

13/19

National Media
Campaign for the
Prevention of
Underage Drinking

Talk. They Hear You.®
Campaign Highlights

**June 2020** 

SAMASA

Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration

## **ICCPUD and SAMHSA Act To Prevent Underage Drinking**

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) mission is to reduce the effects of substance misuse and mental disorders on America's communities. In particular, SAMHSA works toward underage drinking prevention by supporting state and community efforts, promoting the use of evidence-based practices, educating the public, and collaborating with other agencies and interested parties.

In 2004, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary directed SAMHSA to convene the newly established Interagency Coordinating Committee on the Prevention of Underage Drinking (ICCPUD) and serve as the lead agency. ICCPUD was formalized in 2006 with Congress' passage of the Sober Truth on Preventing Underage Drinking (STOP) Act. Created to coordinate all federal agency activities related to the problem of underage drinking, ICCPUD's vision is to provide national leadership in both federal policy and programming to support state and community activities that prevent and reduce underage drinking. ICCPUD's mission is to: (1) Facilitate collaboration among the federal ICCPUD member agencies, state and local governments, private and public national organizations, and agencies with responsibility for the health, safety, and well-being of America's children and youth, and (2) provide resources and information on underage drinking prevention, intervention, treatment, enforcement, and research.

Under ICCPUD's leadership, SAMHSA's Center for Substance Abuse Prevention developed the *Talk*. *They Hear You*.® campaign in response to directives set forth in Section 2(d) of the STOP Act, requiring the HHS Secretary to fund and oversee a national adult-oriented media public service campaign and to report annually on the production, broadcasting, and evaluation of this campaign. ICCPUD has been instrumental in the overall development of *Talk*. *They Hear You*.®, using input from experts and organizations representing a wide range of parties, including public health advocacy groups, the alcohol industry, ICCPUD member agencies, the U.S. Congress, and subject matter experts.

*Talk. They Hear You.* • is a trademarked campaign that aims to:



*Talk. They Hear You.*® service mark certificate

- 1. Increase parents' and caregivers' awareness of the prevalence and risk of underage drinking and other substance use;
- 2. Equip parents and caregivers with the *knowledge*, *skills*, *and confidence* to prevent underage drinking and other substance use; and
- 3. Increase parents' and caregivers' actions to prevent underage drinking and other substance use.

The initial goal of *Talk*. *They Hear You*.® was to provide parents and caregivers with resources to address the issue of alcohol with their children. In 2017, the campaign received separate funding to expand content to include information on alcohol and other substances.

Historically, *Talk. They Hear You.* has focused on parents and caregivers of children ages 9 to 15 for early intervention. In 2018, the campaign expanded this age range to focus on youth ages 9 to 20.

The *Talk*. *They Hear You*.® campaign is congressionally mandated and is evaluated and reported annually in the *Report to Congress on the Prevention and Reduction of Underage Drinking*. The campaign is currently in its seventh year and has expanded into an ongoing communications initiative and a trusted, credible brand.

## What the Research Suggests

Alcohol use by those younger than the legal age of 21 remains a serious public health and safety problem, undermining the well-being of America's young people. Nearly \$24.3 billion (about 10 percent) of the total \$249 billion economic cost of excessive alcohol consumption is related to underage drinking, much of that due to premature mortality of underage youth.<sup>1</sup>



Alcohol also continues to be the most widely used substance among America's youth, with a higher proportion drinking alcohol than using tobacco, marijuana, or other drugs.<sup>2</sup> SAMHSA's National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) found that a higher percentage of youth (18.8 percent) ages 12 to 20 used alcohol in the past month than used tobacco products (10.1 percent) or illicit drugs (13.4 percent).

