



Incorporating PARENTAL ATTITUDES

into an underage drinking prevention campaign

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Background

In 2009, the Cambridge Prevention Coalition, in collaboration with the Cambridge Public Health Department, launched Reality Check, a social marketing campaign aimed at parents of middle school students. The campaign goal is to engage parents in talking with their tweens about alcohol and to set boundaries and limits. This four-year campaign seeks to increase the self-efficacy of parents to have conversations with their children, reduce access to alcohol in the home, and delay the onset of drinking.

Methodology

Objective: Design and implement a formative research plan to reach diverse audiences and to inform social marketing strategy:

1. Baseline data from Teen Health and Parent surveys.
2. Formative research: focus groups, key informant interviews.
3. Developed and tested messaging for Phase 1.

Audience Traits

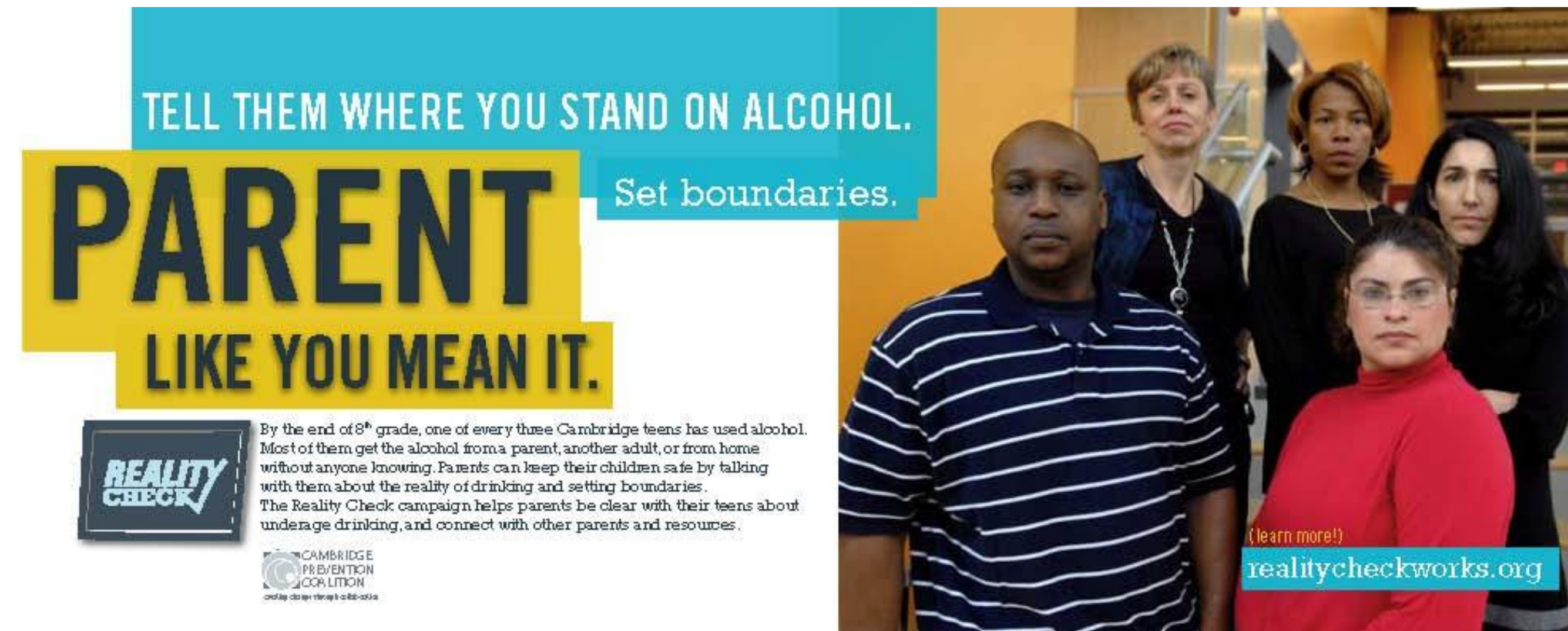
Wide range of demographics of Cambridge parents:

- Variance in age, education, ethnicity and income.
- Most unaware of jump in use of alcohol from 8th grade to 9th grade.*
- Persistent trend of parents not discussing alcohol with teen or tween.*
- Strong identification with “being Cambridge.”

