

I am ME: Changing adolescent perceptions of masculinity and emotional expression

A market profile of the adolescent male market

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Where the Boys Are:

A market profile of adolescent boys, aged 11 - 14

About the Market

Young males between the ages of 11 -14 represent a particularly lucrative target market for advertisers. Most messages aimed at this market tend to play on the markets insecurities about breaking away from childhood, forging their own identities, and becoming "men." Persuasive messages geared to boys, research shows, tend to associate violence and aggression with positive messages about masculinity based on success, confidence, sophistication, coolness, athletic ability, sexual attractiveness, independence, rebellion, adventure, risk-taking and self-fulfillment. Research also suggest that persuasive messages are reinforced not only by television and magazine ads, but also through sponsorship "masculine events" such as racing and extreme sporting events. Studies also find that messages about masculinity can be found in portrayals of action heroes, images and portrayals which are frequently discovered in the movies, television shows and videos games—media content which is consumed regularly and in huge volumes by male teens.

By treating pre-adolescents as independent, mature consumers, marketers have been very successful in removing parents from the picture—leaving this market, also known as "tweens," vulnerable to potentially unhealthy messages about sexuality, relationships and violence. Advertising messages aimed at this group are effective, according to research sources, because those messages speak to the audiences' insecurities and self-doubts, leading them to believe that to be truly cool, they need the advertised product.

According to "No Logo" author Naomi Klein, advertisers quickly discovered that the adolescent youth market was able and willing to pay top dollar in order to be "cool" and as a result they have been using "the cool factor " in advertising messages ever since.

Some advertisers and marketers will hire "cool hunters" or "cultural spies" to infiltrate the world of teens and bring back the latest trends. Trying to stay ahead of the next trend can be a tricky business because the very minute a cool trend is discovered, repackaged, and sold to kids--the kids turn to something else, and the whole process starts all over again."

Teen anger, rebellion, need for independence and attitude have become commodities that marketers use in order to sell products, services, and ideas to teens. The most important question media analysts are asking is: "Does the media reflect today's teens, or are today's teens influenced by media portrayals of young people?" Thus, it seems plausible that advertisements advocating pro-social behaviors should and would challenge the materialistic images, messages and values promoted in today's media.

How Children Perceive Images in the Media

In 1999, the research group Children Now asked boys between the ages of 10 and 17 about how their perceptions of the male characters they saw on television, in music videos and in movies. From the study, the group concluded that the media do not reflect the changing work and family experiences of most men today—and that this fact is not lost on the boys, who noticed the discrepancies between the media portrayals and the reality they knew.

Some of the study's main observations:

- on television, most men and boys usually keep their attention focused mostly just on women and girls
- many males on TV are violent and angry
- men are generally leaders and problem-solvers
- rarely do boys see men or boys crying or otherwise showing vulnerability
- male characters on TV could not be described as "sensitive"
- male characters are mostly shown in the workplace, and only rarely at home
- more than a third of the boys had never seen a man on TV doing domestic chores

The study also revealed that the boys were quite aware that these male characters on television differed from their own friends and fathers, and from themselves. They had also noticed that media portrayals of success do not necessarily reflect their own ideas of real-life success.

Young adolescent boys/children tend to see men on television as leaders and problem solvers, funny, successful, confident and athletic. The study found that a majority of children say that men and boys on television have one thing in mind: His main goal is to get the girl!!

Male Stereotypes in the Media: Can Boys Cry?

Media stereotypes of boys are almost always presented as "tough guys" and, as with girls, there is a consistent emphasis on physical appearance. Studies employing a content analysis of ads and movies show that images of men found in ads and movies, in particular, tend to communicate a masculine body image ideal that is athletic and muscular. In addition, rap and hip hop videos also seem to reinforce this idea of masculinity. Particularly popular with adolescents, rap and hip hop videos often present a single, stereotypical image of masculinity and ideas about gender roles and relations between the sexes.

Images of Violence and Anger

Media research continues to find that the level of violence consistently appears in over half of the sample of television shows and movies which are most popular with adolescent boys. In fact, study after study shows that almost three-fourths of children describe males on television as violent and more than two-thirds describe men and boys on television as angry. One in five male characters employs some form of physical aggression to solve problems.

Research on how children, namely adolescent boys aged 11 – 14 perceive male images in the media seem to suggest that the media and mediated messages need to and should take the opportunity to reach beyond these "masculine" stereotypes—and present a fuller and more realistic picture of the lives, experiences and identities of men and boys today.

Sexuality in the Media

Although sexual content in the media can affect any age group, research shows that adolescents may be particularly vulnerable. Some scholars speculate that when it comes to media effects, adolescents may be exposed to sexual content in the media during a developmental period when gender roles, sexual attitudes, and sexual behaviors are being shaped (Kunkel, Cope, Maynard-Farinola, 1999). In fact, several studies suggest that the adolescent group may be particularly at risk to negative effects of media exposure because the cognitive skills that allow them to critically analyze messages found in most media content are not fully developed (Buerkel-Rothfuss, Strouse, Pettet, 1993; Huston AC, Wartella E, Donnerstein, 1999).

Analyses of broadcast media content indicate that, on average, teenaged viewers take in over 143 scenes and images of sexual behavior on network television at prime time each week with portrayals of three to four times as many sexual activities occurring between unmarried partners as between spouses (Kaiser Family Foundation 1999). As much as 80% of all movies shown on network or cable television stations have sexual content. An analysis of music videos indicates that 60% portray sexual feelings and impulses, and a substantial minority display provocative clothing and sexually suggestive body movements (Baxter, De Riemer, Landini, 1995). Analyses of media content also show that sexual messages on television are almost universally presented in a positive light, with little discussion of the potential risks of unprotected sexual intercourse and few portrayals of adverse consequences (Lowry & Towes, 1985).

Survey data also show that adolescents' access to and use of media as sources of information are substantial. The following section on media consumption will identify media adolescents use regularly and will identify specifically those media adolescents use when seeking information.

In summary, when it comes to effects of exposure to media content, research tells us that:

- Adolescents are exposed to many sexual images and messages on television that are almost universally presented in a positive light with little discussion of potential risks and adverse consequences
- Adolescents use the media to learn how to behave in relationships
- Research indicates that adolescent sexuality is associated with media use, but the direction of the relationship is not clear
- Practitioners should address use of electronic media and the Internet, television viewing patterns, and R- and X-rated movie attendance or video rentals when assessing risk behavior
- Parents and guardians should be encouraged to supervise adolescents' media use

Adolescent Media Consumption

Research conducted by the Poynter Institute and the Pew Center and Lifestyle Project show that children spend hours watching television, playing video games and that media use could qualify as a full-time job. The Kaiser Family Foundation and Children Now Study (1999) found that the typical American child spends more than 38 hours a week as a "media consumer" in a home that averages 3 TVs, 3 tape players, 3 radios, 2 VCRs, 2 CD players, a video game player and a computer, as well as newspapers, magazines and comic books. Children are less likely to live in a home with just one television than in a house with five or more. The study is based on sampling of 3,155 children ages 2-18, and is the first to take into account not just television but the full spectrum of media.

Supervision is often minimal or nonexistent. Half of the children surveyed do not have any parental rules limiting their time in front of the television or the kinds of programs they may watch. For children 8 and older, 61% said they watch what they want, when they want. [Sentinel, 11/18/99]

Adolescents report spending a significant portion of their day using media, but very few report having any parental restrictions on media use (Rogers, Taylor, Cunning, Jones, Taylor, 2008). Rogers et. Al (2008) found that 20% of the participants in their study reported having restrictions on their television use, while less than 15% reported restrictions on their Internet use, instant-messaging, computer, or cell-phone use. According to Pew Internet & American Life Project Report (2004),¹ 54% of teen (12- to 17-year-olds) households actually use filters or monitoring software on home computers. According to the Pew Center study (2005), 64% of parents reported having set rules about their teenagers' time online, and 62% of parents

admitted to checking up on their teenagers' Internet history. In another survey conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation (2005) 31% of 15- to 18-year-olds reported that their parents enforce rules for their television use, while 21% reported that their parents use Internet filters, and 18% say their parents are aware of what sites they visit. Interesting to note: studies did not ask adolescents about parental monitoring of social-networking sites such as MySpace and Facebook.

According to MultiMedia Mentor®, boys spend 80% more time online than the general 18-to-34 population, and 16% more time (about 1.25 hours per day) with media generally; they are also much more likely to belong to and use social networks.

MultiMedia Mentor® is the leading resource for targeting consumers more efficiently with media. Through year-round *MMM* surveys, Knowledge Networks collects the most authoritative information available about consumers' time spent with eight key media; through exclusive software, it allows clients to analyze the media habits of product users and other target groups, finding sometimes unexpected ways to allocate cross-media advertising to reach those consumers at a cost savings.

Research conducted by MultiMedia Mentor (2008) shows that:

- Daily time spent with the Internet and TV is about equal – about 3.5 hours for boys and girls
- Almost half (46%) belong to one or more social networks – indexing at 177 versus the general 18-to-34 population – and this activity consumes 19% of their online time, versus 12% for the general 18-to-34 population
- Instant messaging accounts for 16% of the TV-online group's Internet time (compared to 12% for all 18-to-34s)
- Email was the most used of five specific online activities at 19%, the same proportion of time spent as the general 18-to-34 group

Adolescents between the ages of 12 – 14, according to research, are interested in talking in depth about themselves and about their relationships with others. They want to understand who they are becoming and what others think and feel about them.

Research also shows that this market wants to talk about how they are different from their parents and the rest of the world. They are beginning to recognize that their parents are imperfect people. This is due to the fact that adolescence, experts reveal, is a time when children typically act more negative and have more conflicts with their parents. As a result, adolescents spend more time alone and with their friends and less time with their families.

The evidence that consumption of today's media content contribute to adolescent behavior is substantial, and can no longer be ignored. Here is what every adolescent health researcher and practitioner needs to know about media effects:

- **Violence.** The research on media violence and its relationship to real-life aggression is clear: young people learn their attitudes about violence at a very young age, and once learned, those attitudes are difficult to change. In addition, new research shows that just a minute or two of office counseling about media violence and guns could lead to less violence exposure for >800,000 children per year.
- **Sex.** There are now four longitudinal studies linking exposure to sexy media to earlier onset of sexual intercourse, and one that links early exposure to teenage pregnancy.