SAMHSA's NSDUH found that underage alcohol consumption in the past month also increased with age in a steady progression from 1.7 percent for 12- to 13-year-olds to 35.7 percent for 18- to 20-year-olds. By ages 18-20, 22.9 percent of young people reported binge alcohol use and 4.7 percent heavy alcohol use in the past month.<sup>3</sup>

Alcohol use is also associated with a greater likelihood of using other substances, including marijuana, tobacco, and other drugs.<sup>4</sup> According to NSDUH, 12.1 percent of those ages 12–20 had used marijuana, 9.1 had used tobacco products, and 0.8 percent had misused opioids in the past month.<sup>5</sup> Hospitalizations of 18- to 24-year-olds for overdoses involving a combination of opioids and alcohol also tripled between 1998 and 2014.<sup>6</sup>



Fortunately, parents have a significant influence on young people's decisions about alcohol consumption.<sup>7</sup> In fact, parental attitudes toward drinking, as well as parental communication, can have a substantial impact on adolescent alcohol use, particularly among younger adolescents (Ennett et al., 2001; Wood et al., 2004). When parents know about underage alcohol use, they can also protect their children from many of the high-risk behaviors associated with it. Further, parents who do not discourage underage drinking may have an indirect influence on young people's alcohol use.<sup>8</sup>

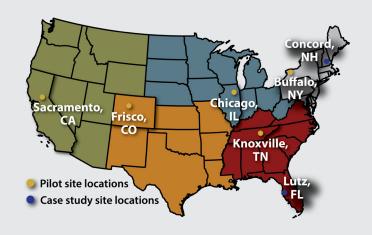
The *Talk*. *They Hear You*.® campaign addresses alcohol and other substance use issues by drawing from the latest scientific research, social marketing and health behavior theories, and feedback from audiences across the country.

## Piloting Talk. They Hear You.® Across the Country

In early to mid-2012, SAMHSA developed a national pilot program to test and refine campaign creative materials and pretest the campaign's national objectives in communities across the country. Five pilot sites, one from each of The National Prevention Network's Five Regions, implemented and evaluated the campaign. The sites were People Reaching Out, Metropolitan Drug Commission, Asian Health Coalition, Summit Prevention Alliance, and Erie County Council. The feedback received from market testing was incorporated into the final materials prior to launch.

#### Pilot sites were asked to:

- Use campaign messages and materials in current underage drinking awareness and education activities;
- Host at least one underage drinking awareness event;
- Include underage drinking research in existing educational materials;
- Provide overall feedback on the public service announcements (PSAs); and
- Gauge attitudes, behaviors, and concerns about underage drinking.



## **Pilot-Testing Campaign Effectiveness Before Launch**

In addition to the pilot sites, SAMHSA administered a national web survey to establish baseline attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors linked to underage drinking. Through "control" and "stimulus" groups, SAMHSA assessed longitudinal changes in underage drinking prevention behaviors and attitudes over a 3-month period. A small sample provided qualitative feedback on the content, layout, and delivery of the PSAs.

#### Assessing the issue:

- Underage drinking is not a top-of-mind issue; less than half of all parents surveyed reported concern.
- Education and conversations with children were the top two ways parents said they could prevent underage drinking.
- Women are much more likely to have talked with their children about underage drinking.

#### **Measuring our success:**

- The majority of parents exposed to the materials said they were believable; a third said the materials left an impression on them.
- A quarter of parents exposed to the PSAs agreed the PSAs were among the best ads they had seen on underage drinking prevention.
- A quarter of parents exposed to the PSAs said they would seek out more information about SAMHSA.
- Parents exposed to the PSAs were much more likely to have talked with their children about the dangers of underage drinking in the last 3 months.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Sacks, J.J., Gonzales, K.R., Bouchery, E.E., Tomedi, L.E., & Brewer, R.D. (2015). 2010 National and state costs of excessive alcohol consumption. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 49(5), e73–79.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Miech, R.A., Johnston, L.D., O'Malley, P.M., Bachman, J.G., Schulenberg, J.E., & Patrick, M. (2017). *Monitoring the Future national survey results on drug use, 1975–2016: Volume I, Secondary school students*. Ann Arbor, MI: Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. (2020). Results from the 2019 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Detailed tables. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Retrieved from <a href="https://www.samhsa.gov/data/">https://www.samhsa.gov/data/</a>

Dupont, R.L., Han, B., Shea, C.L., & Madras, B.K. (2018). Drug use among youth: National survey data support a common liability of all drug use. Preventive Medicine, 113, 68–73.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. (2020). Results from the 2019 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Detailed tables. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Retrieved from <a href="https://www.samhsa.gov/data/">https://www.samhsa.gov/data/</a>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Hingson, R., Zha, W., & Smyth, D. (2017). Magnitude and trends in heavy episodic drinking, alcohol-impaired driving, and alcohol-related mortality and overdose hospitalizations among emerging adults of college ages 18–24 in the United States, 1998–2014. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, 78(4), 540–548.

