



Youth360 Overview

(3/4/09)

Background

In response to feedback received from the Meth360 program, the Partnership for a Drug-Free America is developing a teen-oriented substance abuse prevention education presentation to teach teens (15-19 years old) about the realities and consequences of substance use. wreckED encourages teens to think more introspectively about their own and their friends' behavior regarding alcohol and other drugs, and to consider the associated consequences of getting involved. In addition to getting attendees to take a closer look at themselves, the presentation will also motivate them to be proactive in "looking out" for their friends who may be engaging in unhealthy behaviors.

Initially designed to be distributed to existing Meth360 programs as an additional tool for presenters working in their communities, this presentation will also be made widely available to any interested community or organization via the Partnership's online resources and through collaborative efforts with national and local youth organizations.

Program Development Partner

The development of the program has been aided by an experienced, contemporary youth marketing agency, Premise, Inc. Premise has had extensive experience in helping clients more effectively reach their youth target by engaging them physically, mentally and emotionally in their online and offline worlds. Premise is a strong believer in consumer research and guides all of its work with ongoing input from youth via their proprietary nationwide network of youth "observers".

Program Name

Youth360 has been a working name for this program which, on judgment, is too general a term to communicate any useful information about the program to prospective participants and possesses little or no appeal to the target audience. Part of the Premise assignment was to come up with a name that would resonate with youth and communicate the desired message about the nature of the program.

Through its creative development process and evaluation with target youth, the name that has been selected is "**wreckED**" (pronounced as two words – "wreck" and "ED"). The idea behind the name is that it captures a contemporary term that defines a creditable negative consequence of drug and alcohol use, "getting wrecked", and expresses it in a way that suggests the learning value of the program – "ED", as in education. The wreckED name was evaluated against several alternatives among hundreds of youth and proved to be, by far, the strongest candidate (see name research discussion below).

Program Components

The wreckED program is a community-based presentation designed to engage youth in discussion about alcohol and other drug use and abuse through three major components: 1) an engaging, narrated 12-15 minute video dimensionalizing the current drug and alcohol scene in the youths' world; 2) a facilitated discussion among presentation attendees about various issues generated by the video (to help stimulate the discussion, the facilitator will be provided with an innovative, interactive card game and a collection of real-life drug scenarios and additional drug-specific educational slides in video format); 3) a "call-to-

action” destination - an online resource where attendees can visit to learn more, keep the discussion going, continue playing the card game, access a host of additional tools and resources, and network with peers to virally spread the word about the program and the issues it addresses.

Program Format

Each presentation kit contains a video DVD and supporting materials and instructions on how to conduct the presentation. It begins with the playing of the opening video of 12-15 minutes in length.

This video is a combination of newly produced footage depicting all aspects of the contemporary drug and alcohol scene that is part of the teen life today, as well as footage dramatizing real-life stories of addiction and recovery from the A&E Network program series ***Intervention***. It is narrated by an experienced youth prevention specialist/intervention leader who draws upon his own stories to create credibility among the youth audience.

The video is designed to get teens to think about their behaviors, and the choices they make about their behaviors, and help them recognize risk factors that lead to drugging behavior. The video will demonstrate the spectrum of alcohol and drug use, from casual use to abuse to addiction, as well as the range of consequences from the seemingly minor to the more serious, life-threatening.

Following the video, the facilitator leads group discussion using individual observations of depictions in the video as conversation starters. Each facilitator will also have a comprehensive list of a wide range of drug/alcohol use scenarios that can also be used to start and stimulate conversation. Each facilitator will also have a special wreckED interactive card game that is designed for very easy group participation, and which will draw more participants into the discussion.

The interactive card game focuses on the issues presented in the video, simulating real world choices, behaviors, and consequences. While the video sets up the bigger picture regarding alcohol and other drug use and abuse, the card game personalizes the choices, behaviors, and resulting consequences, giving the teens the opportunity to play out scenarios from their own experiences and viewpoint. The game engages the teens and helps them identify the risk factors in their lives, and discuss the negative behaviors that lead to drug/alcohol use.

Two additional videos will be available on the program DVD. These will be drug-specific educational slide presentations of drug facts and information. These may be used by the facilitator as part of the basic presentation, or later in the discussion phase to supplement the dialogue or illustrate answers to questions. The initial two drug-specific videos included in the program kit will focus on meth and ecstasy. The plan is to continue to produce additional drug-specific modules to add to the program until all drug/alcohol issues are covered.

The Web site

The primary online resource supporting this program is **checkyourself.com**, a Partnership site that is aimed at youth to help them take stock of their own behaviors, and become aware if they are engaging in potentially dangerous activity. The site allows visitors to "look in the mirror" by answering quiz questions about their lifestyle, reading first-person stories, communicating with other teens, and playing decision games to see how they might act in situations involving drugs and alcohol.

Checkyourself.com will be modified to include an area to provide a landing page for visitors coming to the site from wreckED presentations, and space to promote, support and spread the word about the

wreckED program. It will include the video from the community presentation in both viewable and downloadable formats, a presenter sub-section with downloadable materials for use in live presentations.

Exploratory Research on wreckED

In developing the “wreckED” program, research was conducted with approximately 600 teens to test the components, name, and logo for the program. This research informed the development and refinement of the program and helped identify an engaging name for the program.

For example, teens in the study suggested that the program be put online and be designed so that it could be personalized to their own situation and circumstances. Teens also expressed a desire to learn about the different stages of addiction and the associated consequences.

Program Name Research

An overwhelming majority of teens chose “wreckED” for the programs’ title. WreckED proved to be a strong name that resonates with the audience and, importantly, they grasped the meaning behind the title. WreckED was favored because it defines a realistic outcome of alcohol and other drug use and abuse. The capitalized ED evokes the word "education," and supports the call to action that teens get educated about getting wrecked - and "check" themselves and their friends before they engage in alcohol and other drug use. In addition, the title wreckED complements the title of the programs’ website, checkyourself.com, as in “don’t wreck yourself, check yourself.”

Below are some of the specific responses to the wreckED name:

- It’s what happens when you use drugs/ED means get educated;
- Says it all when it comes to drugs and what happens;
- Easy to remember/catchy/up-to-date and cool;
- Makes me want to learn more; and
- It relates better to the topic.

The Partnership was concerned there might be some anxiety regarding the title of the program, particularly with parents. At first glance, the title might evoke images of teens partying and falling about or “wrecked” from their alcohol and other drug use. However, we believe that because this title resonated so strongly with the teens, and that they so clearly understood the message behind the title, it will work effectively for the program. WreckED is designed to engage teens in frank discussion that allows them the opportunity to honestly examine their own behavior, choices, and the very real consequences associated with alcohol and other drug use. As such, the title needs to reflect theme and material presented in the program and we strongly believe “wreckED” accurately and effectively conveys the theme and messaging of the program.

The Partnership recently conducted an email “red flag” check about the name with our current Meth360 presenters. We were pleased to receive very positive feedback, with no significant negative reactions, on the program concept and the name “wreckED”.