- **Drugs.** New research shows that witnessing smoking scenes in movies may be the leading cause of smoking among teenagers. In addition, abundant research exists that attests to the impact of alcohol advertising and cigarette advertising on teenagers' use of those products.
- **Obesity.** Numerous international longitudinal studies show that media use is contributing to the current increase in adolescent obesity.
- **Eating Disorders.** The media are a major contributor to the formation of a teen's body self-image. Studies have found a prevalence of eating disorders among adolescent girls after exposure to images in prime-time media.
- **School Performance.** Intensive media use may contribute to poor school performance and the development of attention deficit disorder .
- **Pro-social Effects.** Despite all of the negative effects listed above, the media also can be powerfully pro-social. Recent research shows that children and teens can learn antiviolence attitudes, empathy, tolerance toward people of other races and ethnicities, and respect for their elders.

It is important to ask two very simple questions of all teenagers: (1) how much entertainment screen time do you spend per day? (2) Is there a TV set or Internet connection in your bedroom? Answers to these questions will show that for adolescents today the media have now become one of the leading “socializing agents” on adolescent attitudes and behaviors.

Watching Television:

As children devote more and more of their free time to television, computers and video games, they're spending less time playing sports and games and being physically active. For example: A survey of young people ages 8 to 18 showed their daily activities accounted for the following hours:

- Watching television — 3 hrs. 51 min.
- Using the computer — 1 hr. 2 min.
- Video games — 49 min.
- Reading — 43 min.

(Generation M: Media in the Lives of 8–18 Year Olds. Menlo Park, Calif.: Kaiser Family Foundation, 2005)

Recent Research shows that:

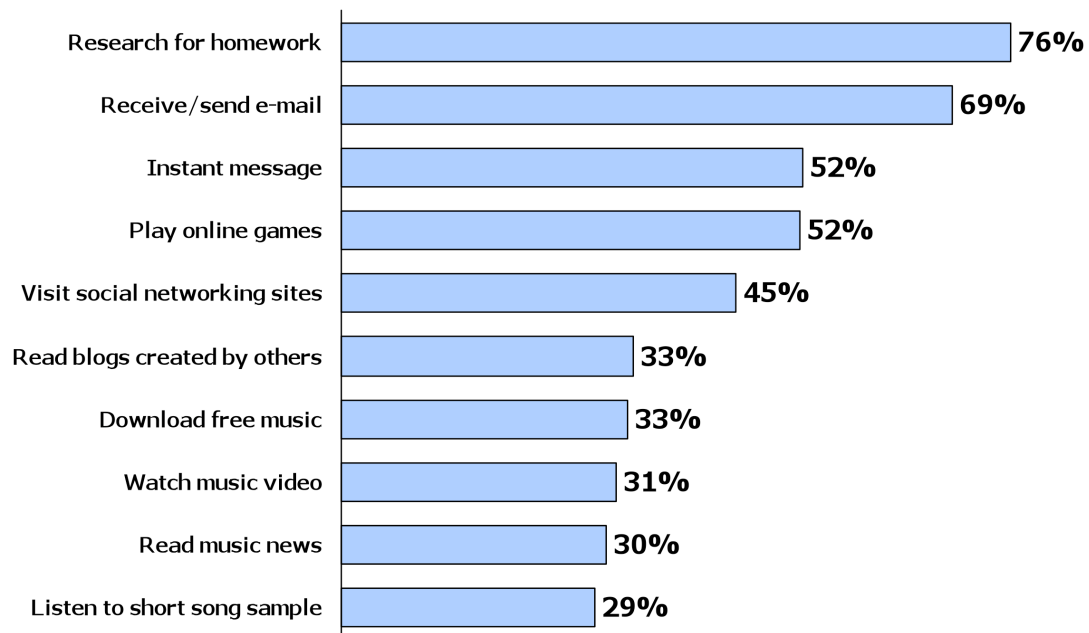
- 65% of Tweens and teen users prefer to watch TV shows live. This contrasts with 25% who say they will view it using a DVR, and 10% who watch online.
- Traditional TV genre programs also play better than new-style TV formats. Tweens/teens prefer scripted series 64% of the time versus reality TV, at 36%.
- Multitasking is still big among this group. They watch TV and are online 78% of the time, while TV and texting is at a 66% rate.
- Television still influences their buying decision. 66% say they download music because they heard it on a show; with 30% saying they purchased clothes because they were seen on a TV character.

(Source: 4/21/09 MediaDailyNews (Study by Pangea Media and Ypulse)

Online and Video Game Playing

Recent research suggests that online penetration among adolescents 11 – 14 will increase from 79% in 2006 to 84% in 2011, remaining the third-highest online penetration by age group (behind young adults as well as college and graduate students (Source: JupiterResearch, “Demographic Profile Teens Online,” 1/24/07)

Top 10 Activities of Teens Online



SOURCE: JUPITERRESEARCH, "TEENS AND ONLINE VIDEO," 1/4/07

Internet Use

	% who use the Internet or email
All Teens	94%
Gender	
Girls	95%
Boys	93%
Age	
12-14	92%
15-17	96%
Race/Ethnicity	
White	96%
Black	92%
Hispanic	87%
Annual Household Income	
Less than \$30,000	86%
\$30,000-\$49,999	93%
\$50,000-\$74,999	96%
\$75,000+	97%

Teen Internet Usage (source: 4/24/08 Writing, Technology & Teens (Pew Internet & American Life Project))

Video Game Use

It is hypothesized that boys spend an average of one hour and 12 minutes playing video games daily, while girls average 25 minutes a day. (Generation M: Media in the Lives of 8–18 Year Olds. Menlo Park, Calif.: Kaiser Family Foundation, 2005). The typical American child spends about 44.5 hours per week using media outside of school. (Generation M: Media in the Lives of 8–18 Year Olds. Menlo Park, Calif.: Kaiser Family Foundation, 2005).

A survey conducted of 1,102 youth ages 12-17 by the Pew Internet & American Life Project, an initiative of the Pew Research Center and was supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation found that game playing is universal, with almost all teens playing games and at least half playing games on a given day. Game playing experiences are diverse, with the most popular games falling into the racing, puzzle, sports, action and adventure categories.

Another major finding is that game playing sometimes involves exposure to mature content, with almost a third of teens playing games that are listed as appropriate only for people older than they are. Specifically research shows that 87% of boys play M-rated games and 78% list an M-rated game among their favorites. Parents report they are now being barraged with requests from their kids for Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas.

According to recent research conducted by the Pew Center & American Life Project (2008), video games provide a diverse set of experiences and related activities and are part of the lives of almost all teens in America. To date, most video game research has focused on how games impact academic and social outcomes (particularly aggression). There has also been some exploration of the relationship between games and civic outcomes, but as of yet there has been no large-scale quantitative research. Research findings continue to show a greater percentage of teens that are playing video games (67%). In addition there is a more even distribution among online boys and girls (87% & 47% playing games, respectively).

Video gaming is pervasive in the lives of American teens -- young teens and older teens, girls and boys, and teens from across the socioeconomic spectrum. Opportunities for gaming are everywhere, and teens play video games frequently. When asked, half of all teens reported playing a video game "yesterday." Those who play daily typically play for an hour or more:

- Close to 97% of teens ages 12-17 play computer, web, portable, or console games.
- 50% of teens played games "yesterday."
- 86% of teens play on a console like the Xbox, PlayStation, or Wii.
- 73% play games on a desktop or a laptop computer.
- 60% use a portable gaming device like a Sony PlayStation Portable, a Nintendo DS, or a Game Boy.
- 48% use a cell phone or handheld organizer to play games.

Game playing is ubiquitous among Americans teenagers. Approximately 99% of boys and 94% of girls report playing video games. Younger teen boys are the most likely to play games, followed by younger girls and older boys. Older girls are the least "enthusiastic" players of video games, though more than half of them play. Some 65% of daily gamers are male; 35% are female.

Most teens do not limit themselves to just a few game genres, instead choosing to play many different types of games. Daily gamers are more likely to play a wider range of game genres than non-daily gamers.

- 80% of teens play five or more different game genres, and 40% play eight or more types.

- 55% of daily gamers play eight or more types of games; just 33% of less frequent gamers do so.
- Girls play an average of 6 different game genres; boys average 8 different types.
-

For most teens, gaming is a social activity and a major component of their overall social experience. Although most teens play games by themselves at least occasionally, just one-quarter (24%) of teens only play games alone, and the remaining three-quarters of teens play games with others at least some of the time.

- 65% of game-playing teens play with other people who are in the room with them.
- 27% play games with people who they connect with through the internet.
- 82% play games alone, although 71% of this group also plays with others.
- And nearly 3 in 5 teens (59%) play games in multiple ways -- with others in the same room, with others online, or alone.
- 42% of teens who play games in multiple ways say they play most often with others in the same room.
- 42% of teens who play games in multiple ways most often play alone.
- 15% of teens who play games in multiple ways play most often with those they are connected to via the internet.

Teens may encounter both pro-social and anti-social behavior while gaming. As discussed above, games are often played with others. In multiplayer game play, different people control different characters in the game, and make individual choices about how to act and what to say in the context of the game. Nearly two-thirds (63%) of teens who play games report seeing or hearing "people being mean and overly aggressive while playing," and 49% report seeing or hearing "people being hateful, racist, or sexist" while playing. However, among these teens, nearly three-quarters report that another player responded by asking the aggressor to stop at least some of the time. Furthermore, 85% of teens who report seeing these behaviors also report seeing other players being generous or helpful while playing. We found no relationship between parental monitoring and teens' exposure to these experiences.

Popular Video Game Genre

The most popular game genres include both games with violent content and games with nonviolent content. The two most widely played game genres were racing and puzzle games, played by nearly three-quarters of teens in the sample. These genres are noteworthy because they have little to no violent content. However, two-thirds of teens reported playing "action" or "adventure" games, some of which contain considerable violent content.

- 32% of gaming teens report that at least one of their three favorite games is rated Mature or Adults Only.
- 79% of M- and AO-rated game players are boys, and 21% are girls.
- 12- to 14-year-olds are equally as likely to play M- or AO-rated games as their 15- to 17-year-old counterparts.

While most parents engage in some form of monitoring, parents are more likely to monitor game play for boys and for younger children. Monitoring, as mentioned above, does not have an impact on whether or not teens are exposed to anti-social behavior or words in the gaming context. Among parents of gamers:

- 90% of parents say they always or sometimes know what games their children play.
- 72% say they always or sometimes check the ratings before their children are allowed to play a game.
- 46% of parents say they always or sometimes stop their kids from playing a game.
- 31% of parents say they always or sometimes play games with their children.

