

Promoting A Positive Campus Image

A few peer educator groups struggle with an image problem because students may think that the peer educators are trying to stop them from having fun on campus. Of course, nothing could be further from the truth. Peer educators are trying to make the campus more fun, more enjoyable, and most importantly, more safe.

Here are Some Tips:

- Talk with people on campus and find out what their image of your group is. Decide what you want it to be, and develop ways for your actions to reflect that image.
- Always think about your image and how member behavior affects the group.
- Define your group's views about a topic. For example, very few groups, if any, have a mission that is "against alcohol." Many groups have a mission that is against "alcohol abuse" or "irresponsible drinking."
- Peer education groups have a strong concern about many of the behaviors that often come with abusive drinking: violence, poor grades, sexual assault, self-esteem issues, etc. Spell these out so that when people question your motives, you can show them what you are working for and against.
- Define your mission in terms of overall health issues. Promote positive lifestyles, positive choices, and total wellness for the community.
- Set one of your goals as, "increase fun on campus!" Co-sponsor existing events on your campus that are fun, such as festivals, movies and comedy nights.
- Use the term "responsible decision-making" instead of "responsible drinking." We care about many health and safety issues in addition to alcohol abuse. Remember that if students make better decisions about a variety of life's issues, they will be healthier and safer.
- Examine the name of your peer education group. Is it a positive name, one that other students can relate to? If not, find a new one. BACCHUS allows you to determine your own name. We would like you to use the tag line, "A campus affiliate of The BACCHUS Initiatives of NASPA".

- Emphasize that your members as peer educators are faced with the same choices and issues as everyone else. You are not here to "provide all the answers."
- Try not to use the words "don't" or "can't" in any of your advertising or programs.
- Try not to use "alternative event" as a description of your substance-free programs because that suggests that anything without alcohol is second-rate.
- Try not to get involved in policy enforcement issues, or the judicial process. Leave that to groups with the authority to conduct such things. If students only see you as a result of a punishment, that's what they will associate you with.
- Get your peer educators involved with a campus or community service project. If you already are, make sure people know about it.