Nash, S.G., McQueen, A., and Bray, J.H. (2005). Pathways to adolescent alcohol use: Family environment, peer influence, and parental expectations. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 37(1), 19–28.

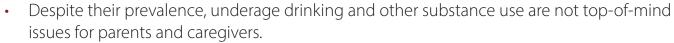
Sieving, R.E., Maruyama, G., Williams, C.L., and Perry, C.L. (2000). Pathways to adolescent alcohol use: Potential mechanisms of parent influence. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 10(4), 489–514.

YOUR TEEN ABOUT VAPING:

# **Empowering Parents and Caregivers To Prevent Underage Drinking**

The *Talk*. *They Hear You*.® campaign engages parents and caregivers in the prevention of underage drinking and other substance use. Underage drinking and other substance use remain national public health issues, especially among adolescents.

## Parents and caregivers have a significant influence on young people's decisions about using alcohol and other substances.



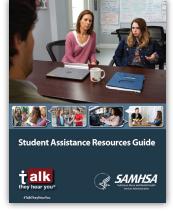
- Children said that parents and caregivers are the primary messengers for underage drinking and other substance use prevention.
- To succeed, parents and caregivers need prompts and conversation starters for talking with their children.

Since 2017—amid the nation's opioid crisis and changes in laws regarding marijuana in a growing number of states across the country—*Talk. They Hear You.*® has expanded its content to include information on underage drinking as well as other substance use. In particular, the campaign has focused on preparing parents and caregivers to talk with their children ages 9 to 20 about alcohol and other substances, including prescription pain medications and marijuana, as well as vaping.

#### The Year in Review

Under the guidance of ICCPUD, the campaign continued to develop new *Talk. They Hear You.*® materials for parents and caregivers, educators, and community organizations this year. In particular, the campaign created a Parents' Night Out presentation series, consisting of three interactive sessions, to inform, prepare, and motivate parents and caregivers to start talking with their children about underage drinking and other drug use. The series is intended for in person and virtual use by schools and community prevention coalitions.

The campaign also received approval to release a new set of *Talk. They Hear You.*® products for parents and caregivers, student assistance professionals and other educators, and community partners. This includes five new television and



TALKING WITH

YOUR TEEN ABOUT OPIOIDS:

radio PSAs, a discussion starter video, 15 print PSAs, four brochures, three posters, a product catalog, and four resource guides/toolkits. The student assistance-specific products showcase the importance of student assistance professionals, school leaders, and families working together to support the needs of students who may be struggling with substance use, mental health, or school-related issues. This new full suite of products is set to launch in summer 2020, ahead of the new school year.

#### TIMELINE

May 2013

Launched Talk. They Hear You.® campaign and website

 Delivered campaign materials to partners Released inaugural campaign PSAs

## February 2014 Released new TV PSA, Mom's Thoughts, during 2014 National Prevention Week

 Launched paid advertising campaign on social media

March 2015

· National partner meeting



Additionally, the campaign continued developing the second iteration of its *Talk*. *They Hear You*.® mobile application. The mobile app displays a variety of everyday situations parents and caregivers can use to start talking with their children about alcohol and other drugs, complete with conversation starters and closers. Many of the scenarios are based on storylines from the campaign PSAs, which are embedded directly into the application for parents and caregivers to watch.

As part of its evaluation efforts, the campaign fielded a questionnaire of parents/caregivers of children ages 9–20 and continued to prepare for a potential roll out of its second case study effort. The questionnaire garnered insights from parents/caregivers on various campaign creative components, with the primary intent of improving current *Talk*. *They Hear You*. \* materials and providing guidance for future development.

The campaign also began distribution and promotion of two new *Talk*. *They Hear You*.® television PSAs focused on vaping and substance use prevention this year. Since its inception, the *Talk*. *They Hear You*.® earned media campaign has garnered more than 12.6 billion impressions with an earned media value of \$164.5 million, and has yielded more than a \$11 to \$1 return on investment for every dollar invested in the campaign.



