

Your Drink. Your Call.

CAMPAIGN EVALUATION



SHEA LAB
SUBSTANCE USE AND HEALTH
IN EMERGING ADULTHOOD

July 2025

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Table of Contents

2	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
3	BACKGROUND
4	CAMPAIGN DEVELOPMENT
5	CAMPAIGN MATERIALS
6	LAUNCH EVENT
7	METHODS
8	RESULTS
11	EVALUATION
14	DISCUSSION

Executive Summary

In March 2025, the Substance Use and Health in Emerging Adulthood (SHEA) Lab at St. Francis Xavier University launched the “Your Drink. Your Call.” campaign in partnership with the Canadian Centre for Substance Use and Addiction (CCSA).

THE CAMPAIGN

This multi-media campaign included print posters, digital posters for social media and screens on campus, social media templates featuring students and a retractable campaign banner. An in-person launch event was also hosted at both institutions.

The goals of the campaign were to:

- 1 Increase student awareness of Canada’s Guidance on Alcohol and Health (CGAH)**
- 2 Educate students of the harms and costs associated with alcohol consumption.**
- 3 Empower students to make informed decisions on their alcohol use.**

EVALUATION

The “Your Drink. Your Call.” campaign was piloted at St. Francis Xavier University (StFX) and the University of Prince Edward Island (UPEI) throughout March 2025. To assess the impact of the campaign, we conducted an outcomes evaluation using a brief online student survey and analysis of social media metrics.

RESULTS

The campaign had significant engagement from students. The social media posts reached 11,818 accounts and all content combined, including posts and stories, had 28,163 views. For the survey, 440 StFX students and 29 UPEI students participated. Survey results indicated that the campaign had good reach with 64% of StFX students and 39% of UPEI students having seen the campaign. Students also showed improved knowledge of the CGAH with 34% of StFX students and 36% of UPEI students reporting that their knowledge of CGAH was very good or excellent after seeing the campaign compared to 18% and 8% before the campaign. Overall, students responded positively to the campaign and felt that the campaign would resonate with students.

Background

Alcohol is the most used substance amongst Canadian post-secondary students, with 79% consuming alcohol in the past 12 months and 69% consuming in the past 30 days according to a 2021-2022 national survey (Government of Canada, 2024). Additionally, almost half of post-secondary students reported heavy drinking (Government of Canada, 2024). Students also report considerable harms from their alcohol use, including physical injury, academic problems, and symptoms of dependence. Student drinking is associated with substantial institutional and community costs, such as property damage and costs for additional resources such as security, judicial, and disciplinary services.

69% of Canadian post-secondary students consumed alcohol in the past 30 days

In 2023, the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction (CCSA) released Canada's Guidance on Alcohol and Health (CGAH), which reflects the latest research on alcohol-related risks (Paradis et al., 2023). This guidance replaced the previous 2011 "Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines" (Paradis et al., 2023). The purpose of these new guidelines were to provide Canadians with information needed to make informed and responsible decisions about their alcohol use in context of their health (Paradis et al., 2023).

ONLY 1 IN 6 students had heard of the 2011 low risk drinking guidelines, the most up to date guidelines at the time of the survey, and less than a third of those students that knew about them were able to accurately report what the guidelines were (Government of Canada, 2024; Paradis et al., 2023).

In January 2024, CCSA hosted a round table in Atlantic Canada to discuss knowledge mobilization of the guidance. One priority population identified were post-secondary students. In response, Dr. Kara Thompson worked in partnership with CCSA to develop a campaign that can be used by institutions to educate post-secondary students about CGAH. This report details the development process of the campaign and presents the results from the pilot phase.

