






How to Implement a Social Marketing Poster Campaign

by [Nadia Shamsuddin and Robert Becker](#)

One of the more traditional ways of implementing social norms interventions is through social norm marketing campaigns. While the campaigns can include t-shirts, buttons, bumper stickers, mugs, and the like, one of the most widely used mediums is posters. The development of the campaign materials are what often gets the stakeholders excited about the intervention, yet programmers must give careful consideration to social norms theory and application before embarking on the development process. For more information about theory and application, review this month's [Topic in Brief](#).

Included in this Educator Skill are the following:

- An outline and discussion of the [Steps](#) to take when implementing a social marketing poster campaign, and
- A [Guide for Conducting a Focus Group](#), including:
 - [A Response Sheet for Message Related Statements](#)
 - [Sample Student Questions](#)
 - [Sample Questionnaire](#), and
 - [Sample Parent Permission Form](#)

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Steps

1. **Collect data to decipher misperceptions about sexuality-related norms.** Research must be conducted to collect data about program participants' misperceptions. For example, in a teen pregnancy prevention program, the misperception might be that "everyone is doing it" whereas the data might reveal that 75% of program participants believe that sex is for adults. The misperception of "everyone is doing it" or "sex is okay for kids my age" might be a misperception to focus on within a campaign. For more information on how to collect data refer reader to "Tips for Educator" in this month's Topic in Brief.
2. **Decide which misperceptions you want to address in your program.** There may be several misperceptions that come out of the data that your program may choose to address. In addition to misperceptions about when it is OK to have sex, there may be misperceptions about program participants' attitudes toward their risk for sexually transmitted diseases or attitudes about the acceptability of sexual harassment. By working closely with school or program administrators, parents, and/or community members, program planners can select misperceptions that are deemed most appropriate and pressing to address.
3. **Develop messages to address the misperception.** Misperception data must be translated into messages that are considered both highly credible

and linguistically appropriate for the audience. Program planners can draft several versions of messages to test with the target audience or let the messages be developed through focus grouping with program participants. In the latter case, program planners can work with program participants on key themes that might be incorporated into a message.

4. **Conduct focus groups with program participants to develop message.**

After messages have been drafted or key message themes identified, it is important to conduct focus groups with program participants to learn how to cater the campaign message in a way that resonates with the audience. As mentioned earlier, the messages must be credible and comprehensible to be effective. This may also be the time to gain input from participants about the design, layout, and — look and feel — of potential campaign posters.

Parental consent may be needed for program participants involved in the focus group process — providing incentives for participants can help entice participation. Groups of eight to ten participants allow for the freedom to openly share opinions and comments about the message. When working with adolescent participants, it is important to set up an environment where they feel comfortable sharing individual opinions as opposed to conforming with responses from the group. To address this, focus group facilitators can ask participants to respond in writing to the campaign messages and then share their ideas verbally. (See [Focus Group Guide](#) for strategies for eliciting feedback from participants on the message and design of the posters).

5. **Refine messages, develop draft posters, and conduct a review by program administrators.**

Utilizing the focus group input, program planners can refine messages and develop drafts of potential campaign posters. If resources allow, working with a design firm can help facilitate the creation of a polished product. If not, programs can utilize traditional word processing, desktop publishing, or presentation software to develop draft posters. Once drafts have been created, it is important to have them reviewed and approved by program administrators, community members, parents, or any other stakeholder who may be called upon to support the campaign message.

6. **Conduct second round of focus groups on poster design and layout.**

After drafts have been created and approved, a second round of focus groups with program participants can help provide important feedback on how the message resonates with the audience. Here focus group facilitators will want to gain feedback to make sure the messages are understood and believable and that the appearance of images, colors, fonts, and design are acceptable. Facilitators might also want to solicit input on where the posters should be displayed for greatest visibility.

7. **Place posters in strategic program locations.**

Utilizing feedback from the focus groups, posters can be placed at strategic locations within a school, program facility, and/or at key locations within a community. A good idea is to ask the focus group participants to help place the posters up as a way of instilling a sense of investment into the campaign. These participants can be encouraged to act as "campaign representatives" who will discuss the campaign with their peers and friends.

8. **Monitor the poster placements.**

Program planners and participants should routinely monitor the posters to ensure they are still up and have not been defaced. Posters that have been torn down should be replaced. Depending on the goal of the campaign, posters might be kept up for a period of two weeks (if multiple posters are created) or longer.

9. **Conduct third round of focus groups and/or data collection to evaluate impact.** After the campaigns are complete, additional research and focus groups can be conducted to evaluate both the campaign process and impact. Research can be conducted with program participants, program administrators and/or community members, and parents.