Parents of teens who play games are generally neutral on the effect of games on their children, with nearly two-thirds believing that games have no impact one way or the other on their offspring.

- 62% of parents of gamers say video games have no effect on their child one way or the other.
- 19% of parents of gamers say video games have a positive influence on their child.
- 13% of parents of gamers say video games have a negative influence on their child.
- 5% of parents of gamers say gaming has some negative influence/some positive influence, but it depends on the game.

Important Information about Online Technology and the Adolescent

Today's teens are going mobile, using cellular phones for voice calls and text messaging. The landscape of communications options has changed and teens are often in the vanguard of adoption for new technologies.

Population surges at the seventh grade level

Going to Junior High seems to be the tipping point when many teens who were not previously online get connected. While about 60% of the 6th graders in our sample reported using the internet, by 7th grade, it jumps to 82% who are online. From there, the percent of users in the teen population for each grade climbs steadily before topping out at 94% for eleventh and twelfth graders. Much of the lag among sixth graders appears to come from boys. Fewer than half (44%) of 6th grade boys report going online, compared to 79% of sixth grade girls.

Cell Phone Use

Close to half of teens (45%) own a cell phone, and 33% have used a cell phone to send a text message. Texting on cell phones is particularly common among those who already go online frequently and use other internet tools often. Teens who have cell phones are also heavy users of online communication tools. One in four cell phone-owning teens have used their phone to connect to the Internet. For many years, email has been the most popular application on the Internet—a popular feature that keeps users coming back day after day. But email may be at the beginning of a slow decline as online teens begin to express a preference for instant messaging.

Email is still a fixture in teens' lives, but IM is preferred.

For many years, email has been, hands down, the most popular application on the internet — a communications tool with a popularity and a “stickiness” that keeps users of all ages coming back frequently. But email is losing some of its appeal to these trend-setting young internet users as growing numbers express a preference for instant messaging. Almost half (46%) of online teens say they most often choose IM over email and text messaging for written conversations with friends. Only a third (33%) say they most often use email to write messages to friends, and about 15% prefer text messaging for written

More girls than boys use email, with 93% of all online girls reporting email use and 84% of boys saying the same. Much of the difference between boys and girls seems to be located in the email habits of online girls 15-17, of whom a whopping 97% report using email. Younger girls and older boys show similar use levels, with 89% of the younger (12-14) girls and 87% of the older (15-17) boys reporting email use. All of these groups report greater levels of use than younger boys, only 81% of whom say they use email.

Age plays a major role in predicting email use. Specifically, only 75% of 12-year-olds use email, while 87% of 13-year-olds are email users. Teens aged 14 and older are marginally more likely to say they use email, with 92% reporting use.

Ethnicity also has impact on email use with White teens being more likely than African-American teens to use email. About 90% of online white youth say they have ever used email, compared to 78% of African-American teens. Teens who have parents with higher levels of education are also more likely to use email, though a family's household income is not a statistically significant factor influencing email use. Teens who go online more frequently are more likely to use email. Teens who go online several times a week are slightly less likely to report using email (88%) and those who use the internet less often than several times a week are significantly less likely to use email (68%).

The presence of email in teens' lives has persisted, and the number that uses email continues to surpass those who use IM. However, when asked about which modes of communication they use *most often* when communicating with friends, online teens consistently choose IM over email in a wide array of contexts. Teens who participated in focus groups said that they view email as something you use to talk to "old people," institutions, or to send complex instructions to large groups. When it comes to casual written conversation, particularly when talking with friends, online instant messaging is the clearly the mode of choice for today's online teens.

Instant messaging has become the digital communication backbone of teens' daily lives. About half of instant-messaging teens — or roughly 32% of *all* teens — use IM every single day. As the platforms for instant messaging programs spread to cell phones and handheld devices, teens are starting to take textual communication with them into their busy and increasingly mobile lives. IM is a staple of teens' daily internet diet and is used for a wide array of tasks — to make plans with friends, talk about homework assignments, joke around, check in with parents, and post "away messages" or notices about what they are doing when they are away from their computers. 75% of online teens — or about two-thirds of all teenagers — use instant messaging, compared to 42% of online adults. 48% of teens who use instant messaging say they exchange IMs at least once every day.

Older teens are more likely to use instant messaging than younger teens, with 84% of online teens aged 15-17 reporting IM use compared 65% of younger teens. As with email, the 12-year-olds are much less likely than all of the older teens 13-17 to use IM with only 45% reporting use. Among 13-year-olds, reported use jumps to 72% of all teens that age. In contrast to the findings on age, boys and girls show little difference in their instant messaging use, with 74% of boys and 77% of girls using IM. Instant messaging has become a staple of teens' daily lives. As more companies offer IM on phones, and more pocket-sized devices become available with keyboards and internet access, teens are starting to take textual communication with them into their busy and increasingly mobile lives. While the overall proportion of teens who use instant messaging has not changed significantly in the past four years, the intensity of teen's use of the tool has increased.

Almost half (48%) of those approximately 16 million teens who use instant messaging say they use it daily, with almost 30% of IM-using teens saying they use it several times a day, and another 18% saying they use it

once a day. Another 18% of teens say they use the software/services three to five days a week, and 11% say they use it one to two days a week. Twenty-two percent of instant messaging using teens say they use it less often than once or twice a week. In contrast to overall use of IM, the frequency of IM use varies more according to gender than age. Instant-messaging girls are somewhat more frequent users than boys.

Most IM teens have also chosen icons or avatars to represent themselves online.

Many instant messaging programs offer places to upload a graphic or photo to serve as a user's icon or avatar. Sixty percent of teen IM users have posted a buddy icon that they associate with their user name. Icons can be anything from a photo of the user to an image of her favorite movie star, sports star, or cartoon character. Other times, IM users may post short video loops, animations or something that they found online and thought was funny or amusing. Other teens report creating their own icon by drawing and something or creating an image or a graphic through a graphic design program.

And some instant messaging programs allow users to build cartoon avatars or virtual representations of themselves, or whatever else they'd like to be — allowing them to choose their gender, hair, eye and skin color, clothes, and a background or location. Beyond selecting an icon or avatar, some instant messaging programs allow teens to customize how their instant messaging window appears to others by choosing a font, font color, window color, or even entire “skins” or design themes. “The color of the font and the background color is the important part for identifying just at a glance who you're talking to...” explains one high school male.

A few focus group participants felt confined by the choices in instant messaging and resisted attempts to have their “personality defined by the computer and the service.” One young man said, “I'd rather be viewed and judged on the merit of my ideas expressed, as opposed to by what I put on there to look at or something.”

Face-to-face and phone time still beats screen time.

Even with their great affection for technology, teens still report, on average, spending more time physically with their friends doing social things outside of school than they report interacting with friends through technology. An average youth between ages 12 -17 reports spending 10.3 hours a week with friends doing social activities outside of school and about 7.8 hours talking with friends via technology like the telephone, email, IM, or text messaging.

Serious conversations usually happen offline.

The mode of communication that a teen chooses also varies according to the nature of the message. Online teens generally prefer the phone (landline or cell phone) to other communications choices, regardless of the type of conversation they are having. When talking about something really serious or important with a friend, almost three-quarters of online teens (74%) say that they typically use the phone. instant messaging for discussing weighty matters. Another 6% will turn to email, and 3% rely on text messaging.

Online teens who want to have a private conversation with someone are more likely to turn to instant messaging on a regular basis (18%) than they are to email (9%) or text message (6%). Still, 60% usually use their landline phone or cell phone to engage in they don't want anyone else to know about. When we first surveyed teens in December 2000, they were leading the trend in online news consumption: 68% of online teens were using the internet to get news compared to 61% of online adults. However, over the course of four years and many major news moments, growing numbers of both groups have turned to the internet to

get news and current events information such that online teens and adults are now equally as likely to do this. Three-quarters (76%) of online teens and 73% of online adults say they get news online.

Gratifications of Media Use: Where do they go?

Girls and boys are equally as likely to be online news-seekers. Yet, older teens (aged 15- 17) are somewhat more connected to online news than younger teens (aged 12-14); 79% of older teens seek news online while 73% report this. As is the case with adults, teens who have high-speed connections at home seek online news in greater numbers than those with dial-up; 82% of broadband teens use the internet to get news, while 72% of dial-up teens do so.

Teens who use the Internet are now more likely to seek out health, dieting or physical fitness information online than they were in 2000. Three in ten (31%) online teens say they will look for this type of health information, compared to 26% who reported this in our last survey. Online girls aged 15-17 are almost twice as likely as those aged 12-14 to look for health, dieting or physical fitness content; 47% of older girls seek this information while 25% of younger girls report this. Older girls are also much more likely than either age group of boys to research health online; just 25% of boys aged 12-14 and 27% of those aged 15-17 say they turn to the internet as a health information resource. This trend is consistent with our 2000 data.

Other “Fun” Activities

Overall, 34% of teenagers say they are involved with a school club, 48% with a school sports program, 41% with an extracurricular activity, and 54% belong to a club or sports program not affiliated with their school. When teens were asked to estimate the number of friends they keep in touch with on a regular basis, meaning at least once a week. The average for all the teens was 20 friends per teen. Older teens, aged 15-17, report keeping in touch with an average of 22 friends while teens aged 12-14 report an average of 17 friends.

Boys also report keeping in touch with more friends with an average of 22 friends while girls report an average of keeping in touch with 17 friends. Outside of school, teenagers average 10.26 hours per week of social activity with their friends (with a median of 6 hours per week). Boys average slightly more, with 11.29 hours per week, while girls average 9.18 hours per week. Older teens, aged 15-17, also report spending more time at 11.84 hours per week compared to teens aged 12-14 who report spending 8.55 hours per week in social activities and with friends outside of school.

Extracurricular activities:

Research from the Pew center: Lifestyle Project (2005) shows that boys aged 12-17 engage in the following activities:

- 37% participate in extracurricular sports
- Adolescent males with highly educated parents are more likely to participate in extracurricular activities
- Participation in extracurricular activities is also higher for non-Hispanic Whites and children in married-couple families
- Males: more likely to be involved in sports
- Females: more likely to be involved in clubs and lessons

The above data came from a total sample of 24,581,000 6-11 year-olds and 23,697,000 12-17 year-olds, according to the Bureau of Census (2000) and current population reports.

