

## Sorority and Fraternity Members on Five Midwestern Campuses, 1993-1994

### POPULATION:

780 Greek students on five midwestern campuses (216 men and 564 women).

### EVALUATION DESIGN:

Pre and post written surveys, with the post-tests administered one year after the pretest. Original study design was to evaluate the impact of three training conditions: (1) a professional trainer condition, (2) a peer-led condition with incentives for attendance and (3) a traditional, no incentive peer-led condition. Due to implementation difficulties, the original training conditions were abandoned and a new analysis strategy devised. This resulted in three groups: those who received the program (true experimental), those who did not receive the program (control), and those who should have received the program but didn't (nonattende experimental).

### EVALUATOR:

Center for Prevention Research, University of Kentucky.

### REFERENCE

Harrington, N.G., Brigham, N.L., & Clayton, R.R. (1999). Alcohol risk reduction for fraternity and sorority members. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, 60, 521-527.

### FINDINGS:

- ◆ At post-test, the true experimental group (those who actually attended the program) had significantly less high-risk attitudes toward alcohol than the control group.
- ◆ At post-test, the nonattende experimental condition indicated greater disagreement with the false (but commonly-held) statements about the etiology of alcoholism than did control or true experimental participants.
- ◆ At post-test, control participants reported a greater decrease in alcohol consumption than did the true experimental participants.

### COMMENTARY:

On the positive end, this study suggests the program brought about some helpful changes in the students' attitudes about alcohol. On the more negative side, this did not seem to translate to reduced drinking, at least in the short run. The researchers identified limitations in the study that could explain this, including lack of support for data gathering. In fact, the authors state on page 526, "The limitations of this study could be responsible for the overall lack of findings of effectiveness."

Nevertheless, PRI believes inconsistencies in the following of the program protocol could also explain the limited positive impact. Though some instructors closely followed the protocol, the researchers noted several problems with program implementation involving a number of peer instructors. These included: instructors with hangovers conducting the program; instructors condensing, omitting or rushing through the material; instructors with scheduling difficulties, including one training that began at midnight, and instructors not delivering the program during fall semester as requested, instead waiting for spring semester (page 525). Again, these serious deviations from quality program delivery were certainly not universal. They were frequent and serious enough, however, to potentially play a major role in minimizing program effectiveness. PRI believes that the results of this study support the importance of teaching the program as designed.