**“Why are you only talking about positive facts?”/”Why don’t we discuss the harms associated with risky behavior?”**

General Guidelines: Discuss facts about the negative consequences of the issue you are seeking to address, but don’t get stuck in a negative story about the community or the situation.

Highlight strengths and assets in the community to address the issue.

No single solution will fix any risky behavior. Multiple strategies are needed to address these complex problems.

**Question: “Everyone lied on the survey.”/”How can we know that people answered the survey honestly?”**

Answer: Some people may not have taken the survey seriously, but most were honest. The survey was anonymous so there was no reason to be dishonest.

Answer (for youth who may ask this question): Did you lie? You might also consider visiting with friends about this. You could ask them if they were truthful on the survey.

**Question: “The statistics are not accurate for our youth.”/”How can we know that the statistics are accurate for our youth?”**

Answer: Much of social science relies on self-reported information. Because of this, there has been extensive research regarding the validity of self-reported data. Researchers have found that self-reported data are accurate when individuals understand the questions and when there is a strong sense of anonymity, and little fear of reprisal.

Answer: These results are very similar to those found in other surveys as well as results gathered historically. The pattern of consistency supports the validity of the results.

Answer: No survey is perfect, and there is always a certain margin of error. However, overall the results provide us with an accurate indication of what is occurring.

Answer: Survey analysts use various techniques to identify students who are not taking the survey seriously. These surveys are removed from the sample and not included in the results.

Answer: At the heart of this question are questions about the data, the accuracy of the data, and reliability. Are the statistics 100% accurate? Maybe not. Are they a reliable indication of student behavior? Yes.

**“Even if the percentages are true, they won’t change how teens behave.”/”How will these data make teens’ behavior change?”**

Answer: Teens often misperceive what other teens are doing. Overestimating substance use can create the idea that young people think “everyone is doing it”. In reality the opposite is true – most teens are NOT using substances. People who overestimate their peers’ risky behaviors are more likely to engage in those behaviors. The goal in supporting the messages with statistics is to challenge youth to consider how they see and understand the world and how these perceptions impact their decisions.

**“Why aren’t we using something that will get students attention, like a crashed car as a result of drinking?”**

Answer: Positive messages focus on the good that already exists and highlight the benefits of making a change or adopting a specific behavior. This frame does not diminish the importance of discussing the harms associated with risky behaviors, rather focuses on the positive, healthy behaviors that are already present.

Answer: Negative or fear-based messages generally highlight the consequences of not changing. In an attempt to motivate change, negative or fear- based messages use scare tactics. Scare tactics or fear appeals are often very effective at getting attention, however this attention is often short lived.