

## For the Coach: Module 2

### OVERVIEW OF MODULE 2

In Module 2, the student leader team conducts an assessment of the organization's risk vulnerability. The assessment gives the leader team an accurate picture of the group's risk taking and the potential for negative consequences, and it enables the team to make a plan for strengthening the group's risk-management strategies using the FailSafe tools.

**The theme of Module 2 is connect the dots.** The concept is that problems and negative outcomes associated with alcohol use are often not a complete surprise. In most cases, we can “walk back” the situation and see exactly how decisions that were made early on contributed to the outcome.

This is a relatively new concept for most traditionally-aged college students, who may not have begun to connect the dots between the decisions they make and the consequences they experience. The practice of walking back an outcome to understand how we contributed to it is somewhat counter-culture. We've become used to watching our leaders blame everything and everyone but themselves and not accept responsibility. It may take student leaders—and members of the organization—some time to understand that connecting the dots is not a trial to prove someone's guilt, but rather an opportunity to avoid unwanted consequences by understanding how decisions made early on can lead to wanted or unwanted outcomes.

**This module contains a single tool, the Leader Awareness and Planning Tool, which guides the group's student leaders through the following activities:**

- 1. The student leaders each complete a brief questionnaire about members' use of alcohol, consequences experienced, and potential influences.**
- 2. The student leaders come together to compare and “score” their results to better understand the organization's level of risk vulnerability.**
- 3. The leaders then examine the elements that contribute to the group's risk vulnerability by using another informal survey that they complete together.** The results help the student leaders to understand where they should focus their work, and which tools in the FailSafe toolkit the group should concentrate on.
- 4. Finally, the leaders develop a plan using a template that is provided.**

### HOW CAN YOU HELP?

If possible, be part of the team meeting where student leaders share their questionnaire results, discuss the group's risk vulnerability, and create a plan. If you're not able to do this, talk with the group's lead student before the leader team meets to review the Leader Awareness and Planning Tool, answer any questions the leader may have, and underscore the importance of student leaders providing honest answers. Keep the following points in mind whether you meet with the leader team or just the lead student.

- 1. Reassure the student leaders that the discussion about the questionnaire will remain confidential and that nothing that is said during the conversation will be used as “evidence” against students.**
- 2. Remind the leaders that they are the only ones who will see their questionnaire responses.** They do not need to sugar-coat their responses or spin the results. Your role as a Coach is to assist, not spy. It's important that the student leaders trust you and are open and honest in their responses to the questionnaire.

It is also important that you let the student leaders know that you cannot ignore illegal activity. Be clear about what constitutes illegal activity related to alcohol use: procurement of alcohol for a minor (buying for or giving alcohol to anyone under 21), assault, sexual assault, rape, intentional or planned driving by persons who are intoxicated, vandalism, etc. The issue is whether the organization or the leaders are aware of illegal activities and do not take action to stop the activities, or if the organization planned for, facilitated, or enabled illegal activities. Student leaders may not understand that some of the group's current practices are illegal and could expose the organization to criminal and civil liability. This may be the first time that the leaders have considered that they are not allowed to do things they may have done for some time. Be gentle but firm. The leaders must understand that you cannot support illegal activity, and that you are confident that there are legal alternatives that would reduce the group's risk without curtailing the group's enjoyment of the activity.

- 3. The point of this module is action—to spur the student leaders to create a plan to change the elements that put the group at greatest risk.** Don't let the leaders get stuck debating fault, arguing ethics, or disputing whether the group is responsible for illegal or very risky activities. Encourage the leaders to focus on creating a plan and identifying the FailSafe tools the group will use to improve its approach to risk management.
- 4. The group's plan needs to include a timeline that contains a realistic sense of how long it will take to implement key activities so that they become common practice.** Many FailSafe activities are designed to enable the group to establish new ways of managing the use of alcohol in social settings. The real change comes after these approaches are regularly practiced, with any challenges ironed out, skills developed, and results evident.
- 5. Student leaders need to track their efforts and note the group's successes and challenges as the plan is implemented.** FailSafe Module 7 discusses measurement and reporting, but leaders should be thinking now about how to track events such as emergency medical service calls, run-ins with the police or angry neighbors, and the number of times a member has to be taken care of due to acute intoxication. Change may be slow, but results should begin to appear and they should be noted and celebrated.