

Lincoln College Partnership 2013 – 2014 Mini-Grant Report

NWU Bystander Intervention Poster Campaign

Building on the concept of Bystander Intervention, which was introduced on campus in August 2013, Nebraska Wesleyan University revised and printed 550 posters. These posters provide examples of ways in which students might intervene when they observe their peers engaging in risky behaviors involving alcohol.

The posters were hung in every restroom stall on campus. The poster revisions were necessary in order to make the message more relevant to NWU students and our specific campus culture.

Evaluation:

An evaluation of the awareness and effectiveness of the “Get It Off Your Chest” Bystander Intervention Poster Campaign was conducted by a Nebraska Wesleyan University Communication Studies Dialogue Class on 11-7-14

Participants: 30 students who were friends and acquaintances of the students enrolled in Communication Through Dialogue, Communication 3800-01, participated in the evaluation. The only criteria was that they be enrolled as students at Nebraska Wesleyan University fall semester 2014 and that they have the time between 10:00 AM and 10:50 available on 11/7/14. Both male and female students served as participants.

Technique: Four Hundred and eighty Bystander Intervention posters were displayed on campus for approximately 2 months. One variation of the poster was posted in each of the bathroom stalls on campus. The location for hanging the posters was based on previous student feedback that the bulletin boards on campus are cluttered and consequently, no one focuses on anything that has been posted.

The students conducting the evaluation used café style dialogues followed by a large group summation dialogue. Participating students sat at one of 6 different tables. Each table was staffed by a student from the Communication Through Dialogue class. The tables were covered with butcher paper and in the center of each table was a question regarding the poster campaign. The questions were developed by the members of the class in advance. The questions included:

- Describe how the poster campaign made you feel
- How would you describe the effectiveness of the campaign?
- When did you first become aware of this poster campaign and what was your initial reaction?
- Describe your understanding of or experience with Bystander Intervention.
- If you were in charge of this poster campaign, what would you do differently?
- How would you describe the impact of this poster campaign on the campus community?

Participants discussed each question under the facilitation of one of the students in the Communication Through Dialogue class. As they discussed, they were given markers and encouraged to write significant phrases regarding their discussion on the butcher paper. After 5 minutes of discussion, the groups switched to a different table. The facilitators remained at the same tables. This process continued until all of the participants had an opportunity to discuss each of the questions. During the last 5 – 7 minutes, students reconvened in a large group where they summed up their impressions of the campaign.

The comments on the butch paper at each table, as well as the comments made during the summation dialogue, were analyzed using a content analysis technique. Every theme that had at least two comments is listed. The themes are listed in the order of frequency in which they occurred. All but one student vocalized that they had seen the campaign.

Resulting Themes in Order of Frequency Mentioned:

- The posters portrayed men and women in stereotypical roles.
- The posters should be more widely distributed on campus and incorporated into class discussions.
- There should be a wider variety of venues represented in the posters i.e. not just house parties.
- Effective/thought provoking.
- The message was not clear enough/not motivational.
- The students in the posters should be more relatable.
- There are cab/transportation issues in the City of Lincoln
- The theme fits our campus ethos of caring for one another.
- Centered on relationships
- The intention of the campaign was good

Conclusion:

Although many participants spoke negatively about the location of the posters, all but one said that they had seen them. As mentioned, the location was selected based on feedback from previous poster campaigns, in which students indicated that they didn't notice the posters when they were displayed on the cluttered general posting bulleting boards on campus. Special permission is required to post in the stalls, so cluttering is not an issue. Unfortunately, numerous students assumed that we selected the location as a way to hide from potential students and their parents the concept that students sometimes engage in unsafe practices involving alcohol. In response to this concern, the remainder of the posters will be posted on general posting campus bulletin boards, but they will not be removed from the stalls prior to May 2015.

The café dialogue model resulted in some very spirited conversation regarding the Bystander Intervention Poster Campaign. A drawback of the model is that there is no control over what participants choose to write on the butcher paper; consequently there is no documentation that the participants actually addressed the questions developed by the students in the Communication Through Dialogue class.

Although there was criticism of the Bystander Intervention Poster Campaign, it is clear that students on the Nebraska Wesleyan University campus saw the posters. In addition, they experienced a reaction to the posters.

UNL Peer Education Support Materials

PREVENT, the relationship violence prevention peer educators at UNL, presents bystander intervention education sessions to student organizations, living units, classes and other groups on campus and in the community. One of the most effective and frequently requested presentations is on Red Flags in Relationships, because as an interactive presentation it affirms for participants that their intuition in potentially dangerous situations is accurate and helps them brainstorm ways to get out of those situations.

We printed 1500 8.5 X 2.75 double sided bookmarks to distribute at presentations to give participants an ongoing reminder of the Red Flags, strategies to intervene in those situations, and resources to support them and their friends. The other side of the bookmarks includes information about PREVENT and multiple ways to get in contact with the group, including social media.

Over 750 of the bookmarks have been distributed to new sorority and fraternity members as well as ROTC and resident assistants for University Housing. The remainder are being distributed as presentations are scheduled throughout the academic year.

Evaluation: Email addresses are being collected for many of the groups and a follow up survey will be distributed in March to determine if participants have kept the bookmarks, have accessed any of the

resources, have talked about PREVENT's information with peers, and have implemented any of the strategies discussed at the sessions and on the bookmarks. Revisions to the distribution process and the information on the bookmarks will be considered in response to the survey results.