are:

- a. Easy social access such as older siblings and parents
- b. Favorable social community norms, in other words it is culturally acceptable for youth to drink
- c. Low perceived risk on the part of youth
- d. Easy retail access

Participants were asked to rank order these.

Discussion:

(a) is the largest contributing factor but community members felt that (b) is the underlying cause. Underage youth in Elm Creek are able to access alcohol through other community members. Some parents provide open parties to all youth and don't always know who the youth are who attend the parties. The school has a policy related to alcohol but parents sometimes challenge the policy on behalf of their children. If a student self reports the penalties are less significant. Cell phones and text messaging contributes to "moving" parties amongst youth. Regarding (c) the low perceived risk is related to the idea that youth feel they can "get away with it".

Review of results.

6. Any surprises?

None expressed

7. Do you have any other thoughts you would like to share before we close?

None expressed

Next Steps

In the latter part of March a follow-up town hall meeting will be held in Elm Creek to:

1. Validate the findings from today's meeting;
2. Hear common themes that have emerged from the other focus group and town hall meetings, and;
3. To seek your input on a county wide 2020 plan that will be in the early stages of development.

All are invited back.

APPENDIX G: Town Hall Meeting Notes – Gibbon

**Buffalo County Community Partners
Town Hall Meeting – Gibbon, NE
For
2009 Community Health Assessment and SPF-SIG Grant
February 8, 2009 at 2:30 pm @ Gibbon Public Library**

14 attendees

Welcome: Carol Schwarz, Chair, Buffalo County Board of Directors

Facilitator: Joan Lindenstein

Community Partner Staff Present: Denise Zwiener, Director; Lacrica Olson, Community Coalition Coordinator; Michelle Lindner, Administrative Assistant

Meeting Purpose

1. To hear your vision for a healthy Buffalo County.
2. To learn from you what you think are the major issues facing your community

Planned Outcomes

1. To create a summary report of the common themes that emerge from our discussion today;
2. To combine these results with the results from other town hall meetings
3. To reach consensus on the county's current pressing issues
4. To develop a 2020 plan for Buffalo County that addresses these issues.

Questions

1. When you think of healthy community what comes to mind?

- Access to affordable or free healthcare
- Medication assistance program
- Paperwork assistance for elderly
- Transportation to services – healthcare/other
- Safe in general
 - safe sidewalks
 - handicap accessibility
 - overpass
- Positive image – no graffiti
- Community beautification
- Community that draws people
- Availability of transitional care – assisted living to nursing home
- Quality buildings/homes
- Good schools with:
 - Transportation
 - Access
 - Safe routes

- Theatre
- Wellness programs
- Cautious drivers
- Adult mentors

2. On a scale of 1-10 (1 being very unhealthy and 10 being perfectly healthy) how healthy is your community?

Scores discussed ranged from 6-8; **Consensus ranking of 7**

Discussion: Gibbon is a good community but there is always room for improvement.

- Noise (Cargill dryer, trains and traffic);
- Air quality – the packing plant and lagoons;
- Lack of low income housing
- Water quality – smells and tastes terrible

3. What are specific issues in your community that you think, if addressed, would improve the overall health of the community?

- Find use for old school
- Survey elderly and low income population to determine their needs
- Development of a community extended family to help those who do not have family
- Increase services in low income housing
- Improve corridor
- Improve water quality (smell)
- Quality of low income housing/rentals
- Safe kids/safe elderly
- Youth drinking and decisions after drinking
- Drug use (15 years old to 35 years old)
- Yard waste and blowing trash
- Minority housing (poor conditions)
- Minority healthcare (access, communication, diversity, higher incidence of certain diseases)
- Patient access to a pharmacy
- Wellness programs
- Need a hike and bike trail from town to the park possibly to tie Gibbon to Kearney
- Development of promotion for tourism opportunities
 - Trains
 - Cranes
 - Winery
 - Shelters
 - State park
 - Frisbee golf
 - Disc golf
- Develop community website

- Better signage
- Increase services in low income housing
- Low income and elderly – need extended family
- Noise quality
- Air quality
- Childhood obesity
- Lack of helmet usage

4. What are barriers to addressing these issues?

- Old water lines – funds to replace them
- Landlord apathy
- Landlords who take advantage of minorities- related to housing conditions
- Access to care – diabetes, hypertension, obesity
- Funding
- Apathetic community
- Getting people involved
- Knowledge/awareness of issues – assumption is that people will read about it in the paper – many do not subscribe to local paper
- Trail right away
- Bedroom community – population not invested/involved
- Lack of promotion – example – disc golf course

5. If you could solve only three of the issues we've discussed which three would they be?

- Quality of housing – low income, minority, owned and rentals (9)
- Water quality (smell) (4)
- Youth drinking and decisions after drinking (4)

Other issues receiving votes

- Improve corridor (3)
- Safe kids, safe elderly (3)
- Noise quality (3)
- Air quality (3)
- Increase services in low income housing (2)
- Minority issues – housing & healthcare (2)
- Other drug use (1)
- Yard waste/blowing trash (1)
- Hike and bike trail (1)

Questions Related to Alcohol

1. Do you feel you have alcohol-related problems in your community? If yes, what are they?

- Yes, but it boils down to whether or not youth have a positive influence in their life (parents, mentors, other community members)
- Improvement has been seen

2. What are the general attitudes about drinking in your community?

- Improvement among parents helping to keep kids safe
- Never goes completely away but there have been some positive changes with the community and the school
- Some still believe it is a “rite of passage”
- Believe that all community members are responsible to speak up and confront the problem, not just the parents; need for adult mentors
- Most youth believe they are invincible
- There is open access in Kearney – college community

3. In your community, is it okay to provide alcohol to someone who is underage and if so, under what circumstances?

- Small majority believe it is okay
- Opinion is that it sets a bad example for kids and teaches them to break the law; also leads to other bad decisions
- Some parents feel it is better to have their youth drink at home than be out and about so provide access at home

Side note: Gibbon is on the corridor for drugs; Youth begin substance Abuse around age 15; there has been an increase in marijuana usage; kids think it is safer than drinking. Both marijuana and alcohol are easy to get.