Recreational Activity of Adolescent Males

- Bicycling is the most popular among 7-11 year-olds
- More than 9 million children (47%) used a bicycle at least once in 2002
- Inline skating ranks second, followed by basketball
- Basketball is the most popular among 12-17 year-olds
- Close to 8 million children (32%) participated at least once in 2002
- Bicycling ranks second, followed by inline skating

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- 40 percent of children participate in organized physical activities during an average week
- 77 percent participate in free-time physical activities on a weekly basis
- Expense is the biggest barrier to children's participation in physical activities, according to 47 percent of parents. This is especially true for Hispanic and African-American families

Theoretical Frameworks on Information Processing

Changing Social Norms

The social norms approach suggests that peer pressure is the primary influence on shaping people's behavior. However, many behaviors are influenced by incorrect perceptions of how peers think and act. Based on research primarily conducted with college-age populations, the social norms approach can be applied to the prevention of sexual violence by correcting these misperceptions of group norms to decrease problem behaviors or increase healthy behaviors. According to Berkowitz, "a key to effective [sexual violence] prevention is the fact that most males are uncomfortable when we witness harassment and other forms of violence, even when we don't know how to respond" (Berkowitz, 2003).

While there may be some utility to the notion that individuals behave in a sexually violent manner because they mistakenly believe their peers are more accepting of corresponding social norms, there are still situations in which harmful social norms are perceived accurately and internalized accordingly, for example, viewing heterosexual sexual interactions as a "game" in which men should try to "win" at the "expense" of women. The hypothesis that some of these norms can be revealed to adolescents as both harmful and less accepted than previously thought can lead to some promising strategies for social marketing and health communication campaigns. For example, an adolescent sexual violence prevention initiative that will expose young men to the pressures exerted upon them by traditional (and often violent) ideas about masculinity, can use promotional tools to show young men how to resist these pressures and find their own positive male identities, change perceptions of masculinity and virility while building self-esteem and skills as peer leaders. It is possible that one major outcome of such an initiative is that adolescent males will then be able to show other young males the link between the norms certain pressures create and the relationship of those norms on aggressive behavior such as sexual violence.

Adolescent boys coming from disadvantaged communities may learn a greater tolerance of violence through exposure to violence by their parents, delinquent peers, and others (Flood and Pease 2006). Research shows that young people's social networks have a significant impact on violence in their own intimate relationships. Having friends or acquaintances who are experiencing violence in their romantic relationships is a risk factor for violence (Flood and Pease, 2006). For some youth, the community and personal experience may normalize violence (Vezina and Hebert 2007). Thus, childhood exposure to intimate partner violence contributes to the transmission of violence across generations. Children, and especially boys, who

either witness violence or are subjected to violence themselves are more likely as adults to have violence-supportive attitudes and to perpetrate violence (Flood and Pease 2006).

In short, initiatives must empower young people, particularly young men, to shift perceptions and thoughts about what it means to be a man, how to treat women in relationships, sexuality, emotional expression, and virility. "Men of Strength Clubs" and "Mentors in Violence Prevention" are examples of such initiatives and will be discussed in the next section (Lee & Lemmon, 2006; Katz, 1995)

Social Marketing

Social Marketing campaigns draw upon marketing research and behavior change theory to develop strategies to shift behaviors. Key components include orientating the campaign toward a target audience; conducting formative research and pre-testing of messages; developing strategies to address barriers and competition to adapting new behaviors; and, using a standard marketing mix (product, price, place, and promotion) (Lefebvre & Flora, 1988).

Real-World Examples and Case Studies

The MyStrength Campaign

The campaign theme "My Strength Is Not for Hurting" repositions the concept of male strength to encourage, motivate, and enable young men to take action to prevent sexual violence. Marketing strategies included using a group of young men to appear at community events in a branded vehicle, heavy radio advertising on youth-orientated stations, a youth-oriented Web site, and distribution of youth friendly collateral materials. The social marketing strategy helped develop young men as leaders in their local communities to promote positive uses of masculinity while speaking out against sexual violence (Kirby, 2006).

California Coalition Against Sexual Assault (CALCASA), with support from the California Department of Health Services, developed a comprehensive integrated social marketing campaign to prevent perpetration of sexual violence. CALCASA conducted 10 focus groups with young men ages 14–18 in rural and multicultural urban communities to determine the best images and language to use in the campaign designed for a California audience. With data obtained from the focus groups, CALCASA and MCSR were able to develop materials to form a California-specific campaign called "MyStrength" and "MiFuerza" using promotional activities around the theme "My Strength Is Not For Hurting." Examples of the materials used in the campaign are available online (at www.MyStrength.org and www.MiFuerza.org).

A significant media campaign was launched: radio ads played over 30,000 times; over 500 billboards, transit ads and mall kiosks were displayed; slides were displayed at over 350 movie theaters; over 400 high schools displayed materials; and over 60 rape crisis centers distributed posters, postcards, t-shirts, wristbands, and mini-footballs. The "Strength Team" consisting of three young men who traveled throughout California as ambassadors of the "MyStrength Campaign." Their main job was to deliver the campaign messages and generate local support for the campaign.

The MyStrength included a community launch event, a 16-session club for young men to explore how they can prevent sexual violence, and a community action project. The clubs for young men were based on the curriculum and principles of Washington DC's Men Can Stop Rape. MyStrength Club participants demonstrated significant increase in self-reported ability to make changes in their community ($p < .05$) and significant increases in self-reported likelihood to take action to interrupt in sexual harassment ($p < .05$) (Lee & Lemmon, 2006). School-wide surveys show the MyStrength Campaign reached high school students and

students were receptive to the campaign; students who were exposed to the campaign were slightly more likely to have favorable (more respectful and equitable) attitudes; and the MyStrength campaign was consistently associated with small but positive differences in social climate and attitudes (Kim, 2006).

Social Marketing Tools

With the proliferation of media in children's lives, marketing now extends far beyond the confines of television and even the Internet, into an expanding and ubiquitous digital media culture. The tools used in social marketing campaigns include, but are not limited to, cell phones, mobile music devices, instant messaging, videogames and virtual, webisodes, social networking sites, branded entertainment, online gaming, video games, and other new media techniques. These social marketing tools are fundamentally transforming how corporations — notably including food and beverage companies — sell products, ideas, and services to young people.

The influx of brands into social networking platforms — where they now have their own “profiles” and networks of “friends” — shows the many ways in which contemporary marketing has erased/eradicated the line between advertising and editorial content. The unprecedented ability of digital technologies to track and profile individuals across the media landscape, and engage in “micro” or “nano” targeting, specifically helps to attract the attention of adolescents in the current media environment. Marketers entertain the prospect of using armies of avatars (virtual people), deployed as brand “salespersons” and programmed to react to the subtlest cues from other online inhabitants, to forge relationships with today's unsuspecting Teen. For children and teens, these tactics pose even greater risks.

In the sections that follow, a brief description of the social marketing tools used in the advertising and marketing industry will be used to provide ideas and suggestions for a social marketing campaign on sex and violence.

Buzz or street marketing

The challenge for marketers is to cut through the intense advertising clutter in young people's lives. Many companies are using “buzz marketing”—also known as “word of mouth” advertising. The idea is to find the coolest kids in a community and have them use or wear your product in order to create a buzz around it. Buzz, or “street marketing,” as it's also called, can help a company to successfully connect with the savvy and elusive teen market by using trendsetters to give a message a “cool” status. Buzz marketing is particularly well-suited to the Internet, where young “Net promoters” use newsgroups, chat rooms and blogs to spread the word about music, clothes and other products among unsuspecting users.

Commercialization in education: The coke machine

School used to be a place where children were protected from the advertising and consumer messages that permeated their world—but not any more. Budget shortfalls are forcing school boards to allow business access to students in exchange for badly needed cash, computers and educational materials.

Many major corporations have come to realize the power of the school environment for promoting their brands. Not only does a school setting deliver a captive youth audience, but sends a subtle and covert message that teachers and administrators also endorse the brand and product/service. Marketers tend to use the school in a number of ways such as sponsored educational materials: for example, a Kraft “healthy eating” kit to teach about nutrition and healthy eating.

Other School-Based Promotional Strategies

- Supplying schools with technology in exchange for high company visibility.
- Exclusive deals with fast food or soft drink companies to offer their products in a school or district.

- Advertising posted in classrooms, school buses, on computers, etc. in exchange for funds.
- Contests and incentive programs: for example, the Pizza Hut reading incentives program in which children receive certificates for free pizza if they achieve a monthly reading goal; or Campbell's Labels for Education project, in which Campbell provides educational resources for schools in exchange for soup labels collected by students.
- Sponsoring school events such as dances and/or parties, etc. Any event that allows the advertiser to showcase various sponsors' products.

The Internet

The Internet is an extremely desirable medium for marketers wanting to target adolescents. Reasons for the increased interest in the internet are:

- It's part of youth culture. This generation of young people is growing up with the Internet as a daily and routine part of their lives.
- Parents generally do not understand the extent to which kids are being marketed to online.
- Kids are often online alone, without parental supervision.
- Unlike broadcasting media, which have codes regarding advertising to kids, the Internet is unregulated.
- Sophisticated technologies make it easy to collect information from young people for marketing research, and to target individual children with personalized advertising.
- By creating engaging, interactive environments based on products and brand names, companies can build brand loyalties from an early age.

Marketing Adult Entertainment to Kids

Children are often aware of and want to see entertainment meant for older audiences because it is actively marketed to them. In a report released in 2000, the U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC) revealed how the movie, music and video games industries routinely market violent entertainment to young children.

The FTC studied 44 films rated "Restricted," and discovered that 80 per cent were targeted to children under 17. Marketing plans included TV commercials run during hours when young viewers were most likely to be watching. One studio's plan for a violent R-rated film stated, "Our goal was to find the elusive teen target audience, and make sure that everyone between the ages of 12 and 18 was exposed."

Music containing "explicit-content" labels have been targeted at young people through extensive advertising in the most popular teen venues on television, and radio, in print, and online.

Of the video game companies investigated for the report, 70 per cent regularly marketed Mature rated games (for 17 years and older) to children. Marketing plans included placing advertising in media that would reach a substantial percentage of children under 17.

The FTC report also highlighted the fact that toys based on characters from mature entertainment are often marketed to young children. Mature and Teen rated video games are advertised in youth magazines; and toys based on Restricted movies and M-rated video games are marketed to children as young as four.

