

Selected Studies for Social Norms and Personalized Normative Feedback

Title: **Social norms approaches using descriptive drinking norms education: a review of the research on personalized normative feedback**

Authors: [Lewis, M.A.](#); [Neighbors, C.](#)

Source: [J.Am.Coll.Health](#), 2006, 54, 4, 213-218, United States

Abstract: College students have been shown to consistently overestimate the drinking of their peers. As a result, social norms approaches are effective in correcting these misperceived norms to reduce alcohol consumption and alcohol-related problems. In this review of literature, the authors critically evaluated the effectiveness of personalized normative feedback. In addition, the authors reviewed personalized normative feedback interventions and provided suggestions for increasing the efficacy of these interventions by making better use of salient referent group data.

Title: **Mailed personalized normative feedback as a brief intervention for at-risk college drinkers.**

Authors: [Collins, S.E.](#); [Carey, K.B.](#); [Sliwinski, M.J.](#)

Source: [J.Stud.Alcohol](#), 2002, 63, 5, 559-567, United States

Abstract: **OBJECTIVE:** The current study examined the efficacy of mailed personalized normative feedback (PNF) as a brief alcohol intervention for at-risk college drinkers, and investigated discrepancy as a possible mediator of the intervention effect. **METHOD:** Participants consisted of 100 at-risk college drinkers who completed an alcohol-use assessment at baseline, 6-week posttest and 6-month follow-up. Measures included number of drinks consumed per heaviest drinking week, frequency of heavy-drinking episodes, peak blood alcohol concentration and number of alcohol-related problems, all for the last month. Participants were randomly assigned to either a mailed brief intervention (MBI; n = 49) or attention-control (C; n = 51) group. The MBI group received mailed PNF that was based on baseline responses to the drinking measures; the C group received a psychoeducational brochure about alcohol. **RESULTS:** Mixed-model, repeated measures ANOVAs were used to examine the effects of time, group and gender on discrepancy and the drinking variables. Following the intervention, the MBI group reported significantly higher perceived discrepancy between self and others' drinking than the C group. The MBI group reported consuming significantly fewer drinks per heaviest drinking week and engaging in heavy episodic drinking less frequently

than the C group at the 6-week posttest; however, these differences were no longer evident at the 6-month follow-up. Hierarchical regression analyses did not provide evidence for the hypothesized mediating effect of discrepancy. CONCLUSIONS: Mailed PNF may be a cost- and time-efficient means of developing discrepancy and temporarily reducing heavy alcohol consumption among at-risk college drinkers.

Title: **Personalized mailed feedback for college drinking prevention: a randomized clinical trial.**

Authors: [Larimer,M.E.](#); [Lee,C.M.](#); [Kilmer,J.R.](#); [Fabiano,P.M.](#); [Stark,C.B.](#); [Geisner,I.M.](#); [Mallett,K.A.](#); [Lostutter,T.W.](#); [Cronce,J.M.](#); [Feeney,M.](#); [Neighbors,C.](#)

Source: [J.Consult.Clin.Psychol.](#), 2007, 75, 2, 285-293, United States

Abstract: The current study was designed to evaluate the efficacy of a mailed feedback and tips intervention as a universal prevention strategy for college drinking. Participants (N = 1,488) were randomly assigned to feedback or assessment-only control conditions. Results indicated that the mailed feedback intervention had a preventive effect on drinking rates overall, with participants in the feedback condition consuming less alcohol at follow-up in comparison with controls. In addition, abstainers in the feedback condition were twice as likely to remain abstinent from alcohol at follow-up in comparison with control participants (odds ratio = 2.02), and feedback participants were significantly more likely to refrain from heavy episodic drinking (odds ratio = 1.43). Neither gender nor severity of baseline drinking moderated the efficacy of the intervention in these analyses, but more conservative analyses utilizing last-observation carryforward suggested women and abstainers benefited more from this prevention approach. Protective behaviors mediated intervention efficacy, with participants who received the intervention being more likely to use strategies such as setting limits and alternating alcohol with nonalcoholic beverages. Implications of these findings for universal prevention of college drinking are discussed.