4. To what extent do you think community norms contribute to the misuse of alcohol? (See responses to #5)

5. From groups that we have been visiting with there are four contributing factors that seem to be emerging related to underage alcohol use. They are:

- #1**
- a. Easy social access such as older siblings and parents
 - b. Favorable social community norms, in other words it is culturally acceptable for youth to drink
 - c. Low perceived risk on the part of youth
 - d. Easy retail access

(Participants asked to rank order these)

Discussion: ALL are factors that exist in Gibbon; there is a combination of all 4. Kids are able to buy right in Gibbon. Community norms vary by year. Access depends on the social network of the youth. Youth who work in the convenience stores, grocery stores and other stores have more access. Youth are influenced by TV and advertising.

Social access seems to be the largest problem in combination with youth traveling to Kearney and being able to access alcohol.

Review results.

6. Any surprises? None expressed

7. Do you have any other thoughts you would like to share before we close? None expressed

Next Steps

In the latter part of March a follow-up town hall meeting will be held in Gibbon to:

1. Validate the findings from today's meeting;
2. Hear common themes that have emerged from the other focus group and town hall meetings; and
3. To seek your input on a county wide 2020 plan that will be in the early stages of development

All are invited back.

APPENDIX H: Town Hall Meeting Notes – Pleasanton

Buffalo County Community Partners Town Hall Meeting – Pleasanton, NE For

2009 Community Health Assessment and SPF-SIG Grant February 11, 2009 at 7pm @ Pleasanton Community Center

30 attendees including 1 Positive Pressure Coalition member

Board Welcome: Bob Smoot, Community Partner Board Vice Chair

Facilitator: Joan Lindenstein

Community Partner Staff Present: Denise Zwiener, Director; Lacrica Olson, Coalition Coordinator; and Michelle Lindner, Administrative Assistant

Facilitator's Introductory/Welcoming Remarks

- Introduce yourself; and
- Share with us what brought you here today

Meeting Purpose

1. To hear your vision for a healthy Buffalo County.
2. To learn from you what you think are the major issues facing your community

Planned Outcomes

1. To create a summary report of the common themes that merge from our discussion today;
2. To combine these results with the results from other town hall meetings
3. To reach consensus on the county's current pressing issues
4. To develop a 2020 plan for Buffalo County that addresses these issues.

Questions

1. When you think of healthy community what comes to mind?
 - All age groups thrive
 - Active businesses
 - Growing population and businesses
 - Services for residents
 - Affordable housing
 - Educational opportunities
 - Exercise groups
 - Clean environment
 - Easy access to recycling
 - Teen/youth activities
 - Access to healthcare
 - Community health screenings

- Care homes for the elderly
 - Recreation (parks and equipment)
 - Communication – everyone informed about events, etc.
 - Public transportation
 - Connection between the community and churches
 - Spiritual needs met
 - Community pride
 - Strong Fire Department and trained Emergency Medical Technicians
 - Youth 5th Quarter – organized activity for youth at local church following sporting events
2. On a scale of 1-10 (1 being very unhealthy and 10 being perfectly healthy) how healthy is your community?
- Scores discussed ranged from 6-8; **Consensus ranking of 7.**
Pleasanton has made a lot of improvements over the past 3-4 years, but still needs to do more. Positive aspects cited were:
 - Level of community involvement
 - Growing number of volunteers
 - Community pride
 - Good parent role models
 - DARE program
 - Fire and Emergency Medical Technician services
 - Educational opportunities are improving
 - New preschool
 - Summer kids partyAreas for improvement cited are recorded in the responses to Question 3.
3. What are specific issues in your community that you think, if addressed, would improve the overall health of the community?
- Better communication about events and services available in the community (no newspaper)
 - More activities for teens
 - Senior housing – currently none available
 - Greater involvement of community members
 - Make new community members feel welcome beyond sports
 - Need more students
 - Need retirement housing; side benefit – would free up some housing for newcomers
 - Affordable housing (not necessarily low income but middle class work force housing)
 - Expansion of sewer infrastructure to accommodate housing growth
 - No restaurant or bar
 - Need a better recycling system; volunteer system currently available and trailers are always full

- Need for a youth center; opportunities with depot discussed
- Some youth alcohol issues but not a major problem at this time; may access alcohol out of town
- No exercise/fitness center
- Need for a hike and bike trail possibly along the river and/or on the old school grounds that could possibly be grant funded
- Expansion of 5th Quarter
- Better highway access
- Daycare center

4. What are barriers to addressing these issues?

- Landlocked – impacts housing growth
- Flood plain – increases cost of insurance for houses, decreases market value of houses, results in vacant home in flood plain and inhibits expansion of housing and businesses
- Must raise buildings due to flood plain creating hardship for adjacent buildings and lots
- Connect city – Sid Rodehorst sited as a source to assist with this
- Infrastructure costs on lots
- Knowledge on how to secure funding to address issues
- Funding for housing options and other projects
- Economy

5. If you could solve only three of the issues we've discussed which three would they be?

- Need for more students (19)
- Need for a restaurant and bar (16)
- Need for a Fitness Center (12)

Other Issues Receiving Votes in Order of Preference

- Better highway access (11)
- Housing (9)
 - Retirement housing (5)
 - Affordable housing (4)
- Need for a hike and bike trail (8)
- Make new community members feel more welcome (beyond sports) (6)
- Retirement housing (5)
- Better recycling system (5)
- Daycare Center (4)
- Expansion of sewer infrastructure (3)
- Youth Center (2)
- More activities for teens (1)
- Summer kids party (1)

Questions Specific to Youth Alcohol Usage

1. Do you feel you have alcohol-related problems in your community? If yes, what are they?
 - Currently not a major issue; some problems exist but most occur outside of the community.
2. What are the general attitudes about drinking in your community?
 - Not acceptable at all for underage youth
3. In your community, is it okay to provide alcohol to someone who is underage and if so, under what circumstances?
 - **Not okay**; Slim amount of parents think it is okay to provide alcohol to minors
 - School has a strong DARE program
4. To what extent do you think community norms contribute to the misuse of alcohol?
 - Community norms actually contribute to responsible usage of alcohol in Pleasanton
5. From groups that we have been visiting with there are four contributing factors that seem to be emerging related to underage alcohol use. They are:
 - a. Easy social access such as older siblings and parents
 - b. Favorable social community norms, in other words it is culturally acceptable for youth to drink
 - c. Low perceived risk on the part of youth
 - d. Easy retail access

Discussion: Underage alcohol use is at its lowest level in many years. Low perceived risk on the part of youth and favorable community norms were cited as the most contributing factors in Pleasanton. Easy retail access does not exist for youth in Pleasanton. If youth want to access alcohol they primarily secure it from older youth.

