



## Parent Alcohol Perception - Focus Groups

### **Purpose**

Research shows that parents are the number one influence on their children's decision whether to drink or not drink alcohol. The Washington State Liquor Control Board (WSLCB) intends to create materials that parents can use to encourage the discussion about the harmful effects of underage drinking. Focus groups were conducted in order to learn what type of educational materials and information would be useful for parents. Parents were also asked to review draft posters being considered for placement in state liquor stores.

### **Approach**

WSLCB applied for, and was successful in obtaining an educational grant from the National Alcohol Beverage Control Association (NABCA) in 2008 to pay for the focus groups. Gilmore Research was selected to conduct two focus groups in Seattle and Yakima. Gilmore was the same organization who conducted youth focus groups for the WSLCB in 2007.

The parent focus groups investigated:

- Parent's concern regarding youth drinking
- Parent's communication with their child regarding drinking
- Parental controls
- Deterrent to youth drinking and the role of the community
- Types of alcohol and brands youth drink
- Media/Advertising impacts to youth
- Opinion of proposed store signage

### **Results**

Gilmore Research was able to correlate the information collected from the youth focus groups conducted in June 2007 to the data collected from the parent focus groups. Key findings from the parent focus groups showed:

- Parental attitudes and perceptions regarding underage drinking closely align with what we heard from youth in 2007
- Parents are most concerned about the most dramatic effects of alcohol on youth (death from accidents, alcohol poisoning, aggressive behavior, sexual assault, drinking and driving)
- Most parents are comfortable talking about responsible drinking with their children and they want factual information for the discussion
- A major challenge the WSLCB faces is getting beyond the "drink responsibly" concept to truly convince parents that underage drinking is harmful to their child
  - Some parents feel *"it's okay to drink underage as long as you do responsibly and are under my roof"*
- The youth survey indicated most youth started drinking as early as 8 years old
- In parent focus groups, parents reported having alcohol discussions about alcohol when their children are a little older.

Feedback from the parents on draft liquor store posters suggested using fewer words with a strong message to reach parents. As a result, the posters were modified and the first poster titled "It's Friday Night" is being displayed with informational brochures in state and contract liquor stores.

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WSLCB Alcohol Education Web site at <http://www.liq.wa.gov/education.asp>

8/27/08 (mlm)