University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Choices about Alcohol Assessment  
2016-2017  

Choices about Alcohol Demographics and Information  

Number of students referred: 524 students (21.4% decrease from 2014-15)  
Number of participants completing program: 576 (including prior year referrals)  
Number of groups held: 116 (5 participants per group average)  
Number of participant assessments analyzed: 493  

Sex: 29.1% female, 70.9% male  

Race/ethnicity:  
- 88.45% White  
- 2.06% Latin@  
- 4.54% Asian  
- 0.82% American Indian/Pacific Islander  
- 1.03% Black  
- 1.86% Multiracial  

Average age: 18.82 years old  
Year in school:  
- 64.7% first year  
- 23% sophomores  
- 10.9% juniors  
- 1.4% senior  

Drinker Profile and Readiness to Change  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choices</th>
<th># of students</th>
<th>Typical Drinking Week</th>
<th>Heaviest Drinking Week</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Drinks per sitting</td>
<td>Drinks per hour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Low risk drinkers</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>2.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>155 (31.5%) (31.5%)</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate risk drinkers</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>5.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>89 (18.1%) (18.1%)</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>1.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High risk drinkers</td>
<td>5.35</td>
<td>6.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>211 (42.9%) (42.9%)</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>1.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Problem drinkers</td>
<td>9.81</td>
<td>9.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>36 (7.3%) (7.3%)</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>2.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High risk drinkers, including problem drinkers</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>7.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>247 (50.2%) (50.2%)</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>1.97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Definitions:  
Low risk drinkers: 4 or fewer per sitting in 30 days prior to first BASICS session  
Moderate risk drinkers: Typically low risk drinkers who averaged between 4 and 8 during their heaviest drinking week in 30 days prior to first session  
High risk drinkers: Typically 5 or more, but fewer than 8; or 4 or fewer typically and 8+ per sitting in heaviest week  
Problem drinkers: Typically consuming 8 or more per sitting in 30 days prior to first session  

188 students began the program precontemplative and were unchanged. Analysis of this group shows that their attitudes are more polarized than that of students who subsequently change (representing more firmly entrenched attitudes resistant to change or contemplation), but did shift their precontemplative and contemplation attitudes. We should be sensitive to the degree of resistance to change and adjust our approach accordingly to elicit more discrepancy about problems that are associated with alcohol use, particularly for high risk and problem drinkers.
58.7% of participants begin the program with little consideration for changing their drinking (precontemplation). Investigating officers should strive to increase contemplation using MI during the misconduct process.

Only 51.5% of participants complete the program contemplative or in action. The outcomes are very polar with only 11.8% of participants contemplative about changing at post-assessment.

64% of high risk and problem drinkers who began as precontemplative remained in that stage. This group had more strongly polarized attitudes that reflected comfort with their current drinking, in spite of the risk levels. When compared to the norms of others in their stage of change, the high risk drinkers tended to be higher risk than the average student and the problem drinkers tended to be lower risk. The hypothesis is that their drinking in the 5.8 and 9 drinks per sitting, respectively, is normalized in their peer group, diminishing impulses to consider change.

Across all drinking styles, 80% of participants who were contemplating changes or taking action at the time of preassessment were still doing so at the post-assessment. Contrasted with the outcomes for precontemplators at the end of the program (above), it is evident that students who are ready to consider changes, at a minimum, are likely to have a better outcome from Choices about Alcohol.
Drinking a lot of alcohol quickly is risky. *Important to have a plan before going out. *It’s important to change my drinking to achieve my goals. **Know to help a passed out friend, and would do it.

**Attitudes Regarding Risky Drinking**

- Scores range from 0 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree).
- N=401 or greater
- All of significant changes in direction anticipated (one-tailed paired t-tests).

**Readiness to Change**

- Scores range from 0 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree).
- N=461 or greater
- All of significant changes in direction anticipated (one-tailed paired t-tests).

- Students indicate greater agreement with the statements on the right, except the importance of changing their drinking to achieve their goals.
Choices about Alcohol Knowledge Comparison

- 11 Items Measured
- N=491 for total
- Average pre-assessment knowledge of 5.89 correct items.
- Knowledge gains of 2.39 items correct, statistically significant at p < .001 for a post-assessment knowledge average of 8.28, lower than in previous years.
- 91.4% of students improved or maintained their total score. Unfortunately 41 students scored lower on post assessment than on pre assessment.

Post assessment knowledge scores concentrate at 9 correct answers. 49.3% score above the average. This is in contrast to the pre-assessment distribution, which more closely resembles a slightly shifted normal curve.
Student evaluations reflect a general agreement that the Choices program would help them reduce risk, but there is greater ambivalence about using the information to change their behavior. What is unclear is which behaviors they may change, whether to avoid detection or lower other negative personal consequences. It remains consistent that while the program is viewed favorably overall, fewer students would recommend it definitively, and are disinclined to take a firm position on how it might lead to changes.