

Youth Prevention Campaign Recommendation

Informed by the 2025 Jackson County Community Profile and Readiness Assessment

Overview

This document provides recommendations for the development and implementation of a two-generation (2Gen) positive community norms (PCN) campaign in Jackson County. The recommendations are informed by the outcomes of the 2025 Youth Prevention Community Profile and Readiness Assessment conducted by Peak Strategy Solutions, which assessed community attitudes and preparedness to prevent substance use via stakeholder engagement, interviews, youth feedback, and surveys.

Background

The two-generation approach recognizes that the well-being of children and youth is closely linked to the well-being of their parents and caregivers. The Community Profile and Readiness Assessment showed a clear need for adult education, awareness, and behavior change to impact youth beliefs and norms. By addressing risk factors and building protective factors for both generations, prevention programs can have a more sustainable and meaningful impact on youth development and family stability.

The findings also reveal that residents of Jackson County possess a strong sense of community pride and are highly supportive of prevention messages that are tailored specifically for their local context. There is a distinct preference for messages developed within the community, reflecting local values and experiences, rather than those created by outside organizations. This attitude is accompanied by a general reluctance to accept external influence or to alter longstanding behaviors and established community norms.

Alcohol consumption is deeply embedded in the social fabric of Jackson County. It is a prominent feature of adult gatherings, including local events such as rodeos, social parties, and even occasions involving children, making alcohol use both highly visible and normalized within the community. This normalization contributes to alcohol being perceived as the most significant substance use issue in the county.

Despite the seriousness of alcohol-related concerns, there are few statewide or national prevention campaigns that specifically address the dangers of alcohol use in a way that fits the local context. The close-knit nature of the community and its strong sense of identity mean that generic, external campaigns are unlikely to resonate with residents or effectively influence established community norms.

Recommendation: Two-Generation Positive Community Norms Campaign

Based on the assessment findings, the implementation of a two-generation (2Gen) positive community norms (PCN) campaign is recommended as a strategic approach for Jackson County. The PCN model is rooted in the Science of the Positive Framework, which provides a

systematic method to foster positive, protective norms within organizations, systems, communities, and cultures. By leveraging this framework, the campaign aims to promote healthier behaviors and attitudes across both youth and adults.

The primary focus of PCN is correcting misperceptions regarding community norms—a practice supported by evidence as effective in reducing harm and improving health outcomes throughout the social ecology. This involves highlighting and amplifying the actual healthy behaviors and beliefs present within the community, rather than allowing inaccurate perceptions to persist and influence actions.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and other respected agencies consistently recognize the value of positive norms, social norms, and norms science as evidence-based approaches to prevention. Their endorsement of these methods further strengthens the rationale for adopting a PCN campaign within Jackson County.

PCN Examples from the Assessment

Youth and Adult Alcohol Norms in Jackson County demonstrate a classic “*false norm*” and opportunity to amplify the *real* healthy majority community norm.

- **Healthy Behavior:** More than 88% of respondents personally maintained that youth under the age of 21 should abstain from alcohol entirely or believe that even minimal consumption is inappropriate.
- **Misperception Gap:** However, only approximately one-third perceived this view as the predominant attitude among adults within the community.
- **Healthy Behavior:** 83% indicated a preference that adults either abstain or restrict their alcohol intake to no more than one or two drinks per week
- **Misperception Gap:** 67% of individuals believe that adults within the community consume one or more alcoholic beverages per day.

What’s Needed for Success

- Create a stronger adult/community survey to gather more data from a wider pool of adults and expand upon questions to better measure community perceptions and positive norms for PCN campaign.
- Collect youth data to show the gap between real healthy choices and perceived alcohol, tobacco, and other drug (ATOD) use among peers. Use HKCS if possible or collect independently if HKCS data is suppressed/unavailable.
- Explore additional communication channels beyond social and traditional media, such as schools, community events, organizational/employer meetings, and nontraditional out-of-home (OOH), to reach wider audiences and avoid fatigue.

- Run additional focus groups with youth and adults to keep campaign visuals and messaging aligned with the target audience during development and implementation
- Gather positive adult behavior examples, community reinforcements, and visible examples to strengthen campaign elements like storytelling and calls to action, making advertisements more engaging.

Advancing Positive Community Norms in Jackson County

The results of the Jackson County Youth Prevention Needs and Readiness Assessment highlight a clear opportunity to strengthen community health through a comprehensive two-generation (2Gen) Positive Community Norms (PCN) prevention initiative. By engaging both youth and adults, this approach builds upon existing community pride and assets to reshape perceptions, influence behaviors, and promote a culture that supports healthy choices across generations.

At its core, the PCN framework recognizes that people often overestimate the frequency of risky behaviors among peers—a misperception that can unintentionally reinforce unhealthy actions. Through sustained, data-driven communication, PCN campaigns correct these false norms by emphasizing the *real*, healthy behaviors that already exist within the community. Over time, as residents see and hear that most Jackson County youth and adults make responsible choices, social expectations shift. This alignment between perceived and actual norms reduces peer pressure, increases protective behaviors, and fosters an environment where healthy decision-making becomes the visible, celebrated standard.

Implementing a PCN campaign will not only reinforce healthy community norms but also achieve the priority outcomes indicated by participants in the assessment, such as:

- Encouraging open, stigma-free conversations about substance use within families.
- Promoting youth belonging, engagement, and mentorship in schools and community spaces.
- Inspiring adults to model healthy habits and support alcohol-free community events.
- Expanding collaboration among schools, families, faith groups, employers, and healthcare providers.
- Reinforcing early, transparent, and culturally relevant prevention education.
- Cultivating hope, pride, and a shared vision for a healthier, more self-assured generation.

In essence, advancing Positive Community Norms in Jackson County is more than a communication strategy—it is a catalyst for long-term culture change. By aligning community perception with reality and amplifying the positive majority, Jackson County can create a lasting ripple effect of health, resilience, and collective well-being that strengthens families today and for generations to come.