CGAH: Drinks Per Week

0 drinks per week Not drinking has benefits, such as better health, and better sleep.	No risk	0
1 to 2 standard drinks per week You will likely avoid alcohol-related consequences for yourself and others.	Low risk	1 2
3 to 6 standard drinks per week Your risk of developing several different types of cancer, including breast and colon cancer, increases.	Moderate risk	3 4 5 6
7 or more standard drinks per week Your risk of heart disease or stroke increases. Each additional standard drink Radically increases the risk of these alcohol-related consequences.	Increasingly high risk	7 8 +

Paradis, C., Butt, P., Shield, K., Poole, N., Wells, S., Naimi, T., Sher, A., & the Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines Scientific Expert Panels. (2023). Canada's Guidance on Alcohol and Health: Final Report. Ottawa, Ont.: Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction.

Campaign Development

This campaign was developed through a multi-step process in collaboration with CCSA, the UP PR firm, and post-secondary students. Our approach to the messaging and tone for this campaign was informed by:

- Conducting a search of academic literature that evaluated other alcohol use and behaviour change campaigns in post-secondary settings
- Conversations with knowledge experts at CCSA and with the UP public relations firm.
- A brainstorming session with health and psychology students working in the SHEA lab.

Through this process, we determined that it was important to approach the messaging and tone of this campaign in a way that was:

- Factual and non-judgemental
- Relatable for student audiences
- Promotes individual autonomy or agency in decisions about alcohol
- Focused on harm reduction and not abstinence
- Avoid “parental or lecture” like tone
- Engaging and memorable
- Providing tools to help students make informed decisions about alcohol
- Peer to peer communication

The UP firm presented the SHEA lab with 3 creative concepts. The SHEA lab conducted 5 focus groups with a sample of 25 students and 5 student service staff. Participants were asked about:

- What stood out them
- What the key messages are
- What they like or dislike about the campaign message and visuals

Responses to the concepts were positive and findings confirmed that the concepts conveyed a sense of personal responsibility, empowerment, and harm reduction.

Students preferred images that were of real people, rather than graphics. They also indicated a preference for visuals that were simplistic, visually engaging, and the appropriate maturity level for young adults.

Ultimately, the selected concept was “Your Drink. Your Call”. The campaign used positive, bright, and energetic images of student-aged individuals, subtext encouraging learning more about alcohol and the guidance, and a QR code that would redirect to the KnowAlcohol.ca website. The goal of the campaign was to:

- 1 Increase student awareness of Canada’s Guidance on Alcohol and Health (CGAH)**
- 2 Education students of the harms and costs associated with alcohol consumption.**
- 3 Empower students to make informed decisions on their alcohol use.**

Campaign Materials

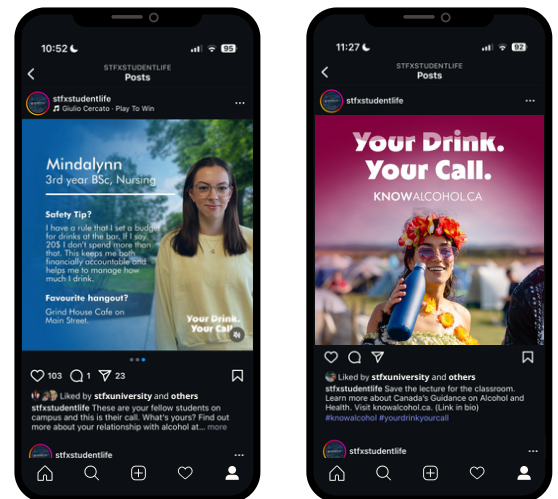
PHYSICAL MATERIALS

The campaign had 3 print posters. The posters were titled “Your Drink. Your Call.” and featured stock images of individuals holding various beverages. All campaign materials were linked to KnowAlcohol.ca either through a QR code or by providing the URL. KnowAlcohol.ca is an interactive website used to educate consumers on Canada’s Guidance on Alcohol and Health. Using the calculator feature, users can calculate the cost of their consumption habits on health and finances. They can also see what their risks would be if they were to change their consumption.



