

For the Coach: Module 3

OVERVIEW OF MODULE 3

Modules 1 and 2 helped student members and leaders become more aware of the ways that their attitudes and practices related to alcohol use increase their individual and the group's collective risk for negative outcomes. In Module 2 the student leaders assessed the organization's risk vulnerability. The next step is to spread that awareness across the group's membership in a non-judgmental, non-confrontational, thought-provoking manner so that the group can begin to make simple changes that yield positive results.

The three tools in Module 3 are designed to give members an opportunity to talk honestly about their practices with alcohol. The entire group receives feedback about the things that make the organization vulnerable to negative outcomes (the Group Feedback Tool). The group then begins to take on the first two steps to change by mentoring one another in risk-protection strategies (the Risk Mentor Tool) and setting policies that take a realistic view of the legal landscape and that include approaches that everyone can live with (the Living Policies Tool). These activities, which are carried out during a membership meeting, should be completed early in the first month of the program.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- 1. Read through the Module 3 tools before meeting with the student leaders to plan the associated activities.**
- 2. Confirm with the student leader that he or she has added these activities to the calendar and agendas of membership meetings, preferably meetings that occur in the first month of beginning the FailSafe program.**
- 3. Help the student leaders make sense of the materials.** Start the planning meeting with the leaders by watching the Module 3 video *How Do You Like Me Now?* from the FailSafe website. The video is designed to increase awareness of the heightened vulnerability of new members, especially freshmen and sophomores. It explains why new members are much more likely to face negative consequences from their drinking, and how older members can unknowingly set new members up for success or failure. While no one "makes" a new member drink more than they should, the group's members can influence drinking in other ways. No one needs to tell a new member to drink the entire bottle, even though that's far more than his or her body can handle. The new member is convinced that social success in the group depends on it. Review with the student leaders the concepts from the video, and talk with them about showing the video to the membership before using the Module 3 tools with the group.

- 4. Help the student leaders to carefully follow the instructions for the Group Feedback Tool.** This tool is taken directly from a well-studied strategy created by two respected researchers from Washington State University. The student leaders will share with members the aggregate data from the group's Member Alcohol Profile. The data are shared following a specific format and style that encourages members to draw their own conclusions about the level of unmanaged risk that exists for the group. The goal is to provide feedback to the group as a whole without judging or confronting anyone. The discussion will be heated; as mentioned in Module 1, some students will resist the information and argue about the data. It is important for the leaders who are presenting the information to remain objective and impersonal and to allow members to work through their discomfort. Student leaders should follow the Group Feedback Tool as precisely as possible.
- 5. Help to facilitate the Secrets to Success conversation with the membership.** The Risk Mentor Tool (where the Secrets to Success activity is located) is designed to produce a light, fun, instructive group conversation about everyday risk management related to alcohol. Most of the older members of the group have survived the alcohol environment of college by developing risk-management strategies that mitigate the potential negative impacts of alcohol use. The goal of this activity is to begin the conversation between older and younger members about these "secrets to success." The first step is to help older students recognize their own strategies; many will be unaware that they've adapted their behavior to avoid harm. You may want to share your own strategies. The purpose is to initiate older members mentoring younger members about risk-management strategies. You can encourage these conversations beyond this initial session so that this practice becomes part of the group's culture.
- 6. Before and during the conversation related to the Living Policies Tool, be prepared to reinforce the concept of laws and policies.** After the conversation remember to reiterate the standards that the group has set related to alcohol use by members. The first goal of the Living Policies activity is to have a realistic conversation about the alcohol-related laws and policies that place the group at risk of significant legal or civil penalties, judicial sanctions, or possibly being banned from campus. It is very likely that group members assume that laws related to the legal drinking age and alcohol procurement as well as policies about hazing and risk to self and others do not apply to them, or that their illegal activities are not susceptible to enforcement and adjudication.

It is important to move the conversation away from a disconnected list of rules toward a focus on the role of laws and policies in keeping everyone safe. Because many members will resist this, focus on helping members to understand that whether they agree or disagree with the laws and policies will not protect them from very real legal and/or judicial consequences. The second goal of the activity is to help the group form agreements about the policies they wish to follow, make commitments to these policies, and agree to hold one another accountable. The goal is to help members adhere to the group's policies not just because they exist, but as a result of their personal commitment to the group.