Mobile Marketing

Cell phones are one of the most important digital platforms for marketing to young people, enabling companies to directly target users based on previous buying history, location and other profiling data. As

the practice grows, mobile users will increasingly be sent personally tailored electronic pitches, designed to trigger immediate purchases and timed to reach them when they are near particular stores and restaurants.

Examples of the use of Mobile Marketing: McDonald's McFlurry mobile marketing campaign was designed to "create a compelling way to connect with the younger demographic. Six hundred McDonald's restaurants in California urged young cell phone users to text-message to a special phone number to receive an instant electronic coupon for a free McFlurry dessert. Youth were encouraged to "download free cell phone wallpaper and ring tones featuring top artists," and to email the promotional website link to their friends. Ads on buses, billboards, "wild postings" near high schools, and even skywriting airplanes promoted the "Text McFlurry 73260" message.

The Kellogg Company printed Web addresses on more than 6.5 million of its Kellogg's Corn Pops cereal packages. When customers go onto the "Gotta be Connected" webpage, they are run through a series of pop-up messages that capture personal information, along with cell phone data, including the phone number. Within days, Kellogg sends a text message with a trivia question. Those who answer the question correctly receive a free Corn Pops screensaver, as well as a chance to win additional prizes, including "pre-paid airtime, a free phone or other prizes."

Behavioral Profiling

Database marketing has become a core strategy for companies targeting teens, not only on the Internet, but also on cell phones, video games and other media. Marketers can compile a detailed profile of each customer, including demographic data, purchasing behavior, responses to advertising messages, and even the extent and nature of social networks. Marketers use the information to create messages tailored to the psychographic and behavioral patterns of the individual.

For example, Coca-Cola uses a variety of techniques to track individuals' online behavior. Its "My Coke Rewards" program encourages consumers to use special codes from Coca-Cola products to access a website, where they can earn such rewards as downloadable ring tones and "amazing sports and entertainment experiences."

Digital "360" Buzz Campaigns

Peer-to-peer marketing (sometimes called "buzz," "word-of-mouth" or "viral" marketing) has become a staple among youth advertisers. Market researchers target key, influential young people who can serve as "brand sirens," promoting products to their peers through instant messaging, social networking sites and blogs. Companies are creating elaborate viral campaigns, sometimes using "hidden messages" to lure youth into a series of games and other activities across different media, generating buzz within the online youth subculture, all under the public radar. This "360" marketing strategy engages with young people repeatedly wherever they are — in cyberspace, watching TV or offline.

KFC used a high-pitched tone as a promotional "buzz" device for a recent "interactive advertising campaign." The "MosquitoTone" was embedded in TV commercials to launch KFC's new "Boneless Variety Bucket." In its press release, the company explained that the popular cell phone ring tone "is too high pitched for most adults to hear because most people begin to lose the ability to hear high frequency tones starting at age 20. This is a fact not lost on young Americans who seek the sound for clandestine ring tones that don't turn the heads of nearby adults."

In the TV commercial, the secret sounds were designed to attract the attention of young viewers and direct them to a website, where they could enter a contest to identify exactly where the tones could be heard in the ad, in order to win \$10 coupons redeemable for the new chicken meal at any KFC.

Sprite created an alternate reality game "Lost Experience" — based on the highly popular ABC television series, "Lost" — giving viewers an opportunity to be more involved with their favorite show while

inadvertently becoming engaged in a Sprite website. Marketers began by creating a “faux-commercial” that aired during an episode of the TV series, in order to “leak” the Web address — Sublymonal.com — to viewers. Once online, site visitors were invited to participate in a scavenger hunt with “DJ podcasts, videos and hidden memos.” Codes were also hidden in print ads in Entertainment Weekly and People magazines. As a result, more than 500,000 codes were entered and Sprite’s Web traffic jumped 400 percent.

Infiltrating Instant Messaging

The three major instant messaging formats — AOL’s AIM, Yahoo’s Messenger and MSN Messenger — all promote themselves aggressively to advertisers that want to permeate and surround teenagers’ ongoing casual conversations. AOL, Yahoo and MSN Messenger offer a variety of strategies, including “roadblocks” and “takeover ads” that flood a site’s homepage with interactive commercials, as well as branded “bots” and buddy icons.

The “M&M Always IMvironment” features the brand’s popular “spokescandies.” “There’s a new way to add a little more M&M to your day,” the site chirps. “Chat with friends about life, love and chocolate with this cool IMV. There’s an M in everyone.” IMvironments are animated backgrounds that customize the appearance of an instant message window.

“Max Out your chats!” urges the Yahoo IMvironment sponsored by Kraft’s Lunchables. “New Lunchables Lunch Combinations Maxed Out Double-Stacked Tacos have arrived and you’re in charge of the flavor and the fun. Buzz a friend and take your chat from Mild to Wild — no salsa necessary! Try it now.”

Commercializing Online Communities

Marketers have aggressively moved into MySpace and other social networking sites, taking advantage of their large, highly detailed user profiles and expanding lists of “friends,” which facilitate extensive targeting. Social networks are also blurring the line between what is marketing and what isn’t.

“Welcome to the King’s Court,” beckons the Burger King MySpace profile. “The virtual home of the Burger King. He’s giving away free episodes of the Fox shows ‘24,’ ‘Pinks’ and ‘First Friend.’ ... And in typical King fashion, he’s giving you plenty of other stuff to check out too.” MySpace users can interact with the “King” on MySpace and add him as a “friend,” which gives the “King” access to their personal profile with information like age and hometown.

At the MySpace Jack-in-the-Box profile, visitors are greeted by “Jack Box” himself, who announces that his goal is “to rule the fast food world with an iron fist.” Through the profile, youth can read Jack’s daily blog entry, post a poem about the joys of cheeseburgers, or create a film and send it in for a chance to win a “Jackie.”

“Brand-Saturated” Environments

Food and beverage companies have created their own online branded entertainment sites, seamlessly weaving a variety of interactive content with product pitches and cartoon “spokescharacters.” Designed to encourage young consumers to engage playfully with products over long periods of time, many sites offer “free” content, games, merchandise and endless replays of television commercials.

With the growth of broadband technology, these digital playgrounds have evolved into highly sophisticated “immersive” experiences, including entire programs and “channels” built around brands. Multicultural marketers are keenly aware of the strong interest in music particularly among African American and

Hispanic/Latino youth, and have created branded entertainment featuring popular celebrities and offering free downloads of their recordings.

Burger King created its own “branded online channel,” called Diddy TV, using popular rapper P. Diddy’s celebrity pull to draw viewers to the Burger King site.

The Mars candy company enlisted the musical group Black Eyed Peas to make a series of “webisodes” called “Instant Def,” in order to promote Snickers bars to teens. The brand is featured prominently in the storylines.

Viral Video

Short online videos are an increasingly popular way of promoting brands among youth, who like to view the videos and forward the links to their friends through IM, text messaging and blogs. Marketers are creating their own “viral videos” to promote their brands through peer-to-peer networks and video sharing services like YouTube. In some cases the sponsoring company is identified, while in others it is disguised.

Wendy’s placed several viral videos on YouTube, specifically designed to attract “young consumers.” In one video, “Molly Grows Up” — which generated more than 300,000 views — a young girl orders her first Junior Bacon cheeseburger and Frosty. While Wendy’s own corporate name was not connected to the intentionally humorous videos, users who watched them were sent to a special website for “Wendy’s 99-cent value menu.”

In January 2007, Domino’s Pizza revealed that it was behind a viral video that had received millions of hits. To promote its “Anything Goes Deal Contest,” the company placed a series of viral videos on MySpace and other popular social networking sites, using characters offering to sell big-ticket items. The first video, “MacKenzie Gets What MacKenzie Wants,” featured a “spoiled rich girl who wanted a blue car for her birthday but got a red one instead. Her whining persisted until she got the car she wanted and then, much to the surprise and delight of video viewers, she decided to offer her red car on eBay for only \$9.99,” according to a Domino’s press release, which revealed the company as the creator of the video. The campaign was a hit, according to Domino’s. “With over 2 million views across multiple video sites, the popularity of the MacKenzie videos earned a top spot on several video sharing websites,” the press release stated.

Recruiting “Brand Advocates”

With more young people creating their own online “user-generated content,” marketers are now encouraging them to “co-create” and promote commercials for their favorite brands. In marketing circles, two new buzzwords — “consumer-generated” and “brand-generated” media — are often used interchangeably, suggesting an intentional blurring of roles. The strategy is designed to foster powerful emotional connections between consumers and products, tap into a stable of young, creative talent willing to offer services for free and produce a new generation of “brand advocates.”

At General Mills’ Millsberry.com website, children are encouraged to make the “best movie” about “Lucky” (of Lucky Charms cereal) and then vote for the winning video. The site provides a pre-branded kit of settings and spokes-characters, making it easy to combine them into a personalized commercial.

Pizza Hut's contest invited pizza enthusiasts to create a short video, "demonstrating their devotion to Pizza Hut Pizza" and showing why they should earn the title of "Honorary Vice President of Pizza." Contestants were encouraged to engage in a variety of creative acts to show their loyalty to the brand, such as "decorating their room with Pizza Hut memorabilia." Entrants submitted their videos on YouTube, ensuring they would be seen by thousands of viewers, whether they won or not.

"Game-Vertising"

In-game advertising, or "game-vertising," is a highly sophisticated, finely tuned strategy that combines product placement, behavioral targeting and viral marketing to forge ongoing relationships between brands and individual gamers. Marketing through interactive games works particularly well for snack, beverage and other "impulse" food products. Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Mountain Dew, Gatorade, McDonald's, Burger King and KFC, for example, were the "most recalled brands" by video game players, according to an October 2006 survey conducted by Phoenix Marketing International.

Not only can marketers incorporate their brands into the storylines of popular games, they can also use software that enables them to respond to a player's actions in real time, changing, adding or updating advertising messages to tailor their appeal to that particular individual. At a September 2006 conference on interactive advertising, software developers explained how they purposefully create games to make them "in sync with the brand," ensuring that images players see in the game are similar to what "they see in the research presented suggested that said that games must always be "addictive," should include a "viral component" and be "continually updated" to facilitate ongoing data collection and analysis.

