**Positive Community Norms in [Enter Community Name]**

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**Your Role is to Guide the Conversation!**

While the healthy norms expressed in the communication campaign are founded in [enter survey name] data, some may challenge long-held perceptions about youth alcohol use in your community. That’s okay, embrace it! If you’re hearing people challenge the media campaign or your local data, it means it’s working. Keep in mind that the messages were created to close a gap between actual behavior and the perception that “everyone’s doing it”. You’ve effectively challenged their perceptions and they’re struggling with that. Be calm and consider these tips to guide the conversation.

* Your job is to create a safe, non-threatening environment to allow people to freely explore these data. We should cultivate environments that allow these healthy discussions to occur.
* Resistance to the gap is healthier than silence.
* Transformation occurs through relationships. Connect with the data, gaps and each other.
* Step aside from the resistance. Often people are resisting something else other than the gap itself. Step aside and see.
* Practice the art of seed planting versus promoting an agenda. Try to step aside for a minute and say things like:
  + “Hmmm, that’s weird. These data show a big gap”
  + “Look at these data. I wonder if these are accurate? I wonder if they consistent with other studies or data?”
  + “Could it be that these gaps really do exist here in our community too like everywhere else that has been researched over the past few decades?”
  + “I wonder what these gaps mean and what we should do about them?”

**Challenging the Data Source**

* Often individuals will question the validity of the data and suggest everyone lied on surveys. If you are confident that your data collection proceedures were sound and that you have a representative sample of your focus population, the information below might help guide your conversations.
  + There has been a lot of research on the validity of self-reported data. It has been found that self-reported data are accurate when individuals understand the questions and there is a sense of anonymity and little fear of reprisal.
  + No survey is perfect, but overall the results give us an accurate indication of what is occuring.
  + We take every measure to ensure we use the best methods for data collection to ensure acuracy and validity of our data.
* Specifc talking points can help stakeholders feel more comfortable guiding difficult conversations around the data. Try these to start:
  + Some individuals may not take the survey seriously, but most were honest. The survey was anonymous so there was no reason to be dishonest
  + What makes you think that….?.(insert whatever the individual is questioning)
  + What would our school/community look like if MOST were using drugs and alcohol? Is that reality?
  + What could be changed to make the poster/media piece more believable?

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**Trust the process.**

**This is the work!**