

For Student Leaders and Coaches: Module 7: Keeping Success Alive

There are three strategies for continuing to successfully manage risks related to alcohol:

- Measure changes
- Reinforce members' great choices
- Keep alert for unmanaged risks

This tool explores each of these strategies in depth.

MEASURE CHANGES

First, you have to know you're being successful. That means continuing to measure the things you measured in Modules 1 and 2, and noting what is changing and what still needs work.

Retake the Member Alcohol Profile

At the end of the semester or academic year, have every one of your group's members who took the Member Alcohol Profile take it again. Just as you did the first time, go to the Student Leader Dashboard and send an invitation to every member during your group's second open-survey period.

Just like the first time, the survey will send each member personal feedback that only they can see. But this time the feedback that students receive will summarize the changes from the first time they completed the survey to now.

You'll also get another aggregate picture of your group's responses, so you can see the changes for the group as a whole. You may want to present the new results to the membership, either to congratulate the group on the positive changes members are making or to clarify where the group still needs to do more work (or a combination of both). Documenting and communicating changes in Member Alcohol Profile results is a great way to show administrators and others that your group is on the right track for managing risks related to alcohol.

Revisit the Module 2 Leader Awareness and Planning Tool

As you learned in Module 2, the Member Alcohol Profile isn't the only measure of success for your group. For this reason, the student leader team may want to redo the Student Leader Questionnaire in the Leader Awareness and Planning Tool. If you complete the questionnaire again, pay special attention to these items:

- The number of times your group called emergency services for a group member or a party guest
- The number of times your group had an unwanted interaction with police or campus security
- The number of times your group faced campus administrators or judicial officers
- The number of times a group member stepped in to prevent another member from engaging in risky behavior
- The number of times a senior member of your group checked in with a younger member because a problem resulted from their alcohol use

Some of these situations may occur more frequently when the group begins to make changes. That's normal; it's because of the attention you and others are paying to situations you may have overlooked in the past. Typically, the frequency of these situations will decrease, especially among members who regularly face alcohol-related problems.

Additional measure of successes to track include:

- The number of new members who successfully make it to activation
- Improvements in member satisfaction, academic success, and overall health
- Improvements in the overall health of the organization
- Improvements in the group's relationship with the campus and the community

Don't Keep Your Group's Successes a Secret

Celebrate the changes that you see in the group, and keep those results handy for any time there's a chance to show administrators, alumni, or advisors the ways in which you've taken initiative to create an organization that is failsafe. Share your efforts and results at conferences and national organization meetings.

You may want to present to the membership the group's latest results from the Member Alcohol Profile, using the Module 3 Group Feedback Tool. This time, you'll want to emphasize in the presentation where you started as a group and where you are now.

REINFORCE MEMBERS' GREAT CHOICES

It's important that the group's leadership team actively reinforce the healthier choices that members are making so that those choices become habit. Here are a few ways to do that:

- When a new member does not participate in high-risk drinking at an event, tell that person how much you respect and admire him or her for making that choice.
- Reinforce members' worth for the other things they do, such as academics, sports, service, or leadership.
- Encourage members to share with each other stories of how they successfully avoided a potentially dangerous situation. Publicly acknowledge your pride in these incidents.
- Hold up to others across campus the stories of members who are successful in reducing risks related to alcohol. Help those members to make and keep strong social connections without having to tell "I was so drunk . . ." stories.
- Live it yourself, and talk about the positive outcomes you experience by managing risk successfully. Encourage all the student leaders in your group to do the same.

Bad Stuff Happens

... even when you try your hardest to prevent or stop it.

It's important to understand that even when you're using the FailSafe tools effectively and are managing risk well as a group, individuals in or around the group may still experience serious harm or negative consequences because of alcohol. Everyone makes their own choices, and we often can't control the outcomes that others experience.

Keep your eye on the big picture, have evidence of the hard work that your group is doing to make changes, and continue to learn about risk vulnerabilities that may still need attention.

Most importantly, remember that the environment you create can help others to make safer choices, but you can't force them to do so. The truth is that if you've really worked on applying the tools, you've prevented far more problems from occurring.

KEEP ALERT FOR UNMANAGED RISKS

Managing risk never ends, and you'll never get to a place where you don't have to think about risk again. Risks to social acceptance, health, legal standing, and academic success are constantly changing as new products, trends, technologies, and customs emerge. Changing the big stuff (e.g., the way new members try to gain the group's acceptance, the way the group recruits and orients new members, risk-management strategies that become part of the group's regular practices) needs to be a central feature of your leadership. These big issues can lay the foundation for reducing problems, especially as older members graduate and new members join.

A few ways to keep the change alive:

- **Keep checking in on the health of the organization.** Ask members regularly how they are doing and what challenges they face. Having a good sense of how members get along, the common causes of arguments, and how well you're able to recruit new members will enable you to determine when it's time to revisit alcohol issues in the group.
- **Keep the FailSafe toolkit nearby.** You can—and should—return to these activities so they remain daily practices that are part of the group's culture. As a refresher, you can show one of the FailSafe videos or hold a discussion using a FailSafe tool.
- **Pass along the charge to the next leaders of your group, reminding them to reuse the FailSafe tools at least once every four years.** Tell the new leaders about the hard work the group has done, and that it's important that they carry the torch and keep the change going.

The tools of Failsafe are available to you any time; you're welcome to go back to them, download them into personal files, or just keep Failsafetools.org on your favorites list. As the membership of your group turns over every four to six years, the toolkit will be there as a resource for the group.