Sony partnered with Pizza Hut to build the ability to order pizza into its "Everquest II" videogame. If a player types in the command "pizza," Pizza Hut's online order page pops up, allowing the player to place an order. At Viacom's Neopets.com — targeted at 8- to 17-year-olds — young gamers create and "take care of" virtual pets, earning virtual currency (neopoints) to pay for the pet's upkeep by participating in contests and games. The site earns substantial advertising revenues from "User Initiated Brand Integrated Advertising" — activities or games built around advertisers' products and services that help build relationships and generate revenues with Neopets visitors. For example, participants can earn points by buying or selling "valuable commodities," such as McDonald's French fries, or winning games with names like "Cinnamon Toast Crunch Umpire Strikes Out." Food companies that have sponsored various activities on Neopets include McDonald's, Frito-Lay, NestlE9, Kellogg's, Mars, Procter & Gamble, General Mills, Kraft Foods and Carl's Jr./Hardees.

Electronic Games Take on Violence Against Women

The central idea is to educate boys and young men that violence (against anyone, but certainly against girls and women) is wrong, that the prevailing definition of masculinity in any society is not the only alternative, and that even though males and females are physically different, girls and women are entitled to the same rights and opportunities as boys and men.

Violence against women and girls is a pervasive problem, often deeply rooted in cultural practices. However, people are often willing to adopt new attitudes, behaviors, or practices if they are convince that such change can improve their lives. Effectively targeted educational tools can help boys and young men identify destructive gender stereotypes, think critically about the role of gender stereotypes that support violence

against women, identify the negative personal and community costs, learn and practice alternative behaviors, and understand the personal and communal benefits of changing their behavior. Electronic games present a unique tool set to provide this type of learning.

Electronic games possess the power of experiential and immersive learning. The player repeatedly performs tasks. The tasks become progressively more difficult until true mastery is attained. The player's ability to customize the experience, explore and receive "on demand" and "just in time" information are game design constructs leading to player commitment to perform and to learn. Part of the uniqueness of an electronic game is that a safe environment is established in which the player experiences differing roles and viewpoints — often playing multiple perspectives in one game — leading to a deeper understanding of various choices and outcomes.

Well-designed electronic games are replayed multiple times with resultant different endings. In repeated play, new attitudes and skills are refined and practiced. The player learns the causative effect of actions. The participatory nature of electronic games provides the opportunity for experiential learning, where players make decisions and the consequences of these decisions are then played out through their character. The player is faced with a variety of different obstacles and can create their own story about overcoming these obstacles through the decisions that they make. One of the benefits of gaming is that you can start over and reconstruct your story (by making different decisions) in order to make it successfully to the next level.

EMC is providing game design and technical expertise to construct a game that is playable, engaging, and achieves the identified goals. PMC is providing guidance on the use of entertainment-education strategies for positive behavior change, based on its successful decade of work in the field of entertainment-education.

A team of 15 students majoring in e-game design, programming, art and animation, marketing, e-biz, software engineering, and education are tackling this very complex and challenging project. Students and staff hope to develop a game prototype, which will include game concept options, a market analysis, delivery methods, design document, storyboards, character sketches, and color scripts (refer to <http://emc-gamestakeonvaw.blogspot.com/>) to create a video game that addresses and attempts to change gender stereotypes and ultimately reduce violence against women. To learn more about the student project and the process of developing the game, see also www.populationmedia.org.

Television, movies, and advertising continue to glorify the role of the "macho" man through action movies and television, violent video games and toys, pornography, and much more. The electronic game being developed by PMC and EMC will provide alternative images and norms of behavior, focused on television and other popular media. Other media, such as television, music, and film, are also effective teachers of gender-stereotyped and violence-supportive attitudes (Hogan, 2005; Huessmann, 2007). Both experimental and observational studies among children document greater rates of aggressive attitudes and behavior among children exposed to media violence, correlational studies show a relationship between heavy viewing of television violence and self-reported or peer-assessed violent behavior, and longitudinal studies find that exposure to media violence in early childhood is a significant predictor of aggression at older ages (Strasburger & Wilson, 2002). Viewing media violence shapes children's cognitive schemas, normative beliefs, and scripts for social behavior, as well as their later aggressive behavior, including when one controls for early aggressiveness (Huessman, 2007).

Media impacts on young people's attitudes toward violence against women have been further identified in two genres of mass media in particular: music videos and electronic games. Various studies find that sexually violent, misogynist, and objectifying themes influence violence-supportive, sexually aggressive, and sexist attitudes (Barongan & Nagayama, 1995; Johnson, Jackson, & Gatto, 1995; Kalof, 1999; Strasburger & Wilson, 2002; Johnson, Adams, Ashburn, & Reed, 1995). In more focused and intense forms of media involvement, such as playing violent electronic games, aggressive behavioral scripts may be shaped by powerful combinations of psychological absorption and immersion (Funk, 2002). There is a growing evidence that playing violent electronic games is associated with lower empathy and stronger adherence to pro-violence attitudes (Anderson & Bushman, 2001; Funk, 2002; Funk, Baldacci, Pasold, & Baumgardner, 2004) and an emerging consensus that exposure to violence in video games and elsewhere is an important risk factor for aggression (Gentile & Anderson, 2005).

Other aspects of popular culture identified as reinforcing community tolerance for violence against women include advertising and language (Murnen et al., 2002). Materials identified as particularly concerning here include TV advertising for children with aggressive content (Larson, 2003) and advertisements focused on women's bodies and body parts (Hall & Crum, 1994; Reichert & Carpenter, 2004). There is evidence that the latter portrayals can increase attitudinal support for sexual aggression, especially among men (Lani & Covel, 1995).

Advertising Through Avatars

Marketing through avatars is "one of the most effective kinds of advertising going," wrote Jesse Shannon, president of the premiere interactive marketing agency, SAJE Media, on an interactive advertising website. Among the food and beverage brands actively engaged in avatar-based strategies are Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Kellogg, Nabisco, Kraft, Pizza Hut, P&G and Subway.

Habbo Hotel — "a teen community where you can meet people, play games and create your own online space" — aggressively promotes itself as a marketing venue, providing "companies and brands with a completely new and exciting way of building their brand value among teenagers around the world," according to a Habbo press release. Marketers can sponsor various elements on the site, and Habbo Hotel's pre-programmed avatars have been designed to make replies involving specific promotions.

Among the "Quests & Activities" currently featured on the home page of Habbo Hotel is a promotional game for Kellogg's Pop-Tarts. "The Crazy Good Pop-Tarts Pastries are Hollywood Bound," the site announces. "Find out where they are now!" Hotel inhabitants are also offered virtual incentives to take part in a poll: "Just for voting, you'll have a chance to receive one of 20 free RARES [Habbo furniture]!"

MyCoke.com is a virtual, immersive environment that offers a multitude of interactive activities to engage teens, including chat, music downloading and mixing, user-generated video, blogs and its own currency. Coca-Cola worked with interactive marketing expert Studio.com to create Coke Studios, a "massive multiplayer online environment" where "teens hang out as their alter-identities, or 'v-egos.'"

Teens who want to become part of the MyCoke community are greeted with encouraging step-by-step instructions on the site: "Ready to reinvent yourself?" "Be who you want with your v-ego." After users complete the registration process the site exclaims: "You've just made millions of new friends! People are cool. We'll help you meet more of them."

Use Social Marketing to Make A Pervasive Presence

Marketing has become a pervasive presence in the lives of children and adolescents, extending far beyond the confines of television and the Internet into an expanding and ubiquitous digital media culture.

Food and beverage companies are at the forefront of a new 21st century social marketing focus. The strategies and techniques the companies are employing in this area mark a dramatic departure from traditional advertising. For example, in-game advertising is not just a new form of product placement; it is a highly sophisticated interactive environment designed to closely monitor individual players, as well as direct personalized ad messages designed to trigger impulsive purchases.

Viral marketing is not just an online extension of word-of-mouth brand promotion, but also a calculated database strategy that relies on detailed profiles of key “influentials,” along with surveillance of their social networks. And so-called “brand-generated marketing” is not a way to direct advertising messages to children, but instead an increasingly popular method for recruiting millions of children to create and distribute the ads themselves

Good-quality video games offer lots of benefits to kids. They can:

- provide a fun and social form of entertainment
- encourage teamwork and cooperation when played with others
- make kids feel comfortable with technology—particularly important for girls, who don't use technology as much as boys
- increase children's self-confidence and self-esteem as they master games
- develop skills in reading, math, and problem-solving
- improve eye-hand coordination and fine motor skills

Case Study: The Washington Middle School Project

The Washington Middle School (WMS) Project was one of three demonstration projects funded in Washington State to pilot test the community development strategy adopted by the state in 1997. The main focus of the project would be to address the issue of sexual harassment within in the school setting as a subset of sexual violence. The intended outcomes were:

- 1) to increase community investment in the issue of sexual violence,
- 2) to increase knowledge of sexual violence among students, families/parents, staff and community,
- 3) to increase skills of addressing sexual violence among students, families/ parents, staff, and community,
- 4) to decrease the acceptance level of sexually violating behavior among students, and
- 5) to decrease gender stereotyping and rigid gender roles.

The activities involving students consisted of three main components: S.A.V.E. a student led “natural helpers” group of both genders providing peer training and producing videos and “zines” focused on sexual violence prevention; a girls’ group focused on promoting potential protective factors in eighth grade girls who self identified experiencing sexual violence or having a specific interest in the issue; and an elective course offered to sixth graders that incorporated violence prevention and comprehensive sexuality education curricula to provide students with a broad-based sexual violence prevention education.

Staff and parent activities were designed to be supportive of the youth activities in addition to supporting change in school climate. Baseline evaluation indicated a school-wide tolerance of sexual harassment by teachers in addition to a lack of consequences. Strategies included an anonymous reporting system, participation in the administration/counseling staff team, a review of disciplinary actions, and staff-wide

teacher training. A parent was recruited to communicate with parents regarding the specific student and staff components as a way of ensuring parent support. At the end of the pilot period the Office of Crime Victims Advocacy (OCVA) concluded that community development was viable sexual violence prevention strategy and adopted it as one of the core services provided by its rape crisis centers.

Message Strategies That Work with Teen Males

Campaigns must help young men to develop self-esteem and a sense of purpose in life can lead to better treatment of women and less risky behavior. But how can health programs help achieve these goals? The best way to reach boys is to go where they are in the community. Programs must use peer educators, youth councils, media and other techniques in order to reach boys in street gangs, in sports clubs, at work and in school.