Collective promotion activities from June 18, 2019, through June 17, 2020 helped drive XXX visits to the campaign website, <u>www.underagedrinking.samhsa.gov</u>.

#### **Parent Questionnaire**

This year, the campaign conducted a questionnaire of parents/caregivers of children ages 9–20. The overall objective of the questionnaire was to garner their insights on various creative components of the campaign, with the primary intent of improving current *Talk*. *They Hear You*.® materials and providing guidance for future development. In particular, the questionnaire assessed respondent feedback on the following issues:

- 1. Talk. They Hear You.® product appeal;
- 2. Whether parents/caregivers report learning anything new from the campaign materials;
- 3. Whether parents/caregivers believe that *Talk*. *They Hear You*.® encourages them to discuss underage drinking and other substance use with their children;
- 4. Parents'/Caregivers' intent to act; and
- 5. How the *Talk. They Hear You.* messaging and materials can be improved.

The questionnaire had over 5,000 responses from across the country. Some of the key findings showed that:

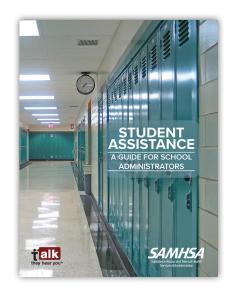
- Parents/Caregivers who thought their kids were susceptible to drinking, tobacco use, and/or "other substance" use were more likely to take actions to try and prevent these behaviors;
- Parents/Caregivers of the youngest (9–12) and oldest children (19–20) reported being less likely to talk with their children about drinking, tobacco use, and/or "other substance" use;

- Parents/Caregivers with bachelor's degrees or higher reported being more likely to talk with their kids about drinking, tobacco use, and/or "other substance" use; and
- Of the three materials tested, the video PSA was deemed slightly more informative and more likely to lead to a parent/caregiver initiating a conversation about underage drinking, tobacco product use, and/or "other substance" use.

## **Case Study**

In 2020, the campaign continued preparations for the launch of its second forced-exposure case study evaluation at two U.S. middle schools. However, with the significant challenges presented by COVID-19, including most schools having to pivot to a distance/remote learning model in 2020-2021, the possibility of conducting a successful and comparable replication of the original case study effort was quickly put in jeopardy. This forced the campaign to quickly shift its focus and identify other feasible evaluation approaches that would benefit *Talk. They Hear You.* \*\*

Findings from the original case study effort in 2017 revealed evidence of positive campaign effects. However, a replication of the case study evaluation is necessary to validate the initial findings. This effort and subsequent case studies will serve as ongoing, supplemental *Talk. They Hear You.* campaign evaluation activities.



The purpose of the case study effort is to explore details of if—and how—exposure to the campaign affects parent/caregiver and child attitudes and behaviors. The intent for replication of the case study would be to employ the same evaluation design, data collection, and data analyses plans as the original case study. First, parents/caregivers and children at each school would be surveyed about their knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs about underage drinking. Following the initial survey, one school would receive a 6-month intervention using *Talk*. *They Hear You*.® messaging and materials, while the other school would serve as a control site with no intervention. Both schools would be surveyed again at the end of 6 months to determine if the campaign influenced their opinions.

In an effort to account for how the campaign may have impacted knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors among parents and caregivers, one-on-one in-depth interviews among parents/caregivers at the intervention site would also be conducted.

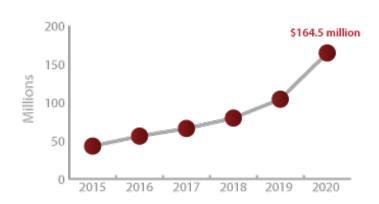
With the existing case study Office of Management and Budget (OMB) package set to expire on May 31, 2020, the campaign also had to develop and submit a renewal OMB package. This process included working with the Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality (CBHSQ) to address specific OMB feedback and updating the package to try and account for the potential impact of COVID-19, including alternative approaches for conducting the case study virtually. The updated OMB package is still being reviewed and revised by SAMHSA and CBHSQ with the hope that it will be approved in time for the 2020-2021 school year. In the meantime, the campaign has been identifying potential middle schools and gauging their interest and ability to participate in the case study during this very difficult time.