About the Authors

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Robert M. Becker, M.S., is the Associate Vice President of Education and Training at PPNYC. He has been involved in the field of sexuality and sexual health for more than 10 years and has helped write curricula that address the sexual and reproductive health needs of adolescents.

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Focus Group Guide

by [Nadia Shamsuddin and Robert Becker](#)



This focus group guide was originally developed and used to get feedback on a social norms marketing campaign in an urban middle school. The guide can be adapted for use with other audiences and in other contexts.

Time: approximately 90 minutes

Materials Needed:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15 pens | <input type="checkbox"/> Markers for nametags |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15 response sheets with prewritten questions | <input type="checkbox"/> M&Ms |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newsprint with one | <input type="checkbox"/> Small plastic cups or |

message prewritten
on each sheet

napkins

Newsprint with
messages with blanks
for rewording options

15 nametags

Newsprint with M&M
info

Stipend log

Blank newsprint

Notepad (for recorder)

2 posters

Cash

Ground rules
prewritten on
newsprint

I. Introduction, Ground Rules & Ice Breaker

(10 minutes)

1. Permission Slips

Make sure all students have a signed parent permission slip (see [sample parent permission slip](#)), sign in and wear a nametag. Stress that if students do not participate in the focus group, they will not be paid!

2. Introductions

Introduce yourself and the person taking notes. Briefly discuss your role and the work you do. Let students know that we are planning to put posters up in the school that talk about some of the things that we have been teaching in the classrooms. Emphasize that the students, in the room today, play a very important role and are going to help us develop this poster campaign for the entire school.

3. Ground Rules

Review ground rules that have been written on newsprint with students. Below is a list of suggested ground rules. Ask students if they can agree to these ground rules by nodding their heads. Ask if there is anything they would like to change or add to the list.

- o Maintain confidentiality
- o Give everyone a chance to talk
- o Speak only for yourself

- PARTICIPATE!!!
- Listen to everyone's opinion

4. **M&M Icebreaker**

In preparation, write out the colors of the M&Ms on newsprint. Next to each color write something each person can say about themselves, e.g., - Red = My favorite food, Green = My favorite sport, etc.

Give each student a handful of M&Ms in a plastic cup. Ask them to pull out two M&Ms. Based on the color, the student has to respond to the corresponding topic listed on the newsprint.

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II. Message Related Questions

(40 minutes)

1. In preparation, write each statement on a separate sheet of newsprint and post one at a time. When talking to the students, the facilitator should use the word "statement" instead of "message." "Statement" generally elicits better feedback.

Statements:

- Most students at (mention school, community, town, etc.) don't plan on having sex in the next year.
 - Most students at (mention school, community, town, etc.) want teasing to stop.
 - Most students at (mention school, community, town, etc.) say that when the time does come to have sex, they won't do it without a condom.
 - Most students at (mention school, community, town, etc.) think that when they start to date it is best to choose someone close to their own age.
 - Most students at (mention school, community, town, etc.) think that people their age are not ready to have sex.
2. Post each statement and ask students to write (on the response sheets provided) their answers to the following questions. Give students about five minutes for each statement.
 - What does this statement mean?
 - Are there any words in this statement that

you don't understand?

Ask students to turn the sheet over and answer the following questions:

- Do you believe this message? Why or why not?
 - Do you think most people in this school (town, community, etc.) would believe it?
3. Collect response sheets and ask students to share some of their opinions/feedback, about what they wrote.
 4. Post each message newsprint with blanks (for rewording) separately. Post the different rewording options for each message and ask students:
 - Which one sounds the best? Which one do they like the best?
 - Which one is the easiest to understand?
 - Do they have ideas for rewording the statement to make it more clear?

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III. Poster Related Questions

(35 minutes)

1. Show the students the poster(s) for their review/comments (one at a time, if more than one). Tell students to ignore the message for now and focus on the photos/color, etc. Let them know that one of messages they discussed before will be going with the poster. For each poster ask:
 - What do you like about this poster? If they don't answer, prompt them by asking what they think of the images, colors, design.
 - What would you change to make this poster better, or would you leave it the way it is?
 - What type of font do you like the best (graffiti, cursive, etc.)
 - Do they prefer objects or cartoons vs. pictures?
2. Discuss ideas for poster designs for each of the different messages. Show any previously created mock-ups to give them ideas and to solicit their opinion.
3. Ask where the posters should be displayed so that

- people see them every day.
4. Ask students if there is anything else that they would like to share.

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IV. Closing (5-10 minutes)

1. Explain to students that you are going to take their ideas and suggestions and work on making some posters for their school. Let them know that you would like them to be a part of another focus group once the posters ready in a month or two, so that you can get more information and help from them. Have them write their names, homeroom class and phone numbers (if they have one) on a sheet if they are interested.
2. Thank them for their participation and hand out \$. (Have them sign the stipend log.)

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