DIGITAL MATERIALS

There were two sets of digital resources. The first were modified versions of the posters for social media. The second set of resources featured students from the institutions sharing their own safe drinking tips. This peer-to-peer communication strategy exposes students to real examples of the types of “calls” students are making when it comes to alcohol. The assets featured pictures of current students, information about them (i.e. name, program, hobbies) and their safety tip to reduce harms from alcohol.



We also created a poster to be displayed on rotating digital screens across campus. This was similar to the physical poster and included a QR code that could be scanned.

Launch Event

CAMPUS LAUNCH EVENT



Each campus also hosted an in-person launch event at the start of the campaign. StFX had a variety of NOLO products available for students to try while chatting about the campaign. Students were asked to share their harm reduction tips on a white board and could be entered into a draw to win a gift basket. UPEI had a mocktail event where students were invited to make their own mocktails. This event also asked students to share their harm reduction tips and they could be entered in a draw to win a gift basket. A large campaign banner was utilized during these events as well.



Methods

“Your Drink. Your Call.” was launched at St. Francis Xavier University (StFX) and University of Prince Edward Island (UPEI) in March 2025. The campaign ran for one month and included an in-person launch event on campus, the distribution of printed posters across campus, and posting of social media content on institutional Instagram and Facebook pages.

The campaign was evaluated using two methods:

- 1 Social media metrics
- 2 Student evaluation survey

Social media metrics were obtained from the respective accounts and metric data included views, interactions, and reach (see table of definitions).

An online survey was sent to all post-secondary students attending StFX in April 2025 following the end of the campaign. UPEI invited students to complete the survey using their social media channels in May. The survey took approximately 10 minutes to complete and contained 13 questions. Students were offered a chance to win a \$150 gift card for completing the survey.



Due to the timing of the survey, UPEI had a poor response rate. Therefore, the UPEI results may not be representative of student’s experiences.

METRIC DEFINITIONS

Views	The number of times your content was played or displayed.
Interactions	The number of actions people take when they engage with your content, such as likes, comments, saves and shares.
Reach	The number of unique accounts that have seen your content on screen at least once.

Note: All definitions were obtained from Instagram.

Results

StFX Social Media

StFX INSTAGRAM POSTS

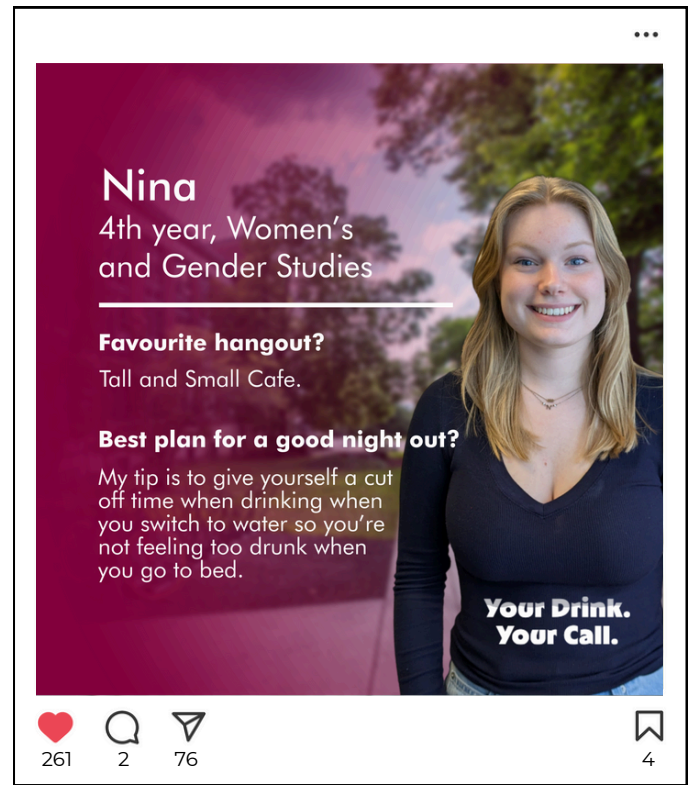
During the pilot, there were 5 posts made across two university affiliated Instagram accounts. The official StFX Instagram account, @stfxuniversity, made one post which featured current students using the “students say” template . This post had the most views (15,161 views) and highest reach (7,346 people) of any post throughout the campaign. The student life Instagram, @stfxstudentlife, made four posts throughout the campaign. Two of these posts were students say and two posts were digital posters. In total, the social media posts reached 11,818 accounts and all content, including posts and stories, had 27,020 views.