Communication messages may be more effective if adapted to address male concerns, one study concludes. Sports sponsorship represents a "win-win" situation where companies get extensive media coverage for both the events and their sports heroes. Boys in particular are more likely than girls to remember advertisements for products, brands or services that are sponsored during sporting events. For example, studies have found that the favorite cigarette brands of teens are the same brands that dominate such events.

Another popular strategy for reaching young males is to appeal to their need for independence. The most pressing psychological need of adolescents is their need for independence, autonomy, self-reliance - as they seek an adult identity independent of their parents. Messages that resonate with adolescent males are those that offer adult imagery rich with connotations of independence, freedom from authority, and self-reliance. The Marlboro Man, for example, is the epitome of this: epitomizes this: he is autonomous-- usually alone and interacting with no one, and always without his parents, siblings, and friends.

Don't Preach

Be knowledgeable about the community and find out what the participants know and are interested in learning. Remember that "Preaching responsibility can turn males off," the so campaigns and programs must try to change males' attitudes towards themselves, their relationships with women, and their futures.

Public information and awareness campaigns

Public information and awareness campaigns are a common approach to the primary prevention of intimate partner violence and sexual violence. Public awareness campaigns have been used throughout the world to educate and inform audiences about violence; the objective often is to influence individuals' attitudes and social norms about its acceptability, and to build effective promotion and marketing campaigns that will to address the problem.

Many have used a human rights framework. The "16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence Campaign" is a movement that has generated a variety of awareness-raising activities around the world. Approximately 1700 organizations in 130 countries have participated in the annual campaign since 1991, many organizing public awareness campaigns. Such campaigns often disseminate messages through mass media channels (television, radio, newspapers, magazines, posters, and billboards) and may include other mechanisms such as town meetings or community theatre. (Center for Women's Global Leadership. About the 16 days (<http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/16days/about.html>), last accessed June 28, 2009).

Campaign goals might include raising public awareness (e.g. about the extent of the problem, about intimate-partner violence and sexual violence as violations of women's human rights, about men's role in

ending violence against women), providing accurate information and dispelling myths and stereotypes about intimate-partner violence and sexual violence, and changing public opinion. These campaigns have the potential to reach large numbers of people. While good campaigns can increase knowledge and awareness, influence perceptions and attitudes, and foster political will for action, the link between public awareness campaigns and behavior change is not at all well-established.

Basic principles of good communications practice should be applied to public awareness campaigns on intimate-partner violence and sexual violence. Effective campaigns are grounded in evidence of the problem and the risk and protective factors; define clear and measurable objectives; identify indicators to measure the impact of the campaign, how they will be assessed, and ensure baseline measurement is taken; select the intended audience; use consumer research with the intended audience to develop messages and identify the best sources, channels and materials to reach them; build in an evaluation mechanism from the start; and continuously use research to monitor impact and improve the campaign (NCI 2002; UNIFEM, 2003).

Lessons learned about public health awareness campaigns:

Public information campaigns, in isolation, cannot normally effect sustained change in complex behaviours (NCI, 2002) such as intimate-partner violence and sexual violence, although they can reach large numbers of people. Campaigns targeting behavior change should therefore be used in conjunction with other strategies for the primary prevention of intimate-partner violence and sexual violence.

Campaigns should be based on social science theories and models of behavior change and an understanding of the particular beliefs, perceptions, and behavior of the intended audience.

Communications strategies based on a social marketing framework are more likely to be effective in changing individuals' knowledge, attitudes, and social norms.

Engage Young Men in the Promotion of Health and Gender Equity.

Program H is theoretically based and has been empirically shown to positively influence attitudes related to gender, including greater sensitivity to issues of gender-based violence, increased intention to use condoms, improved partner negotiation skills, increased attention to health needs and desire to be more involved as fathers (for those young men who are already fathers). The initiative was developed in 1999 by four Latin American non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that had significant experience in working with young men: Instituto Promundo (coordinator of the initiative), ECOS (in São Paulo, Brazil), Instituto PAPAÍ (Recife, Brazil) and Salud y Género (Mexico).

Program H focuses on helping young men question traditional norms related to manhood. It consists of four components: (1) a validated curriculum that includes a manual series and an educational video for promoting attitude and behavior change among men; (2) a lifestyle social marketing campaign for promoting changes in community or social norms related to what it means to be a man; (3) a research-action methodology for reducing barriers to young men's use of clinic services; and (4) a culturally relevant validated evaluation model (the GEM Scale - Gender Equitable Attitudes in Men Scale) for measuring changes in attitudes and social norms around manhood has been developed to measure outcomes of the initiative.

Data from Program H suggests that any program aimed at changing behavior among adolescent men must incorporate:

- (1) the need to offer young men opportunities to interact with gender-equitable role models in their own community setting; and
- (2) the need to promote more gender-equitable attitudes in small group settings and in the greater community.

Program H also suggests incorporating activities such as role plays, brainstorming exercises, discussion sessions and individual reflections about how boys and men are socialized, positive and negative aspects of this socialization, and the benefits of changing certain behaviors. The themes in the manuals were selected based on a review of literature on the health and development of boys, and an international survey of programs working with young men, in collaboration with the World Health Organization (Barker, 2000b).

Lifestyle Social Marketing Campaign Component

In addition to the Program H curriculum, Promundo, JohnSnowBrazil (an international consulting firm) and SSL International (makers of Durex condoms) have also developed a “lifestyle social marketing” process for promoting a more gender-equitable lifestyle among men in a given cultural setting. This involves working with men themselves to identify their preferred sources of information, identify young men’s cultural outlets in the community and craft messages - in the form of radio spots, billboards, posters, postcards and dances -- to make it “cool and hip” to be a more gender-equitable man. This campaign encourages young men to reflect about how they act as men and enjoins them to respect their partners, not to use violence against women and to practice safer sex.

The campaign uses aspects of youth culture – music, theatre and a knowledge of where young people hang out – to promote more gender-equitable versions of manhood. Just as many private sector advertising campaigns seek to promote a lifestyle associated with their product, the lifestyle social marketing component uses mass media and youth culture to promote a gender-equitable life style.

In Brazil, the campaign has been called “Hora H”, or “In the Heat of the Moment.” The phrase emerged from research with young men themselves who said: “Everybody knows you shouldn’t hit your girlfriend, but in the heat of the moment you lose control.” Or, “Everybody knows that you should use a condom, but in the heat of the moment” Campaign slogans use language from the community and images are of young men from the same communities – acting in more gender-equitable ways.

Measuring Change

What do we expect out of young men as a result of a social marketing intervention? And how can we realistically and effectively measure changes that occur as a result of our interventions? These two questions have been central to many intervention efforts. A first step in this evaluation process, is to define the kind of attitudes and behaviors that are being promoted. Specifically, the developers of Program H identified four characteristics of more “gender-equitable” young men, which in turn are the Program H objectives. Based on results from the earlier qualitative research, the term “gender equitable” young men was operationalized for this evaluation as men who (taken from the web site):

- Seek relationships with women based on equality and intimacy rather than sexual conquest. This includes believing that men and women have equal rights, and that women have as much sexual desire and “right” to sexual agency as do men.
- Seek to be involved fathers, for those who are fathers, or support substantial involvement, meaning that they believe that they should take both financial and at least some care-giving responsibility for their children.
- Assume some responsibility for reproductive health and disease prevention issues. This includes taking the initiative to discuss reproductive health concerns with their partner, using condoms or assisting their partner in acquiring or using a contraceptive method.

- Are opposed to violence against women. This may include young men who were physically violent toward a female partner in the past, but who currently believe that violence against women is not acceptable behavior (Barker, 2000a).

These definitions are based on interviews and identification of young men who acted in these ways. As such the scale, or evaluation model, is grounded in the real life behaviors and attitudes of young men, and not in an idealized or theoretical idea of what more gender equitable behaviors and attitudes are. There are young men in these communities who act in these more gender-equitable ways and their attitudes and behavior became the desired outcome.

With this operational definition of “more gender-equitable young men” established, the next step is to identify how manhood is defined, for example norms or values related to male-female roles, household roles, sexuality, parenting, and homophobia, to name some. It is suggested to draw upon prior research which addresses similar issues and then adapt items from previous measures related to “masculinity ideology” (Pleck, 1993; Ku, Sonenstein, and Pleck, 1992) and “power in sexual relationships” (Pulerwitz, Gortmaker, and DeJong, 2000; Pulerwitz, Amaro, DeJong, Gortmaker, and Rudd, 2002).

Obstacles and strategies used to overcome them:

Research warns that initially it will be difficult to get boys to participate and it will be difficult to convince school boards to allow media literacy training to be held in schools. Numerous visits and meetings will need to be held with principals and senior teacher in order to share training materials. Reaching and working with boys and young men seem like such good ideas...but when individuals and programs try to reach out to young men, resistance and lack of interest seem to be the primary responses.

Limited resources may also constrain the duration of the project and the activities. Advertising on youth-orientated television and radio stations, creating and maintaining a youth-oriented Web site, and distribution of youth friendly collateral materials can be costly. The implementation of education and social norms changing activities, and other pieces of a comprehensive strategy against sexual violence among youth, will require ongoing support from key decision-makers in the community, and in-state and federal organizations.

Establishing policies that mandate school staff respond to sexual harassment and changing advertising practices that sexualize or objectify women are examples of potential policies. Without dedicated funding for primary prevention programs, there is little chance for sustained and progressive efforts dealing with sexual violence. Additional primary prevention resources are needed that do not compete with or take away from services to victims. In many states, sexual violence primary prevention efforts are funded exclusively with federal resources, making policy-level work at the federal level critical. However, being dependent on federal resources leaves primary prevention of sexual violence vulnerable to budget fluctuations. It is becoming increasingly important that state and local partners collaborate and become adept at communicating with decision-makers at all levels with the goals of implementing broad policy changes, protecting against budget cuts, and obtaining additional funding that can be sustained over time. Federal, state, and local policy-makers must be informed about the lifelong impact of sexual violence on individuals and communities, the cost to society as a whole, and the importance of undertaking comprehensive primary prevention activities that focus on youth.

Formative Research Recommendations

Efforts to improve attitudes toward violence against women should be guided by five assumptions. First, the process of changing attitudes must be located within a project of changing familial, organizational, communal, and societal norms that support violence against women. Second, interventions must address not only those attitudes that are overtly condoning of violence against women but also the wider clusters of attitudes related to gender and sexuality that normalize and justify this violence. Given the close association between attitudes toward violence against women and attitudes toward gender, especially adolescent males' heavy consumption of "sexist" media content which ultimately influences attitudes toward women, the latter must be targeted in educational campaigns.