Next Steps

In the latter part of March a follow-up town hall meeting will be held in Pleasanton to:

1. Validate the findings from today's meeting;
2. Hear common themes that have emerged from the other focus group and town hall meetings; and
3. To seek your input on a county wide 2020 plan that will be in the early stages of development

All are invited to back.

APPENDIX I: Town Hall Meeting Notes – Ravenna

**Buffalo County Community Partners
Town Hall Meeting - Ravenna
For
2009 Community Health Assessment and SPF-SIG Grant
February 8, 2009 at 7:30pm @ Ravenna Youth Center**

32 attendees

Board Welcome: Carol Schwarz, Buffalo County Community Partners Board Chair

Facilitator: Joan Lindenstein

Community Partner Staff Present: Denise Zwiener, Director; Lacrica Olson, Coalition Coordinator; and Michelle Lindner, Administrative Assistant

Facilitator's Introductory/Welcoming Remarks

- Introduce yourself; and
- Share with us what brought you here today

Meeting Purpose

1. To hear your vision for a healthy Buffalo County.
2. To learn from you what you think are the major issues facing your community

Planned Outcomes

1. To create a summary report of the common themes that merge from our discussion today;
2. To combine these results with the results from other town hall meetings
3. To reach consensus on the county's current pressing issues
4. To develop a 2020 plan for Buffalo County that addresses these issues.

Questions

1. When you think of healthy community what comes to mind?
 - Programs and services that serve all age groups with a variety of activities
 - Vibrant businesses
 - Good schools with parental involvement
 - Churches
 - Good natural resources – clean air and water
 - Volunteers
 - Positive attitude
 - Senior citizens receive adequate care
 - Good transportation
 - Strong medical facilities
 - Access to public transportation
 - Good public facilities – parks, ballfields, etc

- Great support from the agriculture community
 - Residents return to their community after pursuing their education
 - Open communication with local government
2. On a scale of 1-10 (1 being very unhealthy and 10 being perfectly healthy) how healthy is your community?
- **Consensus ranking of 7**
 - Ravenna has many positive things occurring in it's community i.e. youth center, daycare center, senior center, etc. but has areas that need improvement such as strengthening the business district and improving communication with local city officials.
 - Strong downtown businesses available to residents
 - Presence of the railroad and industry results in dollars spent in the community
3. What are specific issues in your community that you think, if addressed, would improve the overall health of the community?
- Development of a recycling program – no existing program in place and program is costly
 - Grocery store recycles cardboard and is exploring how to recycle plastic
 - Loup City has a program that could be explored
 - Could possibly work with the housing senate to help with this issue
 - Have lost Advanced Nurse Practitioner from the Ravenna Medical Clinic resulting in less days of coverage and decreased access to medical care
 - Loss of medical and dental care directly affects other aspects of the community such as retention of a pharmacy and loss of business to other communities when residents go to other communities for medical care
 - Senior center is great but it is underutilized
 - More organized youth activities are needed. Youth travel to Kearney to seek more activities. Would like to see a movie theatre, miniature golf, etc. available in Ravenna. Lions club has roller skating – could possibly expand its activities. City has building available with a big screen TV where movies could be shown free with a charge for concessions; however there is a need for volunteers to help with the process.
 - Youth drink alcohol in absence of other activities (see specific questions related to youth alcohol use below)
 - Increased dialogue between youth and adults
 - Youth vandalism
 - Housing
 - Need more housing
 - Need for safer homes -some houses are substandard
 - Need higher end homes
 - Annexation of property needed for homes
- *On the positive side, the planning commission has approved development of a subdivision and is waiting to move forward and the community

continues to apply for grants related to housing.

- Improve curb appeal – clean lots, no weeds, etc.
- Internet and digital access
- Development of another truck stop off of highway 2 that could be open longer hours with expanded amenities such as a restaurant, plug in for hybrid cars, etc.
- Signage on highway 2 and development of a community entrance that lets travelers know what is available over the “hill” in Ravenna – the businesses, the winery, bed and breakfasts, etc. Consider signage advertising Ravenna – the next 3 exits
- Bio-diesel operation

4. What are barriers to addressing these issues?

- Technicalities on how to operate a successful recycling program and funding for program
- Funding for specific projects
- Need for a grant writer
- Infrastructure (gas and electrical lines) present barriers for an eco-friendly community
- Communication – community needs to dialogue more around issues
 - Primary communication vehicle – newspaper
 - Town hall meetings – not well attended when feedback is being sought
- People are shy about sharing or getting involved
- Restaurant and lodging taxes charged in Kearney and Grand Island – if a portion were returned to local communities; dollars spent in Kearney and Grand Island would help fund Ravenna initiatives
- Taxes associated with opening new businesses – would be beneficial if tax breaks could be offered

5. If you could solve only three of the issues we’ve discussed which three would they be?

- Recycling (25)
 - Youth have also defined this as the #1 issue they would like to work on; Potential for the Youth Advisory Board (YAB), the Community Improvement Board, the Housing Senate and others to work together
- Sustaining access to medical care with loss of APRN at the Ravenna Medical Clinic (15)
- Developing a community entrance off of highway 2 and curb appeal particularly east of the overpass (17)

Other Issues Receiving Votes in Order of Preference

- Need stronger downtown businesses, more industry and the workforce to support it (12)
- More youth activities (10)
 - In the community