## **Reaching Parents and Caregivers Through Relevant Channels**

Through June 30, 2020, the *Talk*. *They Hear You*. PSAs have appeared in all 50 states and earned more than:

12.6
billion
impressions

#### \$164.5 Million in Earned Donated Airtime



The PSAs have generated an advertising equivalency of more than \$164.5 million across all media outlets

## **Parents' Night Out Series**

In 2020, the campaign began developing a set of materials to help local school districts and coalitions facilitate conversations about underage drinking and other substance use prevention with parents and caregivers in their community. The Parents' Night Out series consists of three interactive sessions to help inform, prepare, and assist parents and caregivers in taking action by talking with their children about alcohol and other drug use. Each 1-hour session is interactive and led by a facilitator. The goals for the three sessions are as follows:

- **Session #1. Get Informed** Increase parents' and caregivers' awareness about underage drinking and drug use.
- Session #2. Be Prepared Introduce skill building and share available resources and tools.
- **Session #3. Take Action** Increase parents' and caregivers' actions to help prevent underage drinking and drug use.

In addition to three ready-to-use PowerPoint presentations focused on the campaign's goals, the series also comes with a facilitator's guide to help educators, administrators, or community leaders deliver the presentations. The facilitator's guide provides tips to help plan and prepare for the presentations as well as guidance for reporting and following up with participants upon completion.

#### **Online Conversations**

Throughout the year, SAMHSA promoted the *Talk. They Hear You.*® campaign through strategic social media messaging on Facebook and Twitter. Monthly editorial content calendars were also developed and shared with SAMHSA's Office of Communications for integration into the agency's overall social media strategy. Content leveraged relevant themes and observances, such as summertime, back to school, Alcohol Awareness Month (April) and SAMHSA's National Prevention Week (May), to share relevant resources and messages with SAMHSA's followers. SAMHSA shared 80 *Talk. They Hear You.*® social media posts in the last year, which garnered 2,956 engagements (i.e., reactions, comments, shares, etc.)—a 29 percent increase in engagements from the year prior.



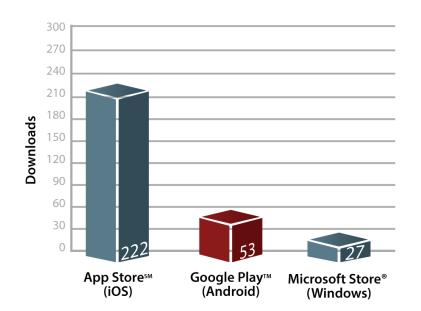
Social media promotion also helped drive traffic to the campaign website.

*Talk. They Hear You.* social media posts were retweeted and shared by government agencies and offices such as the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health, FDA Women, and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. The campaign was also mentioned on social media by more than 50 local community organizations.

## **Building Skills With the Existing Campaign Mobile App**

The existing *Talk. They Hear You.* mobile app features an interactive simulation that uses avatars to help parents and caregivers practice bringing up the topic of alcohol, learn the questions to ask, and get ideas for how to keep the conversation going.

The existing *Talk. They Hear You.* mobile app has garnered 12,694 downloads, including 302 in the last year.



Total Number of Downloads

12,694



November 2017

Hosted first *Talk*. *They Hear You*.\* virtual stakeholder meeting

**March 2018** 

Garnered more than 7 billion impressions of campaign PSAs

April 2018

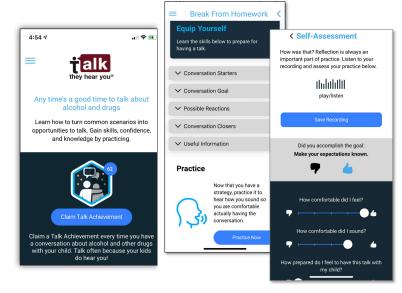
Produced second campaign soundtrack, "You've Been Through"

May 2018

Produced three new Talk. They
 Hear You.®TV and radio PSAs: one
 for military families, one focused
 on alcohol and other substances,
 and one focused on opioids

