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Introduction:

The health campaign I chose was from the Pan American Health Organization and it was a campaign advocating to reduce alcohol consumption. The campaign PSA states “I promise it’ll happen again.” This statement is powerful because the PSA is meant to say, “I promise it’ll never happen again,” but on it, a bottle is covering up the word “never.” The moral of this campaign is to inform people about the harmful effects alcohol consumption can do to your body as well as the future health effects it could bring. Throughout this paper I will bring up factual information from the campaign, “Live better, drink less,” and other points they have made to their online platform.

Health Topic Description and Audience Analysis:

The campaign is focused on reducing the use of alcohol consumption. The campaign is not telling people to no longer drink alcohol, but slowly lessen the amount they normally consume. At the beginning of the campaign page, there is a video of a man who drinks a beer and after he drinks it, the viewer sees a vision of him and his friends having a great time, because they are drinking. The video then goes on to show the man walking home with a bunch of bottles attached to his body, representing how much alcohol can wear on a person without them realizing until after the fact. The video gives a visual example of more people being affected by drinking alcohol and how it not only affects the individual themselves but others around them as

well. The video portrays a grandpa trying to kick a soccer ball back and forth with his grandson but he has a hard time trying to kick the ball. Another visual was a man who lost his job due to the fact that he could not stay awake at work. It ends with the man at the bar being handed another bottle of beer, and he stares at it and questions if it is worth it. In the end, he pushes it aside. The moral of this video is we have the choice if we want to consume alcohol. If you are of age, you have a choice. You also have a choice, if you are underage to partake in that behavior, which is not recommended.

You do not need alcohol in your life in order to have fun. Being in college comes with the typical “college stereotype” that you need to drink in order to have fun or be “cool.” When in reality, that is not the case at all. If one decides to not go out on the weekends but decides to stay in and watch a movie; that is looked at as uncool in some people’s eyes. The factors related to the consumption of alcohol would be helping with social interaction or taking one’s mind off problems that are currently happening in their lives. Alcohol gives people a boost of confidence they might not have if it is not in their system. Some people believe they need alcohol in order to have fun, which is not the truth.

The benefits for these recommended behaviors would be for anyone who struggles with overindulging in alcohol or is a struggling alcoholic. Alcohol consumption can lead to all sorts of health issues such as: cardiovascular disease, cancer, brain health, and sleep issues. The benefits someone would gain from these messages are reducing future health risks like these. There are short term and long term effects alcohol can leave on the body. PAHO states, “Alcohol is causally linked to more than 200 health conditions, ranging from liver diseases and cancer to cardiovascular problems and tuberculosis. Alcohol use is also a contributing factor to socio-economic issues like domestic violence and unemployment. Across the Americas,

someone dies from alcohol-related causes every ten seconds” (PAHO). Alcohol will not solve people’s problems, if anything it could create more.

There is a billboard image that says “I promise it’ll (never) happen again.” With words below it saying, “Don’t let alcohol get in the way.” The word “never” is in parentheses because there is a green bottle covering it, representing that alcohol is used to cover people’s problems. An example of this would be someone saying they will never drink again, after getting very sick from drinking but once there is another party, said person begins to pour themselves another drink. Another example would be almost getting into an accident, but coming out with zero injuries. For some, this would be a sign to not drink and drive. Depending on how bad someone relies on alcohol, their mind might go to the fact that since they were okay, it is still okay to drink. The type of people who are not likely to get involved in this campaign would be people who choose to not drink. On the other hand, someone involved in the campaign could be a person who has seen loved ones lose their lives due to their battle with alcohol or they themselves have struggled with alcoholism. These tips and facts can only help people, whether they drink or not. There is no harm in learning about ways to increase benefits for your health.

The audience of this campaign is targeted towards men and women who are older and may or may not be unemployed. As an example, a seventy year old male named Steve, with a few missing teeth and a little scruffy looking is part of the target audience. Steve always has a stock of beer in his fridge or just enough money to go out to the bars and that is it. He has enough money to buy alcohol but not enough to pay his rent or other necessary bills. According to Social Cognitive Theory and Health Belief Model, Steve would not take into consideration any of the information being given through this campaign because in his eyes, his life is already going downhill so why change that. He believes that since he has been doing this for as long as

he has, he is not as susceptible to the risk. Steve might agree to limit his use of drinking, but then go right back to his original habits. He may start out confident but fall back into his original habits. Steve might respond to the Live better, Drink less campaign by saying that it will never work because he has “tried.” Looking at it through the Social Comparison Theory lens, Steve might view himself as less than due to the fact he drinks but he has gotten to the point where he no longer cares.