- Expand youth center
- Lions Club increase activities in the auditorium
- Address housing Issues (7)
 - more quality housing,
 - address substandard housing
 - develop new subdivision
- Increased utilization of the Senior Center (7)
- Parental Involvement (2)
- Increase in truck stop services – more hours of coverage, restaurant, plug in for hybrid cars, etc. (2)
- Keep dental access strong (2)
- Quality Senior Center (1)
- Return of portion of city sales taxes and lodging taxes charged in Kearney and Grand Island to Ravenna (1)

Questions Specific to Youth Alcohol Usage

1. Do you feel you have alcohol-related problems in your community? If yes, what are they?
 - 3/4 of the Ravenna teens do not drink; strong adult role models and mentors
 - Community supports “no tolerance” for youth alcohol
 - Parents support “no tolerance”
2. What are the general attitudes about drinking in your community?
 - Acceptable for adults
 - Not acceptable for youth
 - Some acceptability seen at specific events such as graduation parties.
3. In your community, is it okay to provide alcohol to someone who is underage and if so, under what circumstances?
 - Generally not acceptable; some acceptability seen at specific events such as graduation parties
4. To what extent do you think community norms contribute to the misuse of alcohol?
 - Ravenna community norms contribute to the responsible use of alcohol
5. From groups that we have been visiting with there are four contributing factors that seem to be emerging related to underage alcohol use. They are:
 - #1** a. Easy social access such as older siblings and parents – Considered # 1 (See discussion below)
 - #2** b. Favorable social community norms, in other words it is culturally acceptable Of youth to drink
 - #3** c. Low perceived risk on the part of youth
 - #4** d. Easy retail access – Considered # 4 (See discussion below)

Discussion:

- It is difficult for minors to buy at local retail establishments and is the least likely contributing factor in Ravenna
- Businesses such as Flashbacks and Cedar Hills have recently received Responsible Beverage Server training.
- Social access sited as the main contributing factor especially occurring with youth who are uninvolved

Note: Participants inquired whether the question “ how involved are youth in activities” is on the youth behavior surveys that are conducted by Community Partners in conjunction with the schools. Community Partners will explore inclusion in the upcoming survey.

Next Steps

In the latter part of March residents of Ravenna will be invited to attend a follow-up town hall meeting in Ravenna to:

1. Validate the findings from today’s meeting;
2. Hear common themes that have emerged from the other focus group and town hall meetings; and
3. To seek your input on a county wide 2020 plan that will be in the early stages of development

All are welcome back.

APPENDIX J: Town Hall Meeting Notes – Shelton

**Buffalo County Community Partners
Town Hall Meeting – Shelton, NE
For
2009 Community Health Assessment and SPF-SIG Grant
February 8, 2009 at 5pm @ Shelton Community Center**

12 attendees including 1 Positive Pressure Coalition member

Welcome: Carol Schwarz, Chair, Buffalo Community Partners Board of Directors

Facilitator: Joan Lindenstein

Community Partner Staff Present: Denise Zwiener, Director; Lacrica Olson,
Community Coalition Coordinator

Meeting Purpose

1. To hear your vision for a healthy Buffalo County.
2. To learn from you what you think are the major issues facing your community

Planned Outcomes

1. To create a summary report of the common themes that emerge from our discussion today;
2. To combine these results with the results from other town hall meetings
3. To reach consensus on the county's current pressing issues
4. To develop a 2020 plan for Buffalo County that addresses these issues.

Questions

1. When you think of healthy community what comes to mind?

- Clean
- Recycling
- Unity
- Strong school
- Nice parks
- Physically active community that engages together
- People involvement
- Well maintained affordable and available housing
- Positive place for youth
- Place for seniors/elderly to walk especially in the winter
- Senior Center
- Senior services
- Ability to walk after hours in the school and other buildings in the community
- Medical care

- A lot to offer residents
- Community pride
- One that has a vision and is moving in the right direction
- A place for youth to grow and have a future
- Community involvement
- Teen center
- Strong economy

2. On a scale of 1-10 (1 being very unhealthy and 10 being perfectly healthy) how healthy is your community?

- Ratings discussed ranged from 4 to 6; **Consensus ranking of 6.**
- Discussion: Shelton is not on the right track with what is mentioned above. Compared to the past, businesses and services have declined. At one time Shelton had a bowling alley, lumber yard, pharmacy, jewelry store, theatre, laundry services, and race track. Community has less activities for youth than in the past.
- Strengths/assets sited:
 - Nice park
 - Nice grocery store
 - Bank
 - Community building
 - Fire and rescue
 - School
 - Medical and dental care
 - Clean town
 - Churches; strong faith community
 - Farming community – holding the economy steady
 - Ratio of churches to bars is positive – 3 churches (Catholic, Lutheran and Methodist); 2 bars (1 bar; 1 gas station that sells alcohol)
 - School has an alcohol policy that parents support
 - STAND/FCCLA – strong; 85 members; addressing youth issues; (Comment made that youth change quickly)
 - Safe place
 - Community works through the school and the churches

3. What are specific issues in your community that you think, if addressed, would improve the overall health of the community?

- Elderly outreach program to help with shopping, housework, etc.
- Need more resources/services for elderly/seniors
- Need for semi-competitive sports for young adults – i.e. softball and baseball leagues
- Youth tobacco use
- Need grant writer to find funds to address issues
- Quality housing
- Community infrastructure

- With so many elderly in their homes, need strong emergency services
- Pioneer apartments need upgrading
- Workforce development
- Teenage concerns
- No focus on new families and their basic health needs
- Need after school tutoring
- Need food service
- Need more mentors for teens (parents, teachers, counselors, church and some who are closer to their age)
- Church family
- Need elder independent housing facility that is close to resources – something between home and assisted living
- Youth alcohol use (Added to list after alcohol questions were asked)
- Parent alcohol use (Added to list after alcohol questions were asked)

4. What are barriers to addressing these issues?

- Lack of local resources particularly for the elderly
- Lack of unity among parents
- Funding for teen center, elderly needs, etc.)
- People involvement
- Knowledge and funding needed to build the youth center

5. If you could solve only three of the issues we've discussed which three would they be?

- Elder housing and services (9)
- Recommended a separate focus group for the elderly
- Youth alcohol use (5)
- Finding a grant writer to address community issues (4)