Post	Instagram Account	Views	Interactions	Reach
	@stfxuniversity	15,161	Likes: 261 Shares: 76 Saves: 4 Comments: 2 Total Interactions: 343	7,346
	@stfxstudentlife	2,641	Likes: 83 Shares: 3 Total Interactions: 86	1,444
	@stfxstudentlife	3,341	Likes: 103 Shares: 23 Saves: 2 Comments: 1 Total Interactions: 129	1,593
	@stfxstudentlife	856	Likes: 11 Shares: 2 Total Interactions: 13	689
	@stfxstudentlife	1,166	Likes: 11 Shares: 1 Total Interactions: 12	746

Results



StFX Social Media

The first 'students say' post on the StFX institutional Instagram had the most interactions with **261 likes, 76 shares, 4 saves, and 2 comments.**



StFX INSTAGRAM AND FACEBOOK STORIES

In total, there were 2 stories posted on StFX's institutional joint Instagram and Facebook accounts. The first story had the most views, interactions and link clicks. In total, there were 2,384 views, 4 likes, 1 reply, and 7 link clicks on the first story.



Story	Joint Instagram and Facebook Account	Views	Interactions	Link clicks
	The Instiution	2,384	Likes: 4 Replies: 1 Total Interactions: 5	7
	The Institution	1,471	Likes: 2 Replies: 1 Total Interactions: 2	4

Results

UPEI Social Media




UPEI INSTAGRAM POSTS

In total, there were 2 posts made on the UPEI student affairs Instagram account @upei_studentaffairs. The first post had the most views (472 views) and highest reach (??) of the UPEI posts. It also had the most interaction of the two posts with 9 likes and 1 share. It is important to note that the followers for the UPEI account (788) differed drastically from the amount of followers on both the StFX institutional account (19.5K) and the student life account (3031).

Post	Instagram Account	Views	Interactions	Reach
	@upei_studentaffairs	472	Likes: 9 Shares: 1 Total Interactions: 10	
	@upei_studentaffairs	247	Likes: 6 Total Interactions: 6	

