

The Vermont Department of Health, Division of Substance Use Programs (DSU) has developed multiple awareness and social marketing (behavior change) campaigns for various audiences to prevent alcohol, cannabis, stimulant and opioid use, misuse and addiction. Tone and language in these messaging campaigns are intended to help reduce the stigma that may prevent a person from seeking help.

What are the steps to developing messages?

1. Conduct research to inform audience, message, and delivery
2. Develop campaign messaging and creative concepts
3. Test the messaging and concepts with the audience
4. Implement the campaign through paid media placement
5. Evaluate the campaign based on identified media metrics

Working with media and marketing experts, these steps are fundamental in developing campaigns that effectively reach and resonate with audiences. DSU's media placement approach ensures that topic-specific campaigns for identified audiences are placed strategically throughout the year to avoid messaging gaps.

What is DSU's messaging?

VT Helplink is a statewide resource for people that use substances and their families to connect with support and services. The call center and website provide information and referrals for prevention, intervention, harm reduction, treatment and recovery services in Vermont. VTHelplink.org



ParentUp helps parents and caregivers to have conversations with their children about alcohol and other drugs. This social marketing campaign provides tips for establishing a supportive environment and creating on-going, two-way dialogue to make discussions easier about alcohol, cannabis, other drugs and mental health. ParentUpVT.org

Let's Talk Cannabis is an educational campaign providing science-based information to increase awareness about cannabis and how it affects our bodies, minds and health. The campaign provides information on the health and developmental risks of use among youth or people who are pregnant, prevention tips and how to access help. Messaging is tailored for youth, adults, parents and mentors, people who are pregnant and breastfeeding and health care providers. healthvermont.gov/LetsTalkCannabis



KEY POINTS

- Awareness and social marketing around substance use, misuse and addiction
- Messages are researched, tested and evaluated
- Messages are specific to audience

Communications

Do Your Part provides tips on safe storage and disposal of medications to help prevent accidental ingestion by children and pets, and to protect the environment. Messaging promotes safely storing and disposing of unwanted medications through drop-off kiosks and mail-back disposal envelopes, and participation in National Prescription Drug Take-Back each April and October. healthvermont.gov/DoYourPart



Over the Dose is a digital campaign reaching young adults aged 18 to 25 at increased risk for overdose. Messaging addresses the increased risks of using substances together, signs of an overdose and risks of fentanyl. OverTheDoseVT.com

OutLast is a digital campaign for teens at an increased risk for alcohol and cannabis use. Messaging emphasizes how substances can interfere with managing stress and anxiety, self-control, being focused and achieving goals. OutLastVT.com



Check Yourself is a digital campaign addressing high-risk behaviors among young adults ages 21-25. Messaging highlights the health risks and social consequences of binge drinking and stimulant use. CheckYourselfVT.com

KnowOD is an overdose prevention campaign with messaging intended to reach people at greater risk of overdose, as well as their family and friends. The campaign focuses on harm reduction messaging, including carry naloxone, avoid using alone, risks of fentanyl and xylazine, and call 911 in an overdose emergency. KnowODVT.com



Health Department Messaging Collaborations

The Division of Substance Use Programs partners with other Health Department programs to integrate public health messaging.

Healthy at Home is a campaign that provides simple steps to keeping homes, and everyone in them, healthy and safe. DSU partners with the Division of Environmental Health to provide guidance on safely storing substances to protect kids and pets from accidental ingestion. healthvermont.gov/HealthyAtHome



One More Conversation messaging helps Vermonters understand there is no known safe amount of substance use for a healthy pregnancy. DSU partners with the Divisions of Family and Child Health and Health Promotion & Disease Prevention on this resource that supports and encourages health care professionals to continue this conversation with their patients throughout pregnancy and the baby's first year. healthvermont.gov/1MoreConversation



New for 2024

Adult alcohol messaging is under development in 2024. Data and research will inform the creation of tailored messaging for adults, focusing on reasons for alcohol use and impacts of alcohol use.

For more information, contact ahs.vdhdsu@vermont.gov, with subject line "Communications."