Third, efforts to address violence-supportive attitudes must also work to provide an alternative, a set of norms and values centered on nonviolence and gender equality. Fourth, violence prevention interventions must be culturally appropriate (Flood, 2005- 2006). Finally, interventions must be accompanied by changes in social practices if violence against women is to be prevented.

Next Steps

- Determine the goal of the materials or media (e.g. determine topics to be addressed, targeted audience, how the materials, performances will be used and by whom).
- Determine indicators that will be used to evaluate the project, and develop tools to collect data (e.g., activity logs, profiles of participants, pre and post tests, focus group discussions, and interview guides).
- Train trainers and moderators
- Conduct developmental research relying on focus groups, in-depth interviews, cool hunts, and observations.
- Collaborate with state-wide agencies experienced in working with adolescents, community centers, schools, and faith-based organizations to craft messages and house the project (e.g., provide space for the project in the city or town, offer forum for reaching youth).
- Seek technical assistance in developing monitoring and evaluation tools, training trainers, facilitating delivery of the project into schools, community centers, and other organizations that work with youth from health, education and youth departments.
- Build strategic alliances with fast-food chains (i.e., for reward programs if and when participants attend sessions. They could, for example get a free Big Mac)
- Inform parents and religious, traditional and political leaders in each community about the project and the problems it aims to resolve.
- Develop educational materials including videos, video games, social marketing networks, brochures, promotional materials, flyers, posters, advertising messages, commercials, Internet-based information, and experiential interactive exercises.
- Seek, identify and encourage adolescent boys and young men to participate in developing materials and peer training workshops, etc.
- After focus groups are held and preliminary messages and themes are created it is important to pre-test materials and make adjustments based on feedback.
- Involve youth in designing all aspects of the campaign including the design of ads, promotional materials and spokesperson.
- Train teachers, youth leaders, youth advocates, peer leaders, and any adults who may be interested and involved with implementing project activities.

- Develop partnerships with the ministry of health, departments of health, youth, and sports, etc.
- Select venues for locating projects. Potential sites include schools, vocational training centers, gyms, clubs, and correctional facilities. Work with advocates and their networks to find venues willing to house the project (e.g., parents associations in favor of integrating project into schools, correctional facilities working on rehabilitating troubled youth).
- Foster and encourage active support from parents and teachers (e.g., run workshops for them to keep them informed about what youth are learning).
- Administer a post-test to project participants when the project ends. Note the number of dropouts and the number of participants who joined the project once it was underway and did not take the pre test.
- Evaluate project use monitoring tools (e.g., pre and post test results, data that tracks activities and number of participants, etc.) focus group discussions and interviews with trainers, teachers, youth, health care providers (where applicable) and other stakeholders to assess and quantify project achievements.

Suggestions for Theme Development

- Link pro-social behaviors in ads with being "cool," masculine/virile, and independent
- Place messages in TV shows with high adolescent viewership, such as "American Idol," "American Dad," etc.
- Include "masculine" athletes, role models and movie stars, who are popular with young people
- Sponsor rock concerts and sporting events
- Place/embed pro-social, anti-violence/media literate messages in media such as online games and video games.
- Also place messages near high schools: on billboards, in bus shelters and in variety stores. Newer marketing approaches must include online advertising and innovative marketing techniques, such as embedding products in the program content in films, online, and in video games.
- Recognize the value of the Internet as an effective tool for reaching young people. The Web offers marketers a medium that is a huge part of youth culture—with the added bonus that it's unregulated, with very little parental supervision.

CONCLUSION: Talk to Boys about Media Violence

Talking to kids about violence in the media they consume – television, movies, video games, music and the Internet – can help them put media violence into perspective and perhaps diffuse some of its power. The following "discussion starters" are designed to help kids develop the critical thinking skills they need to understand and question the use of violence in media.

Ask kids: what is violence?

Once kids understand what violence is, they can then start to put media violence into context. Ask them to consider both physical and emotional acts of violence in their definition. Can emotional violence be as harmful as physical violence? Yelling, put-downs, name-calling and threats are what kids are most likely to experience in the school yard. Talk about how these kinds of acts can begin a cycle that leads to physical violence. How do they feel when someone call them names or threatens them?

Discuss how violence is used in different media.

With a definition of violence in mind, kids can start to examine its use in the media they enjoy. Is violence used gratuitously or is it integral to the plot? Is it used in a humorous way and does the humour make it less harmful? Is it there to teach a lesson? Is violence shown to be the only possible solution to a situation which the audience expects?

Discuss the consequences of media violence. Ask kids to think about the realistic consequences of the violence they see in the media:

- How would the people involved in the conflict feel in real life?
- What would be the results of the violence? What injuries may have occurred? What property damages would have resulted?
- How would the perpetrators of violence be punished or made accountable for their actions?

Look for examples in different media (video games, music videos, comic books, TV or movies) where there are no consequences to violence.

- Discuss why there is violence in media and why people are attracted to it.
- Producers create violent media because it sells both at home and abroad. Many people want their entertainment to be action-packed, but the industry also creates an appetite for violence through marketing – especially to young people. Ask kids if they feel they are being targeted as consumers for violent media.
- Consider whether people become increasingly de-sensitized to media violence.
- Do kids feel that they need to see graphic violence? Talk about what they expect to see in the next action movie they go to. What does it take to scare them or keep them on the edge of their seat, and why. If people do become desensitized to violence, could that be a problem. Why?
- Compare psychological suspense to gratuitous violence.
- Can a well-made suspenseful movie be more frightening than a violent action film? Talk about the excitement generated by shootings or explosions in an action movie sequence versus a suspenseful scene that builds tension using music, tempo, camera angles and facial expressions.
- Look for creative solutions to conflict in media. Ask kids to look for examples of anger with and without violence in the media. Is there a difference between the two? Does the non-violent approach seem more realistic? Discuss alternative ways to resolve conflict.
- Talk about media violence and stereotyping.
- Media violence is often used to perpetrate myths and stereotypes about people. Ask kids:
 - Who is committing the acts of violence – men, women, white people, minorities?
 - Who are the victims of violence – men, women, old people, children, white people, minorities?

Checklist for Violent Youth

Note: This scale has been provided in the event that researchers want to specifically recruit and include focus group participants who have been identified by teachers and/parents as exhibiting some of the warning signals. Valuable information could/might be gained from asking this population about their thoughts about violence, what media they consume and how much, and more importantly, what types of messages do they think boys like them might respond that will help reduce the aggressive tendencies.

The National School Safety Center (NSSC) in the U.S. developed the Checklist for Violent Youth after studying common characteristics of youngsters associated with school-related deaths. While there is no foolproof system for identifying potentially dangerous students, the NSSC offers the following warning signals that could indicate a youth's potential for harming him/herself or others.

1. _____ Has a history of tantrums and uncontrollable angry outbursts.
2. _____ Characteristically resorts to name calling, cursing or abusive language.
3. _____ Habitually makes violent threats when angry.
4. _____ Has previously brought a weapon to school.
5. _____ Has a background of serious disciplinary problems at school and in the community.
6. _____ Has a background of drug, alcohol or other substance abuse or dependency.
7. _____ Is on the fringe of his/her peer group with few or no close friends.
8. _____ Is preoccupied with weapons, explosives or other incendiary devices.
9. _____ Has previously been truant, suspended or expelled from school.
10. _____ Displays cruelty to animals.
11. _____ Has little or no supervision and support from parents or a caring adult.
12. _____ Has witnessed or been a victim of abuse or neglect in the home.
13. _____ Has been bullied and/or bullies or intimidates peers or younger children.
14. _____ Tends to blame others for difficulties and problems s/he causes her/himself.
15. _____ Consistently prefers TV shows, movies or music expressing violent themes and acts.
16. _____ Prefers reading materials dealing with violent themes, rituals and abuse.
17. _____ Reflects anger, frustration and the dark side of life in school essays or writing projects.
18. _____ Is involved with a gang or an antisocial group on the fringe of peer acceptance.
19. _____ Is often depressed and/or has significant mood swings.
20. _____ Has threatened or attempted suicide.

Source: Reprinted with permission from the National School Safety Center Web site

<http://www.schoolsafety.us/>

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUPS

What media do you use often and why? TV? Radio? Magazines? Newspaper? Internet?

What is your all-time favorite media and why?

Define violence. Where did your definition come from?

How do they relate to and communicate with women?

From whom/where do they get information?

Who do they trust?

Who is the MOST influential person in their life?

Where do they learn about how to "be a man"?

Tapes into self identity/gender (e.g., how do boys and young men view themselves?)

What behaviors and practices do they adopt to identify as men?)

How do people earn respect?

Communication (e.g., how do they communicate with their families, friends, girl friends?);

Decision-making (e.g., how do they decide if they will stay in school, work, have relationships?);

Ask participants to recall information about their behavior and to recount times when they had behaved aggressively. (Example: "Tell me about an incident where you acted aggressively by threatening someone.")

How would being in a good mood all the time help you to not be aggressive. If they have engaged in aggressive behavior, ask for the reasons behind their aggressive behavior. (Example: "What are some things that would make you want to fight?")

Discuss the significance of the context in which the behavior occurred. (Example: "How would you describe the neighborhood/ family / society in which you grew up?")

Ask questions concerning effective intervention strategies and/or the strategies that could be used to help "other boys" curb or control their anger and aggression.

Determine age, educational and income level of targeted audience. Take into consideration cultural values and religious beliefs.

Tips on the Focus Group Procedure:

Each interview should begin with routine assurances about confidentiality, the use of the information for research purposes only, and the fact that the participants could stop the tape at any time during the interview. Participants should also be told that the purpose of the interview was to find out about aggressive behavior from the point of view of adolescents and that any insights they could provide would be greatly

appreciated. In other words, participants should be encouraged to recognize their expertise and the contribution is valuable to the outcome of this study: the development of an advertising campaign aimed to reduce violence. The participants should be told and it should be emphasized that the knowledge gained through this experience is incredibly valuable, and their cooperation is and will be appreciated.

For those male participants who have been identified as “aggressive,” they need to know that their aggressive behavior is and will be in no way condoned, but that their willingness to talk about it, analyze it, and reflect on it, as well as their insights into what would work to change this behavior, will be recognized as central to the research.

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