UPEI INSTAGRAM AND FACEBOOK STORIES

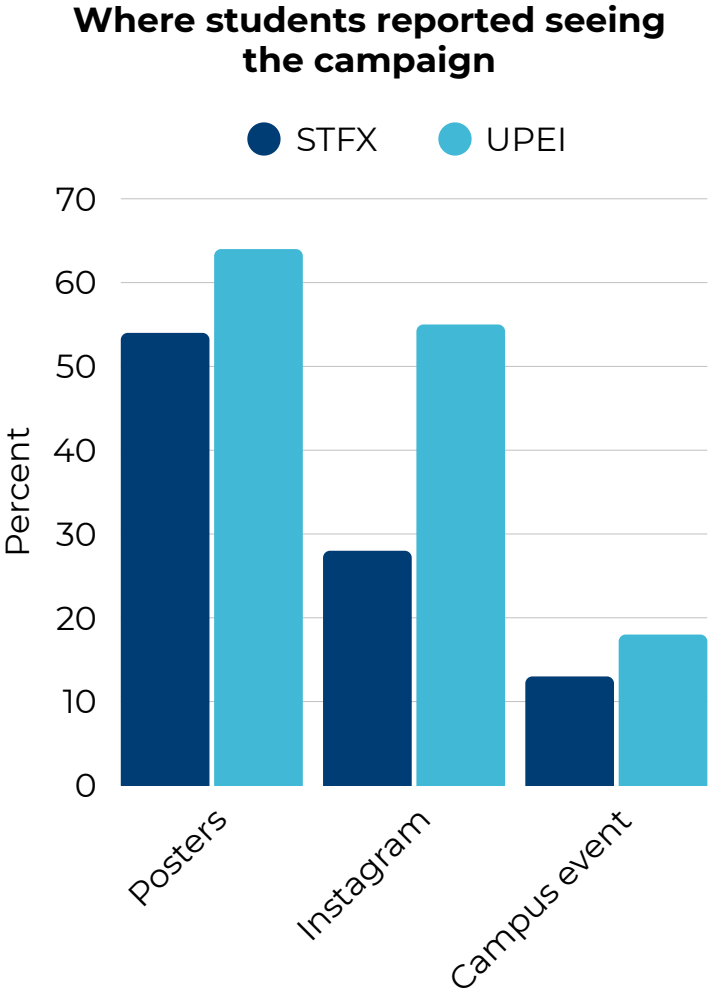
In total, there were 2 stories posted on StFX's institutional joint Instagram and Facebook accounts. The first story post of the blue advertisement had the most views, interactions and link clicks. In total, there were 2,384 views, 4 likes, 1 reply, and 7 link clicks on the first story.

Story	Joint Instagram and Facebook Account	Views	Interactions	Link clicks
	The Institution	150	Total Interactions: 5	18
	The Institution	143	Total Interactions: 3	7
	The Institution	131	Total Interactions: 3	9

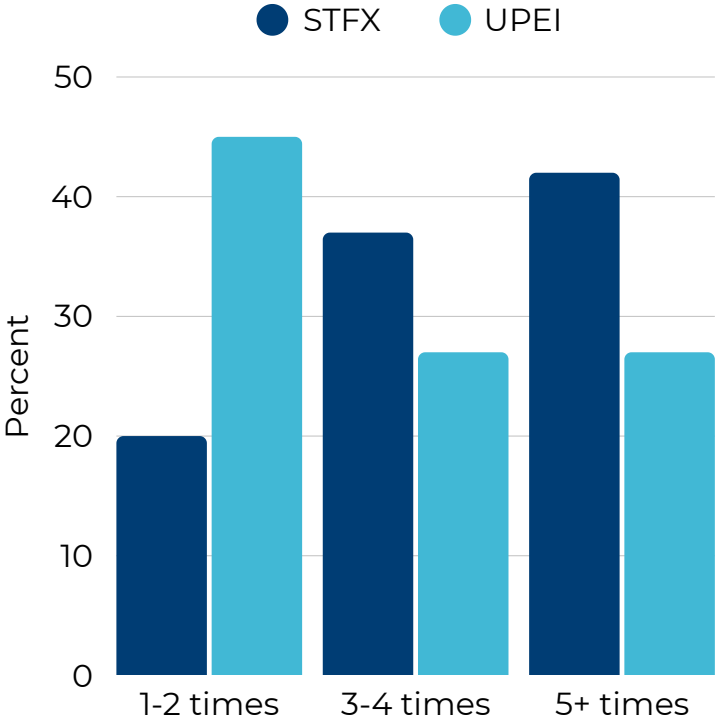
Evaluation

We had survey responses from 440 StFX students and 29 UPEI students.

Approximately **64%** of StFX students and **38%** of UPEI students reported that they had seen the “Your Drink. Your Call.” campaign in the previous month.