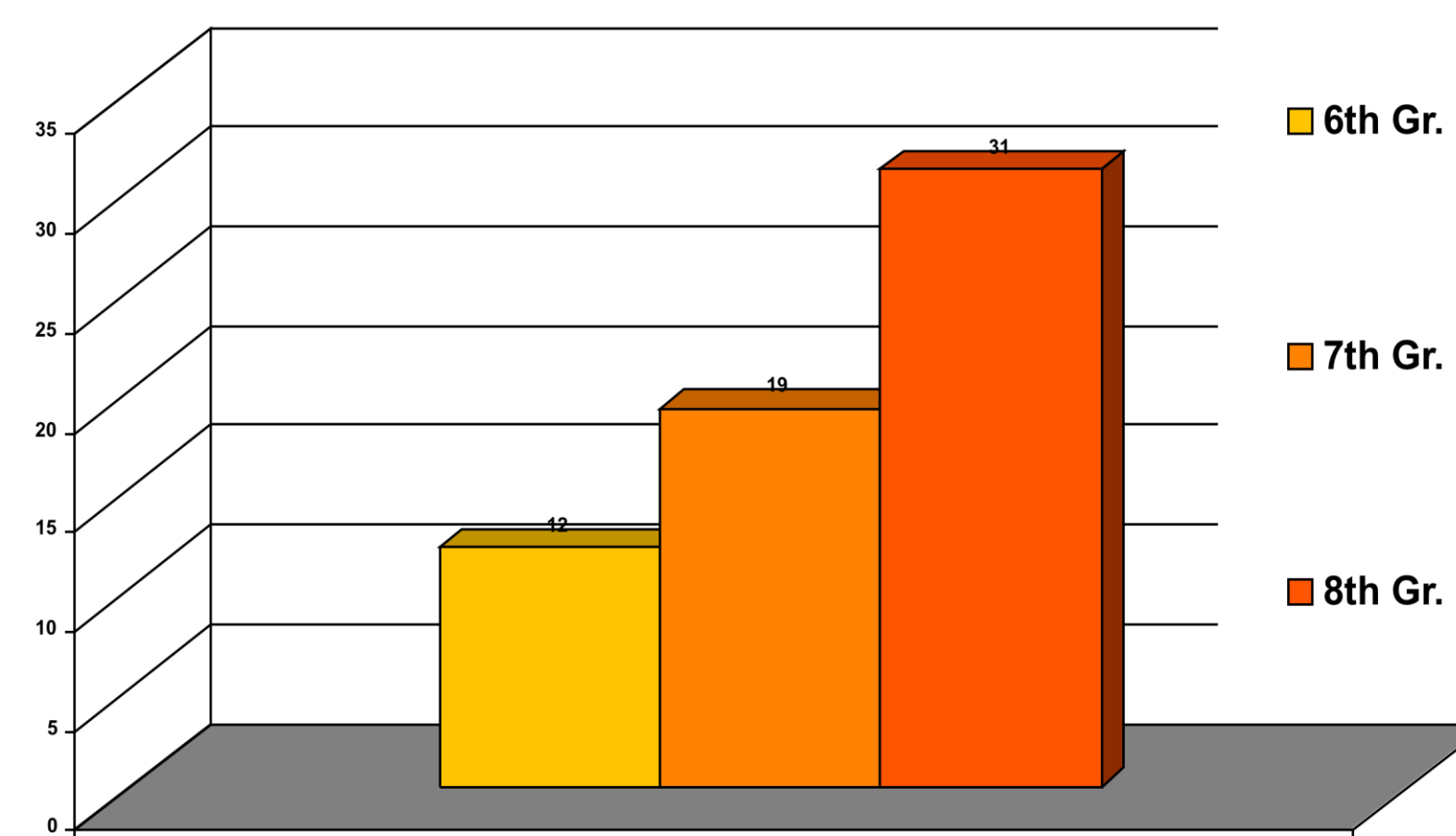
Varying degrees of concern among parents, influenced by:

- Not aware that underage drinking is still a problem.
- Strong belief in “European Model.”
- Own personal drinking experiences.
- Difficulty overcoming perceived social norms.
- Competing worries: sex, bullying, drugs, grades.
- Belief that parents do have effective conversations with kids about alcohol conflicts with teen survey data. Survey data also shows a decline in parent conversations with teens.