Other issues that received votes

- Need for semi-competitive sports for young adults – i.e. softball and baseball leagues (2)
- More mentors for teens closer to their age (2)
- Food service (1)
- Workforce development (1)
- After school tutoring (1)
- Youth tobacco use (1)
- Quality housing (2)

If alcohol is not suggested as a priority issue then one or more of the following questions will be asked:

1. Do you feel you have alcohol-related problems in your community? If yes, what are they?

- Yes

2. What are the general attitudes about drinking in your community?

- “Kids will be kids”
- “I did it – it’s okay” (Parents)
- Mentality – this is how it has always been
- Formation of STAND/FCCLA – avenue for making better choices

3. In your community, is it okay to provide alcohol to someone who is underage and if so, under what circumstances?

- It should not be but it happens
- School has a drug and alcohol policy – recent survey of parents and youth shows that there is support for the policy
- Some parents want the school to do the parenting
- Unfair treatment of athletes vs. other students related to MIP’s etc. Favoritism toward athletes

4. To what extent do you think community norms contribute to the misuse of alcohol?

- Youth obtain alcohol from older kids
- Community knows who parents are that provide.

5. From groups that we have been visiting with there are four contributing factors that seem to be emerging related to underage alcohol use. They are:

#2 a. Easy social access such as older siblings and parents

#3 b. Favorable social community norms, in other words it is culturally acceptable for youth to drink

#1 c. Low perceived risk on the part of youth

#4 d. Easy retail access – **Not seen as a problem in Shelton**

(Participants asked to rank order these)(See above for ranking and below for discussion)

Discussion: The group suggested a 5th contributing factor as it relates to Shelton:

#5 Parents not monitoring their kids (sleepovers, etc); out doing their own thing

- **Kids go to Kearney, Hastings and Elm Creek for activities; Secure alcohol from older kids and at parties**
- **Some kids in Shelton are more responsible than their parents when it comes to alcohol**
- **Peer pressure among parents – not enough support for parents – some parents just tell other parents it is okay**

Review results.

6. Any surprises?

- Youth alcohol use was not initially listed as an issue in the community but was added following the discussion and was voted as one of the top 3 priorities to address.

7. Do you have any other thoughts you would like to share before we close?

- None expressed.

Next Steps

In the latter part of March a follow-up town hall meeting will be held in Shelton to:

1. Validate the findings from today's meeting;
2. Hear common themes that have emerged from the other focus group and town hall meetings; and
3. To seek your input on a county wide 2020 plan that will be in the early stages of development

All are invited back.

APPENDIX K: Town Hall Meeting Notes – Sumner/Eddyville/ Miller

**Buffalo County Community Partners
Town Hall Meeting – Sumner/Eddyville/Miller
For
2009 Community Health Assessment and SPF-SIG Grant
February 9, 2009 at 6:30 pm @ SEM School Cafeteria in Sumner**

13 attendees

Welcome: Luke Olson, Buffalo County Community Partners Board Member

Facilitator: Joan Lindenstein

Community Partner Staff Present: Denise Zwiener, Director; Lacrica Olson, Community Coalition Coordinator, and Michelle Lindner, Administrative Assistant

Meeting Purpose

1. To hear your vision for a healthy Buffalo County.
2. To learn from you what you think are the major issues facing your community

Planned Outcomes

1. To create a summary report of the common themes that emerge from our discussion today;
2. To combine these results with the results from other town hall meetings
3. To reach consensus on the county's current pressing issues
4. To develop a 2020 plan for Buffalo County that addresses these issues.

Questions

1. When you think of healthy community what comes to mind?

- Standard housing – appropriate for the area
- Opportunities – place to eat healthy, place to exercise and recreation for all age groups
- Safety – able to walk to school safely
- Clean air/water
- Job opportunities
- Big 4 – School, post office, grocery store and restaurant
- Good morale
- Emergency services
- Job opportunities
- Churches

2. On a scale of 1-10 (1 being very unhealthy and 10 being perfectly healthy) how healthy is your community?

- Scores discussed ranged from 4 to 7. **Consensus was that the score depends upon the issue**
- Discussion related to the score of 4:
 - Lack of adequate housing
 - Lack of job opportunities
- Strengths of the community sited:
 - Good water
 - Clean air
 - Safe community
 - Emergency Medical Technician services
 - Community involvement – the community pulls together
 - Mustang Community Development Board – a community improvement board that reinforces the town board and has some positive efforts
 - Pre-school
 - Local sports (Baseball and T-ball)
 - Girl scouts
 - 4-H
 - Trying to bring entrepreneur program into Sumner
 - Miller village clean up
 - Baptist and E-Free church joined together – has been very successful for adults and youth
 - Strong Awanas
 - Law enforcement
 - * Sumner and Eddyville are covered by Dawson County; Miller is covered by Buffalo County
 - * Makes visits twice a day
 - * Covers local events
 - * Great response time (within 15 minutes)

3. What are specific issues in your community that you think, if addressed, would improve the overall health of the community?

- Housing
 - Substandard homes – cheap but cause health issues
 - No new housing
 - No available lots for housing
 - No local zoning
 - Most people build
 - More houses available out of town
- Need a health and fitness area for all age groups
- Job opportunities
- Getting the 3 communities (Sumner, Eddyville and Miller) to work together – each community has it's own town board
- Youth activities – youth go to Kearney for activities if no local sporting events

- Youth retention
- Youth alcohol use
- Adult drug use/alcohol
- Family environment
- Long commute to services and events (health care, sports, etc.)
- No cub scouts
- Low drive for youth to go on to college and tech schools (specific data requested from the school – 80% go on to college; 50% succeed)
- Low school enrollment; increase in drop-outs due to intake of high risk youth
- Some problems with teen pregnancy at the end of high school or right after graduation
- Revenue spent in Kearney – no kick back
- No senior independent living facilities
- Medical services for the elderly lacking but needs are met with physicians in Kearney

