



# Planning a Safe Spring Break

## Getting Started

When it comes to educational programming, there are some strategies that you can use to help create the perfect Safe Spring Break activities. Here are some things for you to consider:

## Planning Your Calendar

It might sound obvious, but your first step is deciding the timing of your Safe Spring Break programming activities. There are many things to take into consideration, so take a good look at what is going on just before spring break. One of the advantages of starting your planning early is that you can get on your campus calendar before the second half of the year starts getting too full.

Obviously, the best time to conduct a Safe Spring Break Campaign is right before everyone leaves for break, although some campuses will plan it two weeks before break if midterms are a major concern. If your campus closes for break on Wednesday, do you begin your week that Monday, or the previous Friday? Most campuses do not conduct a complete week of Safe Spring Break activities. Instead, they choose to concentrate their energy on three or four full days. It's entirely up to you, depending on your group's size, your financial resources, and how ambitious you feel! Keep in mind your members will need mid-term study time, too.

Pick your dates and get on your official campus calendar in your Student Union, Health Center, Residence Life Office, Athletics, and Greek Affairs Offices. Letting these key people know that you are making plans for Safe Spring Break will be important for the next step.

## Balance Different Types of Programming

When it comes to programming ideas, try to expand your list of options for planning purposes. We commonly plan an educational event, such as a speaker coming to campus or a workshop, in the student union or a residence hall. These are great ideas but it is also important to think of ways you can do an awareness event that don't necessarily involve a

formal audience. How about a table set up in a high-visibility area with short quizzes and prizes to give away? What about posters hanging from hallways in academic buildings or statistics written on chalkboards in classrooms? Don't forget to take advantage of the campus radio station or video monitors to run free messages throughout the week. Finally, you might want to consider a social event or game designed just to let people have some fun! How about a campus dance or open-mic coffeehouse? What about a pool or volleyball tournament? By combining different types of programming at different times, it is possible for you to have many successful Safe Spring Break activities.

## Share the Work . . . Share The Success

Safe Spring Break is a perfect time for planning committees. Too often one or two peer educators take on the responsibility for the whole week and end up getting overwhelmed. It might be better to form committees, either by creating different committees such as marketing, fundraising, etc. or by delegating the responsibility for each major event to a different committee. Not only does this share the work, it also is a great opportunity to empower other student leaders to get more involved and prepare them for the time when they will run your peer education program.

## Safe Spring Break is a Perfect Networking Opportunity

Student safety is a campus-wide issue and there are many different student organizations and campus departments that also are concerned about alcohol abuse and campus safety.

Here is a chance to co-sponsor events with these different groups. Think about planning an event with Counseling or Health and Wellness. See if you have any interest from Athletics or Academic Affairs. What about organizations such as the Women's Center, Panhellenic or Interfraternity Council (IFC), or Multicultural Affairs? This might be a great time to go to the campus programming board and see if they can use their budget to bring in a nationally known speaker to do an event as part of your Safe Spring Break. By co-sponsoring and networking with some of these other

groups, you have an opportunity to share resources such as budget and student help. You also have a great marketing opportunity, as each department or organization that is sponsoring the event will try to get their members to come. When we network, we become stronger!

### **A Great Program Needs an Audience**

No matter how good your programming planning might be, it is all for nothing if no one shows up! Take the time to figure out the best and most creative ways to market your events. Check out the section later in this manual on marketing and promotion and don't forget to let people know all the wonderful things you are planning!

### **Developing Partnerships**

In order to develop a comprehensive Safe Spring Break Campaign, it is necessary to involve a wide variety of individuals and departments from the beginning. The more groups you get involved, the more comprehensive impact you will have on your student body.

Identifying and recruiting partners serves several purposes. First, it is simple nature for people to support those programs they help create. If attendance at events is a crucial part of your campaign, you will need all the help you can get! Second, any work you do creating partners for Safe Spring Break will set up long-lasting allies for end of the year programming, next year's NCAAW, etc. It is good campus relations. Third, by including other groups, you can take advantage of their resources, whether that means financial help or simply a place to hold a program. Many groups will lend this kind of support in exchange for a chance to have their name attached to a positive campus-wide event. When you decide that creating campus partners for your Safe Spring Break Campaign is a good idea, you can go about generating support in many ways:

#### **1. Form a planning committee.**

Go to those groups and invite them to be part of a committee from the very beginning of the planning process. This committee can be involved with choosing the theme, creating their own programs that will match up with yours, and co-sponsoring programs with your group. By having a committee that meets every week or so, not only do you get more people

involved, but it provides instant communication about your efforts as each committee member takes news from your meeting back to her/his constituents.

#### **2. Form partnerships that are win/win.**

Look at other student organizations and campus departments and decide how best to combine your strengths and weaknesses. Perhaps make a deal with your athletic department to do an impaired driving prevention message during one of their home basketball games. You provide the educational component (something they perhaps could not or would not do), and they provide you an audience of hundreds or thousands of people (something that we normally do not get at our programs!) Everybody wins in this case. Look for these partnership opportunities: making mocktails at a student activities dance, providing safe break packages for the campus parking lots, writing a column for the alumni magazine, throwing a midnight breakfast with the food service, planning a service event with historically Black fraternities and sororities. Create partnerships that are win/win.

#### **3. Create partnerships in the community.**

There are many organizations and businesses in your greater community that would love to work with you on student health events. Safe Spring Break offers that opportunity for exposure in the community.

For example, look to create partnerships with:

- Police/Emergency Services
- Restaurants and Bars
- Local Health Agencies
- Community Support Groups
- Local TV/Radio/Newspaper
- Health Clubs
- Treatment Centers
- Hospitals and Clinics

Hold a rally for safe driving, sponsor an alcohol-free dance at a local restaurant, or have a workout all-nighter at a local health club. Be creative. Remember that sometimes it is easier for local agencies and businesses to donate services and facilities than donate prizes.