*Data from Cambridge Health Surveys



Lifetime Alcohol Use for Cambridge Middle School Students



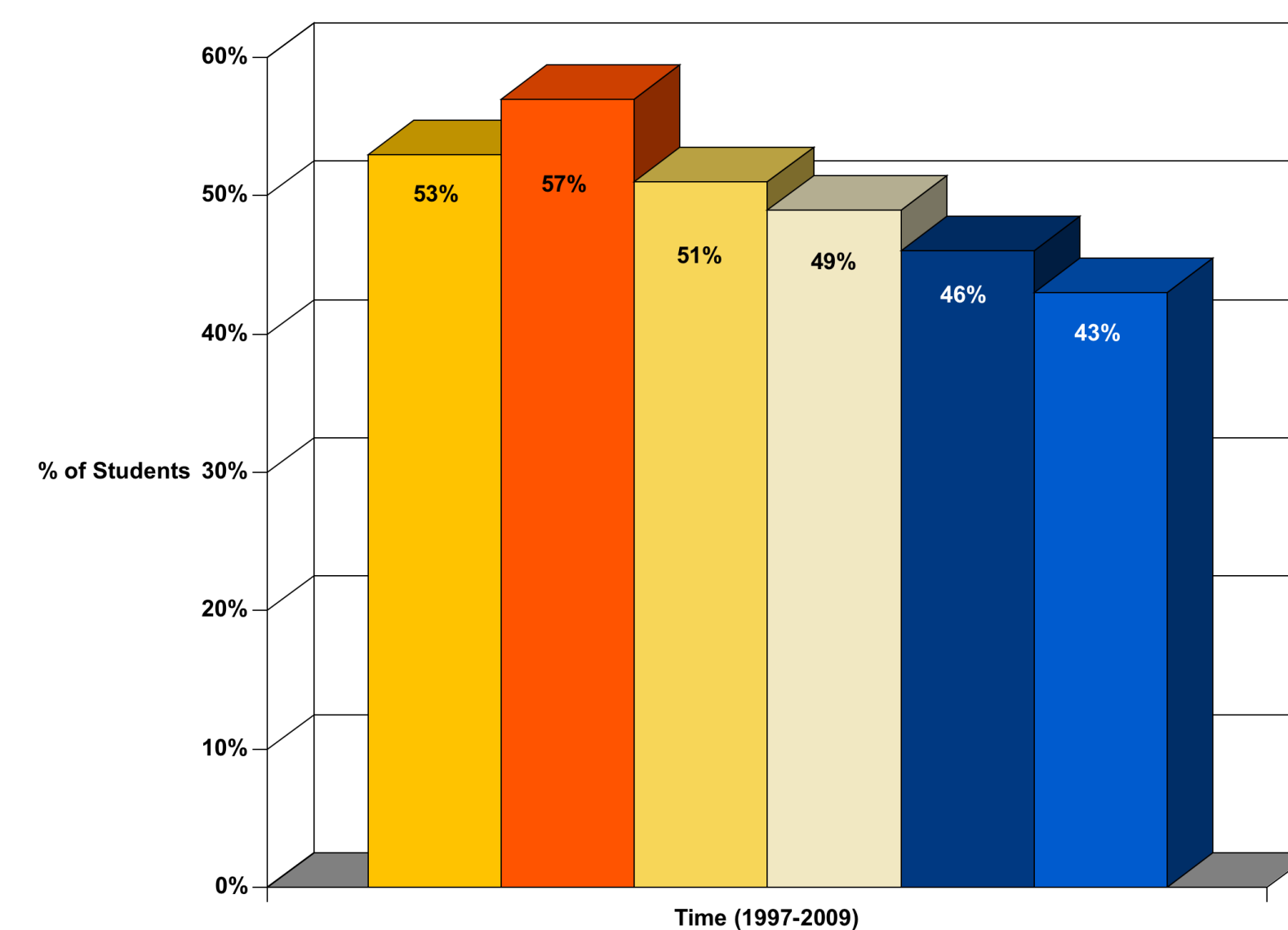
Campaign Strategy

Phase 1

Objective: Raise awareness with diverse segments of Cambridge parents by engaging community partners in the development of key messages and campaign evaluation.

1. Partnership between Cambridge Public Health Dept. and the Cambridge Prevention Coalition.
2. Collaboration between partnership and schools, teen health centers, and parents from identified population segments.
3. Inclusion of content-specific experts, as well as community members, with specific knowledge about our target population
4. Working with evaluation experts to ensure best practices are followed and effective evaluation is conducted.
5. Use of locally known parents in the images of the campaign, becoming the faces of the campaign and campaign spokespeople in the community.
6. Development of messages from formative research were pre-tested and professionally designed for maximum impact.
7. Collaborate with local businesses that attract parents to provide incentives.

Middle Grades Students Who Talked with Parents about Alcohol or Drug Use



Phase 2

Objective: Using feedback from Phase 1, develop a campaign that appeals to parents and gives them clear action steps to take to reduce access to alcohol in the home.

1. Using feedback from Phase 1 to inform Phase 2, including Parent Survey v.2 as well as feedback from partners.
2. Based on research in Phase 1– continued to refine how to best reach parents and their preferred media channels.
3. Phase 2: Public intercept surveys with people at locations that attract target populations to develop targeted messaging (including creating multiple messages for different populations).



4. Incorporate mixed media - online, print and in-person:
 - Print: local MBTA ads, bus shelters, local schools, youth centers and places parents go;
 - In-person: collaborate with schools to host parent workshop, incorporating youth voice, parent voice, and expert voices;
 - In-person: “parent models” being recognized and talking about their experiences, promoting the messages and becoming active in the issue;
5. Targeted: Tips for parents – began as 10 tips in 10 weeks; expanded to over 30 tips based on parent feedback and interviews. Also available as emails.
6. Online: Using social media to reinforce campaign elements, including interactive communication and tips.

Acknowledgements

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