4. What are barriers to addressing these issues?

- Distance
- Limited resources to develop such things as a fitness center (no building, no land, etc)
- Not creative; Don't "turn wheels" to get past barriers; people set in their ways
 - Comfortable with the way things are
 - “This is the way it has always been”

5. If you could solve only three of the issues we've discussed which three would they be?

- Develop a health and fitness center (9)
- Address housing issues with emphasis on substandard housing and availability of lots (8)
 - Substandard homes – cheap but cause health issues
 - No new housing
 - No available lots for housing
 - No local zoning
 - Most people build
 - More houses available out of town
- Youth retention (6)

Other issues receiving votes

- Need for senior independent living facilities
- Getting the 3 communities (Sumner/Eddyville/Miller) to work more closely together (2)
- Low school enrollment (1)
- Long commute to services (1)

Questions Related to Alcohol Usage

1. Do you feel you have alcohol-related problems in your community? If yes, what are they?

- Yes, youth drink alcohol as means of activity. Those who choose not to travel to Kearney drink in pastures

2. What are the general attitudes about drinking in your community?

- Divided – many people are “strongly” against it; however some parents provide alcohol to minors

3. In your community, is it okay to provide alcohol to someone who is underage and if so, under what circumstances?

- See responses to Question 2

4. To what extent do you think community norms contribute to the misuse of alcohol?

- Discussed in Question 5

5. From groups that we have been visiting with there are four contributing factors that seem to be emerging related to underage alcohol use. They are:

- a. Easy social access such as older siblings and parents
- b. Favorable social community norms, in other words it is culturally acceptable for youth to drink
- c. Low perceived risk on the part of youth
- d. Easy retail access

(Participants asked to rank order these)

Results:

(a) Ranked #1; (b) correlates with (a)

(c) Ranked #2

(d) Ranked #4; respondents do not believe youth have easy retail access to alcohol

Other comments:

- Community is thankful no major accidents have occurred

- Other drug use exists:

- **Marijuana amongst youth**
- **Meth and alcohol among adults**
- **Feel these go hand in hand in certain situations**

Review of results

6. Any surprises?

- None expressed

7. Do you have any other thoughts you would like to share before we close?

- Shared positive things they are working on with the Mustang County Community Board. These are included in Question 2 listing under strengths sited in the community.

Next Steps

In the latter part of March a follow-up town hall meeting will be held in Sumner, Eddyville or Miller to:

1. Validate the findings from today's meeting;
2. Hear common themes that have emerged from the other focus group and town hall meetings; and
3. To seek your input on a county wide 2020 plan that will be in the early stages of development

All are invited back.

APPENDIX L: Youth Focus Group Notes – Buffalo County Youth Advisory Board

Buffalo County Community Partners YAB Youth Focus Group For 2009 Community Health Assessment and SPF-SIG Grant February 15, 2009 at the Gibbon Library

21 attendees

Welcome: Denise Zwiener, Director, Buffalo County Community Partners

Facilitator: Joan Lindenstein

Other Community Partner Staff Present: Lacrica Olson, Community Coalition Coordinator, Kimmy Minnig, Activate Buffalo County Coalition Coordinator, Michelle Lindner, Administrative Assistant

Meeting Purpose

To explore youth substance abuse, specifically alcohol use.

Planned Outcomes

1. To listen for and capture the common themes that emerge from dialogue today;
2. To combine what we hear with what we hear in other focus group and town hall meetings;
3. To develop a county wide action plan that will focus on how to prevent alcohol use among youth and young adults in Buffalo County.

Questions

1. When you think about people your age who drink, where do you think that they usually obtain alcohol and how easy is it to get alcohol from these sources?

- Parents
 - Some supply alcohol to minors
 - Some parents have it available at home and youth access it with or without knowledge of parents
 - Some parents condone underage drinking as long as it is done in their home – feel youth are safer
- Older friends – college age; UNK; Kearney
- Fake ID's - Processes sited for securing:
 - Lost ID - older person says they have lost their ID, secure a new one and give their old one to someone underage
 - Use someone else's who looks like you
 - Use ID of someone of similar age
- Liquor stores
 - Use fake ID's; harder in small towns where everyone knows everyone and their ages
- Connections to employees – employee steals for self or someone else

- Parties
- “People they know”

2. Where are youth your age most likely to drink?

- Cornfields
- Parties
- With groups in general due to peer pressure and “cool factor”
- Depends on connections
- College parties with people they know
- Cruise night
- UNK campus – certain houses supply
- In Kearney – perception is they are less likely to get caught

3. From groups that we have been visiting with there are four contributing factors that seem to be emerging related to underage alcohol use. They are:

2 a. Easy social access such as older siblings and parents **Comments – with easy social access more likely to drink**

1 b. Favorable social community norms, in other words it is culturally acceptable for youth to drink **Comments – if you want to drink you can; people in the community encourage you**

3 c. Low perceived risk on the part of youth

4.d. Easy retail access – **Comments – takes more effort and is risky**

Participants asked to rank from 1 to 4 which contributes most in Buffalo County (See rankings above)

4. If people your age drink alcohol, how likely do you think it would be that people would find out?

- Easy to find out
- Hear from other students – students brag and feel they have nothing to lose
- Facebook – conversations and pictures posted
- Law enforcement – usually have been informed by someone else
- Teachers know but many don’t do anything about it
 - Hearsay
 - Don’t know what to do next
 - Sometimes have personal connections
 - Student sleeping class – sign of being “hung over”
- Parents
 - May know but are in denial
 - Know but don’t impose strict enough punishment
 - Some know but don’t care

5. How much do you think that people would disapprove if people your age were to drink?

- Frowned upon in Elm Creek
- Some communities disapprove, others do not
- Some parents party with their college students when they come home from school so obviously approve
- Depends upon the time period i.e. during a sports season/event vs. no sport going on
- Depends upon peer pressure
- More disapproval if youth brag than if they keep quiet about it
- Depends upon popularity of the person – the more popular the person is the more disapproval
- The more status the person has the more disapproval; Example – Michael Phelps

6. How much do you think that drinking and driving is a problem for people your age?

- Very much; Low perceived risk
- High school students – less likely to secure a designated driver due to:
 - Inconvenience
 - Scared people will find out they are drinking
 - Often designated drivers are not sober

7. How much do you think that people would disapprove if people your age were to drink and drive?

- People disapprove due to harm that could be done to others
- Disapprove more if drinking and driving rather than just drinking
- Parents get upset because son/daughter has risked his/her life
- Some parents don't understand or acknowledge significance of problem until their child is hurt; or take a "blind eye" until it affects them personally
- Parents expect a call for a ride home
- Repercussions from parents
- Loss of jobs
- Legal action – severity depends on number of incidents and how intoxicated the youth is

Side Conversation: Use of breathalyzers – mainly used at dances, not at sporting events; if alcohol is detected parents are called.