Channels of Communication:

The Pan American Health Organization does a great job of using multiple channels to get their message across to viewers. There are billboard posters, infographics and videos which can be found on YouTube, as well as on their campaign page. The main PSA captures the attention of the viewers because it is the first thing that shows up when you look at this campaign. In bold gold letters it states, “I promise I’ll (never) do it again. Don’t let alcohol get in the way.” This is very effective because at first glance it almost looks like the PSA is telling the viewer that all of these problems will happen again, which essentially is true. A double take is needed to realize that the bottle is covering up the true meaning of what the PSA wants to get across, which is to stop alcohol from covering up our problems. To help the audience understand this topic, one must think back to what this campaign is advertising, which is to reduce the consumption of alcohol. As mentioned earlier on in this paper they do have a very impactful message in a video of a man who decides to have a beer. The video gives great examples of how alcohol can affect not only the person indulging in the alcoholic beverage, but also those around them.

Navigating through the online platform was very easy to use. You scroll down and as described above, there is a video of a man deciding whether he should have another beer or not. The video is constructed in a very powerful way and gives the viewer an idea of how alcohol can

not only affect themselves but others as well. An example is, getting in a car accident or trying to spend time with family. Below this video, there is an online digital health specialist on alcohol use and you can click on it and talk with Pahola, or read about some more information on alcohol. There is also an acronym, Safer, which stands for strengthen, advance, facilitate, enforce and raise. The acronym states, “Strengthen restrictions on alcohol availability. Advance and enforce drink driving countermeasures. Facilitate access to screening, brief interventions and treatment. Enforce bans/comprehensive restrictions on alcohol advertising, sponsorship and promotion. Raise prices on alcohol through excise taxes and pricing policies” (PAHO). Following the Safer information, there are alcohol-related fact sheets and all the ways alcohol can affect your physical and emotional health. If you continue to scroll you have the option to click on more campaign materials which take you to a few short videos that talk about the health implications alcohol can bring and another video where it shows the number of deaths per year that are related to alcohol use, which comes out to a total of 379,000. There are also other examples of different types of sayings on billboards such as “I’ll (never) hit you again,” or “I promise I’ll (never) miss your match again” (CITE). The communicative component motivates users to interact because the more information that they receive, the more likely they are to click around through the online platform.

Looking at both the PSAs and online platforms they work very well together because the billboard poster is the header at the top of the page which leaves the person reading the information interested in learning more. The narrative they are creating is trying to help others limit their normal alcohol consumption. The campaign offers a unique and creative take on this health topic by putting a bottle over the word “never” when relating any statement someone has said towards alcohol. The health campaign is not considering young adults or the elderly. The

reason for this is there are not a lot of social media accounts for the PAHO and young adults rely a lot on having information at their fingertips. PAHO could create an Instagram account to reach young adults and post fast facts about alcohol consumption. Granted, PAHO does have a Facebook group page but that is all that shows up. My grandma has a hard time figuring out technology and finding this information might be difficult. The elderly also have a harder time changing their ways compared to someone who is younger. The elderly might focus more on the fact that they have lived their life this long, so why change it? This goes back to the mindset that the Health Belief Model proposes.

One concept from the textbook would be, external locus of control because by definition it is the belief that events are controlled by outside forces (DuPré). This relates to the health campaign because a lot of people who struggle with alcoholism are people who will take any excuse given to them and use it to drink. If they had a bad day, drink. If they had a good day, drink. Another concept from the textbook is Social Learning Theory. This relates to the health campaign because a lot of time alcohol is looked at as “cool” if you drink it, when in reality there are a lot of health risks that can come with it. Media depicts alcohol as having fun and being cool due to the way they advertise celebrities or certain brands on television. The relationship between this health campaign and the healthcare system would be going through small changes. There is no drastic change happening with either, but moving at a slow pace and starting to create change is the overall goal at the end of the day.

Conclusion:

After analyzing this campaign it has been very powerful to learn from. There has been a lot of information about alcohol that has been discovered, such as the health issues alcohol can lead to in the future. An example of one being, cancer. One of the most impactful takeaways was

the amount of deaths related to alcohol consumption per year. Being a college student myself, it is good to know about all the effects that come with consuming alcohol. It brings up a good question of: is it really worth it? Is having a little bit of a confidence boost worth the health effects it could bring in the future? This campaign has been eye opening to learn from and one definitely worth sharing.

References

DuPré, A., & Overton, B. C. (2021). *Communicating about health: Current issues and perspectives*. Oxford University Press.

Live better, Drink Less. PAHO/WHO | Pan American Health Organization. (n.d.). Retrieved May 2022, from <https://www.paho.org/en/campaigns/live-better-drink-less>