#### Developing a New Talk. They Hear You.® Mobile App

This year, the campaign also began developing the next iteration of the Talk. They Hear You.® mobile app. This new app will help parents and caregivers learn how to turn everyday situations into opportunities to talk with their children about alcohol and other drugs. It will also help them gain the necessary skills, confidence, and knowledge to start and continue these important conversations as their kids get older by providing a safe and accessible medium to practice. The new mobile app's content management system will enable the campaign to promote featured campaign products for parents and caregivers, educators, and communities; make them available for download; and enable users to share these



materials via their social media networks. It will also enable the campaign to send push notifications to users to promote key campaign messaging and materials more frequently and strategically. The new mobile app is scheduled to launch in late 2020 and will replace the previous version.

## **Broadening Campaign Reach Through Partnerships**

*Talk. They Hear You.* • increased its total number of campaign partners by 118 percent, engaging nearly 700 new national and local organizations via digital engagement activities, such as e-newsletters and community engagement meetings. This outreach resulted in distribution of more than XXX campaign products, including print PSAs, fact sheets, brochures, infographics, and branded flash drives with the campaign's full suite of materials for parents and caregivers.

In the past year, the campaign continued to foster meaningful prevention partnerships with groups such as the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Coalition for a Drug-Free Hawaii, Marengo County Community in Action (AL), and Tehama County Drug Free Community Coalition (CA). For example, Coalition for a Drug-Free Hawaii adapted several campaign materials to share with parents and caregivers across the state, including original imagery of local families. The materials were adapted for parents and caregivers of younger children as well as teens, and the coalition also created a series of complementary prevention messages reaching youth directly. The campaign's efforts resulted in placements in media outlets such as Honolulu Family, Hawaii Business Magazine, and Honolulu Magazine. The campaign will continue to be shared into the second half of 2020.

Partnerships like this have helped the campaign earn an estimated 38,520 donated labor hours from local community organizations, which equates to approximately 19 Full-Time Employees (FTEs)\* and \$868,626 in estimated salary.

radio PSAs

Released We Do Hear You

and Reminiscing TV and

#### **Community Engagement**

Since 2017, the campaign has hosted *Talk. They Hear You.* community engagement meetings to create a forum for community groups to share best practices for local underage drinking prevention. Meeting

topics (e.g., underage drinking prevention in rural communities) are selected based on stakeholder input. Meetings typically spotlight a local community group, such as a public health department, coalition, or school district, and showcases how its community is promoting parent/caregiver-to-child prevention conversations. Here are some groups the campaign has spotlighted in past meetings:

- Marengo County Community in Action (Demopolis, AL)
- Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Arden Arcade (Sacramento, CA)
- Sacramento County Coalition for Youth (Sacramento, CA)
- Easthampton Healthy Youth Coalition (Easthampton, MA)
- Center for Prevention and Counseling (Newton, NJ)
- Manhasset Coalition Against Substance Abuse (Manhasset, NY)

The most recent *Talk. They Hear You.* community engagement meeting focused on soliciting feedback from campaign partners on their prevention needs and gaps in campaign products, website content, and digital resources for health and wellness they would like to see filled. Key takeaways included interest in additional Spanish-language campaign materials; additional representation of urban locations, grandparents, and LGBTQIA+ parents and caregivers in campaign materials; access to campaign metrics to measure local impact; and guides and presentations on how to download and use the campaign mobile app.

## **Continuing To Evolve**

To prevent underage drinking and other substance use and empower parents and caregivers to talk with their kids about these topics, *Talk. They Hear You.* continues to grow. Upcoming activities include:



**SAMHSA** 

"Talk. They Hear You." © Community Engagement Meeting: Evaluation Tips for Implementing the Campaign in Your Community

Robert M. Vincent, MS.Ed.

October 31, 2019

Jodie Abbatangelo-Gray, Sc.D., M.S., M.A Evaluation Consultant

- Finalizing and launching a refined *Talk. They Hear You.*® campaign mobile application.
- Evaluating the campaign to inform future approaches, including a potential case study replication effort during the 2020-2021 school year.
- Creating new *Talk. They Hear You.*® products that resonate with campaign audiences.
- Continuing to establish and cultivate partnerships with local and national stakeholder organizations.

# SAMHSA

Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration

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