9. Do you have any other thoughts you would like to share before we close?

- Youth report they feel some school administrators ignore youth who bring alcohol and marijuana into the school because they either do not care or do not know how to handle the situation
- Some school administrators either do nothing or push too much; if they push too much youth fight back; Need to find a happy medium

- Students expect school administrators to enforce the rules and not ignore the problem
- Some student leaders who represent the school are not punished – adult sponsors of activities don't want to believe student is involved or ignore it so student will stay involved
- Questioned merits of legalizing alcohol
 - Sited examples from foreign exchange students who can legally drink in their countries and state that underage drinking is not an issue
 - If legalized consensus was that there would initially be a marked increase in underage drinking and the associated problems but would later taper off; The question is, at what cost?
- Lowering drinking age rather than legalizing it would be a huge step backwards and make the problem worse
- Need to do something to make it not “cool” anymore to drink –
- Smoke free campuses – youth know how to push the policy
- Some youth think it is fun to break the law

Next Steps:

In March we will be holding follow-up town hall meetings in each of your communities to:

1. Feed back what we heard in the focus group and town hall meeting; and
2. Seek input on the county wide action plan that is being developed.

We would like to invite you to attend one of these meetings. We would encourage you to bring your parents, your pastors, other mentors in your life and others you think have a passion for helping to prevent underage drinking. Thank you for participating today.

APPENDIX M: Youth Focus Group Notes – Kearney Public School – DAFY Group

**Buffalo County Community Partners
DAFY Youth Focus Group
For
2009 Community Health Assessment and SPF-SIG Grant
February 11, 2009 @ Kearney Public School Media Center**

16 attendees including 1 DAFY sponsor, 4 seniors, 2 juniors and 6 freshmen

Welcome: Lacrica Olson, Coalition Coordinator, Buffalo County Community Partners

Facilitator: Joan Lindenstein

Other Community Partner Staff Present: Michelle Lindner, Administrative Assistant

Introductions: Each asked to introduce self and share why they became a member of DAFY. **Responses:**

- To be a role model; has seen how drinking can impact own family
- To be a role model for siblings; For support
- Believes in DAFY
- Family legacy of DAFY; To be a role model
- To be a role model
- Has seen what drugs and alcohol can do; works with kids and wants them to look up to her
- Has seen effects of alcohol abuse
- Sister was in DAFY; It is a respected group
- To be a role model for siblings; has a personal health problem
- Oldest child in family – example for siblings

Meeting Purpose To explore youth substance abuse, specifically alcohol use.

Planned Outcomes

1. To listen for and capture the common themes that emerge from our dialogue today;
2. To combine what we hear from you with what we hear in other focus group and town hall meetings;
3. To develop a county wide action plan that will focus on how to prevent alcohol use among youth and young adults in Buffalo County.

Questions

1. When you think about people your age who drink, where do you think that they usually obtain alcohol?

- Family
- Older friends or siblings

- Parents
- Refrigerator at home
- May try to purchase but unlikely

2. How easy is it for people your age to get alcohol from these sources?.

- Very easy if you know older kids who drink
- Just a phone call away
- Purchasing generally does not work

3. Where are youth your age most likely to drink?

- Parties – home and college parties
- Basement of home with friends
- With college kids – mainly junior and seniors

Side question: At what age do most youth begin drinking?

- Between sophomore and junior year (when they start driving)
- Some begin experimenting the summer after 8th grade

4. If people your age drink alcohol, how likely do you think it would be that people would find out?

- Very likely – students share events with friends to try to look cool
- In school – can smell alcohol on other students walking in hall
- The more people who know, the more you are likely to be caught
- If shy, many may not know
- Teachers
 - Some ignore the issue – don't want to be bothered or feel it will not help
 - Involvement depends upon level of caring – teachers who care will try to influence behavior
 - Some teachers will pull students aside and try to influence their behavior
- Parents
 - If you try, you can hide it from parents
 - Some parents are strict and youth get caught
 - Some parents trust that their youth will make the right choices
- Colleges and employers are now looking on Facebook and can find out if youth are drinking – may decrease the chance of youth obtaining job.

5. How much do you think that people would disapprove if people your age were to drink?

- People do not approve but don't do anything about it
- Some parents approve of limited social drinking (i.e. sharing a glass of wine with family at Christmas) but disapprove of other youth drinking

Side Comments

- In some crowds it is cool to drink
- Regarding DAFY – if other students know you are serious about the mission of DAFY there is no pressure to drink; Peers who don't know you are in DAFY will offer you alcohol
- If friends know where you stand there is no pressure

6. How much do you think that drinking and driving is a problem for people your age?

- Frequently youth don't think it is a problem
- Won't call parents for a ride home
- Causes injuries

7. How much do you think that people would disapprove if people your age were to drink and drive?

- Parents disapprove
- Parents are concerned if youth are out late because others may be drinking and driving
- Coaches – if they know they try to enforce consequences

8. If you drink and drive, what do you think would happen to you?

- First couple of times – a night in jail
- If more offenses – stricter punishment
- Jail
- Fine
- Liability for damages
- Lose license
- Lose job
- Lose mobility which could affect other activities like hunting, etc.