Title: **Indicated prevention for incoming freshmen: Personalized normative feedback and high-risk drinking**

Authors: [Lewis,MelissaA.](#); [Neighbors,Clayton](#); [Oster-Aaland,Laura](#); [Kirkeby,BenjaminS.](#); [Larimer,MaryE.](#)

Source: [Addictive Behaviors.](#), 2007, 32, 11, 2495-2508

Abstract: This research evaluated the efficacy of a computerized, freshmen-specific personalized normative feedback (PNF) intervention on reducing alcohol consumption among high-risk drinking freshmen. Students (N = 316; 53.8% female) completed measures of perceived drinking norms and drinking behavior. After completing the baseline assessment, students were randomly assigned to receive either freshmen-specific PNF that was gender-specific or gender-neutral, or to assessment only control. Findings demonstrated that

students exhibited normative misperceptions for typical freshmen drinking behavior and that perceptions of typical same-sex freshmen drinking were positively associated with riskier drinking behavior. At follow-up, students randomly assigned to receive PNF reduced perceptions of typical freshmen drinking behavior and personal drinking behavior relative to those who did not receive PNF. Findings extend previous evaluations of computer-based PNF and suggest that computer-based PNF for incoming freshmen utilizing freshmen-specific norms that are gender-specific may constitute a promising prevention strategy.

Title: **Controlled study of brief personalized assessment-feedback for drinkers interested in self-help.**

Authors: [Wild,T.C.](#); [Cunningham,J.A.](#); [Roberts,A.B.](#)

Source: [Addiction](#), 2007, 102, 2, 241-250, England

Abstract: AIMS: Brief alcohol interventions typically have been directed to heavy-drinking patients seeking primary health care and college students. This study examined the efficacy of mailing brief personalized assessment-feedback to interested drinkers recruited from the general public. We hypothesized that problem drinkers would benefit more from the intervention than individuals who were not problem drinkers. DESIGN: A two-arm, double-blinded, community-based randomized controlled trial with 6-month follow-up. SETTING AND PARTICIPANTS: A screening interview was administered to a stratified random sample of 10 014 Canadians 18 years of age and older (5621 women and 4393 men; M age = 43.3 years, SD = 15.99; response rate = 65.4%). INTERVENTION: Current drinkers interested in receiving alcohol self-help materials (n = 1727) were assigned randomly to receive brief personalized assessment-feedback on male and female population drinking norms by mail, or to a delayed-treatment control group, and were contacted 6 months later (76% retention rate). MEASUREMENTS: Problem drinking status at baseline [using sex-specific Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) cut scores], and frequency and quantity of alcohol use at follow-up. FINDINGS: Analysis of covariance identified the hypothesized interaction of baseline problem drinking status and treatment condition (P < 0.01). Among problem drinkers identified at baseline the intervention caused a 10.1% reduction in per-occasion binge drinking compared to controls, whereas there was no difference in binge drinking across conditions for non-problem drinkers. CONCLUSIONS: The continuum of care for alcohol problems can be broadened by providing brief interventions to interested drinkers in the general population.

Title: **Being Controlled by Normative Influences: Self-Determination as a Moderator of a Normative Feedback Alcohol Intervention**

Authors: [Neighbors,Clayton](#); [Lewis,Melissa A.](#); [Bergstrom,Rochelle L.](#); [Larimer,Mary](#)

[E.](#)

Source: [Health Psychology](#), 2006, 25, 5, 571-579, American Psychological Association, US

Abstract: The objectives of this research were to evaluate the efficacy of computer-delivered personalized normative feedback among heavy drinking college students and to evaluate controlled orientation as a moderator of intervention efficacy. Participants (N = 217) included primarily freshman and sophomore, heavy drinking students who were randomly assigned to receive or not to receive personalized normative feedback immediately following baseline assessment. Perceived norms, number of drinks per week, and alcohol-related problems were the main outcome measures. Controlled orientation was specified as a moderator. At 2-month follow-up, students who received normative feedback reported drinking fewer drinks per week than did students who did not receive feedback, and this reduction was mediated by changes in perceived norms. The intervention also reduced alcohol-related negative consequences among students who were higher in controlled orientation. These results provide further support for computer-delivered personalized normative feedback as an empirically supported brief intervention for heavy drinking college students, and they enhance the understanding of why and for whom normative feedback is effective.

The following sites may also be of use to you:

1) University of Washington's Social Norms and Alcohol Prevention Program (SNAP):

This project extends preliminary work to a web-based format and examines gender specificity and single versus repeated exposure as moderators of the effects of personalized normative feedback.

<http://depts.washington.edu/abrc/snap.htm>

2) Center for Alcohol and Substance Education, University of Virginia:

The goal of this grant project was to reduce the number of alcohol-related negative consequences experienced by the members of University of Virginia (UVA) fraternities and sororities. The intervention plan includes a social norms program to correct student misperceptions about drinking. An additional strategy is a brief, individualized personal feedback intervention to motivate students to reduce alcohol consumption.

Year Two Progress Report:

<http://www.virginia.edu/case/education/documents/2006WebsiteProgressSummary.pdf>

Year One Progress Report:

<http://www.virginia.edu/case/education/documents/2005AnnualProgressReport.pdf>