9. From groups that we have been visiting with there are four contributing factors that seem to be emerging related to underage alcohol use. They are:

- # 1** a. Easy social access such as older siblings and parents
- # 3** b. Favorable social community norms, in other words it is culturally acceptable for youth to drink
- # 2** c. Low perceived risk on the part of youth
- # 4** d. Easy retail access

Participants were asked to rank order these. (See rankings above)

10. Youth were asked about other problems with substance abuse

- Alcohol is the most common, then marijuana
- Marijuana – easy to get and easy to detect due to smell
- Not much prescription drug abuse unless person is depressed or suicidal

11. Do you have any other thoughts you would like to share before we close?

- There should be stricter punishment for adults who supply alcohol
- If minors know who the supplier is most likely they will not tell
- Some 8th graders accessing weed and getting in trouble because of alcohol

Next Steps

1. Reiterate “Planned Outcomes”
2. Ask if group would be interested in providing input into the plan to address underage drinking being developed by Positive Pressure.

Response: Yes.

APPENDIX N: Youth Focus Group Notes – UNK Students

**Buffalo County Community Partners
University of Nebraska at Kearney (UNK) Youth Focus Group –
Chancellor’s Leadership Class (Freshmen)
For
2009 Community Health Assessment and SPF-SIG Grant
(February 3, 2009)**

21 attendees

Introductions: Members of the class introduced guests

Welcome: Denise Zwiener, Director of Buffalo County Community Partners

Facilitator: Joan Lindenstein

Other Community Partner Staff Present: Lacrica Olson Coalition Coordinator and Michelle Lindner, Administrative Assistant

1. When you think about people under age who drink, where do you think that they usually obtain alcohol?

- Older friends
- Older siblings
- Parents (Seldom in college; more likely in high school)
- Stealing from Retailers(Example: Place alcohol on bottom level of grocery cart; not seen by cashier and then walk out of store)
- Fake ID’s (Stores and Liquor store)
- Take from home
- Boss supplies it (Example: Branding cattle)
- Parties that charge by the cup

Of those you listed, which two do you think are the most common?

- **College**
 - Parties
 - Older Friends
 - Siblings for those who have them
- **High School**
 - Siblings
 - Take from home

2. How easy is it for underage people to get alcohol from these sources?

- Older friends – easy if you have money
- Siblings – easy if you have money
- Parents – some parents want to be cool and provide it as long as you are at home and safe. This is more prevalent in high school than college.
- Stealing – mainly from parents, not from stores

- Fake ID's – more prevalent in high school; most ID's are not very good quality; some use other people's old ID's; some siblings exchange ID's
- Taking from home – more prevalent in high school
- Boss supplies it – common for those who work on a farm

3. Where are underage drinkers most likely to drink?

- **College**
 - House and apartment parties
 - Dorms (Occasionally)
- **High School**
 - Driving around (One of top two)
 - Parties in the woods, by the river and in the pastures (One of top two)
 - Home – parents host
 - Home – parents out of town or working
 - School – vodka in water bottles
 - School lunch hour/open lunch
 - Bon fire on private property – secure burn permit and then spread the word for a certain night
 - Alleys and behind gas stations
 - New construction developments

4. When underage people drink alcohol, how likely is it that other people will find out?

- Many parents know but think child is “golden” or turn a blind eye
- Coaches know but turn a blind eye to star athletes
- Teachers are very knowledgeable but often don't show it (hearsay or avoidance of required paperwork)
- Facebook – posted pictures
- Anonymous MIP hotline (in Beatrice, NE)
- Cops patrol areas where parties are held
- Cops turn a blind eye to relatives and friends
- Some cops are part time and don't take time to patrol
- Cops often do not know until something major happens

Side note: When do you think youth begin to drink?

- Most begin as a freshman or sophomore
- Some begin in middle school – 7th and 8th grade
- Those who wait to begin until 12th grade abuse alcohol the most

5. How much do you think that those people would disapprove of people under age drinking?

- Split – some thought more people are okay with it than disapprove of it; others thought more people disapprove than are okay with it; it depends on the community
- Parents did it so they think it is okay

- Depends upon the community
 - In some communities it is okay to drink in high school but not in middle school
- Those who are in sports are more likely to drink all the time
- A blind eye is often given to those who are involved in sports.
- Those who are most popular are the ones who drink most frequently
- Teachers and coaches – don't tell you not to drink; they tell you if you do, don't get caught
- Principal's kids – some "sweep it under the rug" and everyone knows they have done it
- Community leaders often ignore it

6. How much do you think that drinking and driving is a problem for people your age?

- College – problem has decreased; likely to use designated drivers or will walk to parties
- College – UNK can use cab service for designated driver – learn about this through orientation, fliers and word of mouth; about half of those present knew about service
- In high school – some camp out
- Many times don't use seatbelts as "not going that far"

7. How much do you think that people would disapprove if people your age were to drink and drive?

- More disapproval by others if you drink and drive rather than just drink
- Legal - sometimes even the designated driver gets MIP even if he/she is being the responsible one
- If an open container is present police will also MIP the designated driver
- Sometimes a blind eye is given by police if they know there is a designated driver

8. If you drink and drive, what do you think would happen to you?

- MIP – 2 days in jail in Buffalo County
- Parents of students in college –not as many consequences due to distance
- Parents of students in high school often have more consequences - some enforce rules from school policies, some sell cars or take away cars, cell phones, and internet; and some don't care – just tell us what the fine is and we'll pay for it.
- Coaches
 - Added workouts
 - Favoritism related to type of punishment
 - Some turn a blind eye; the emphasis is on winning
 - Some bend policy (Example: If school policy says the youth is not allowed to start the game, they don't start them but put them in 3 seconds later)

- Certain people don't get punished (Example: football players)
- School policies are followed
- Some students are asked to sign activity contracts related to sports, other activities and trips; if a student violates the contract they are punished
- International trips taken through the school – permission is secured from parents for students to drink if country traveled to allows a lower drinking age
- Some parents report the drinking to the school so the student will not be able to be involved in activities.

9. Do you have any other thoughts you would like to share before we close?

- Putting cameras in the school parking lots decreases use of alcohol
- Students hide alcohol in bottles
- One school had a policy where students were not allowed to have any outside food or drink bottles. The students fought it but it markedly decreased the number of student who drank
- Some school policies are not followed
- Vodka is the alcohol of choice while in school