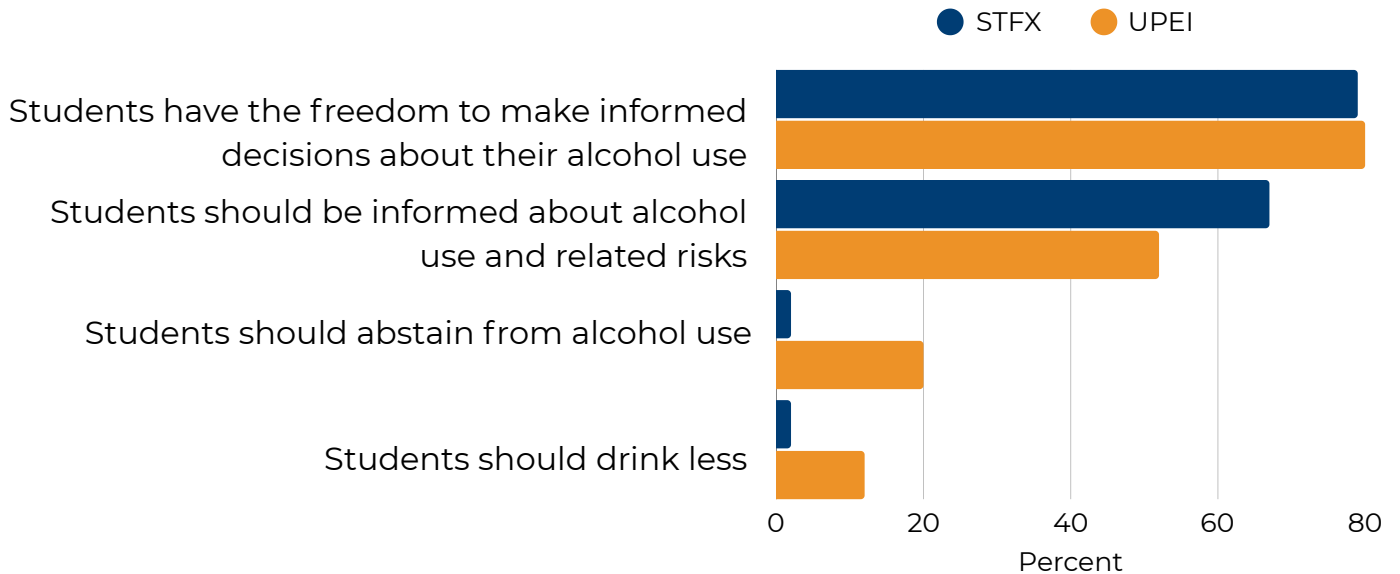
Number of times students reported seeing the campaign



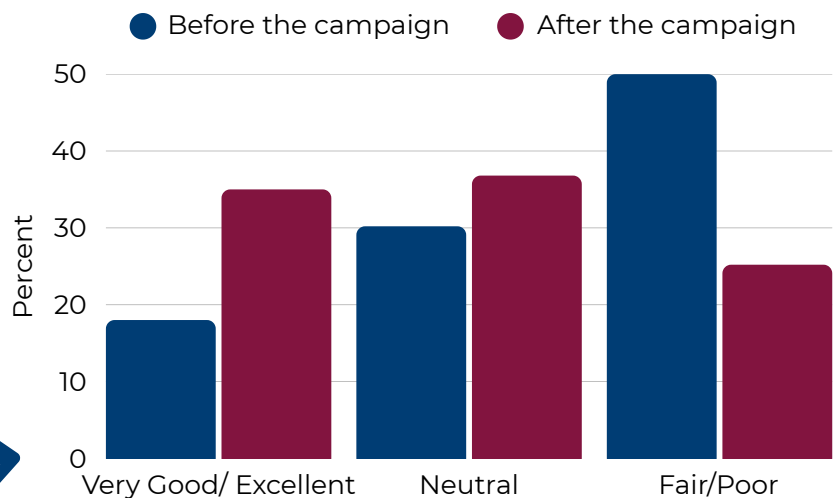
Students most commonly reported seeing the campaign on posters or Instagram. In terms of engagement with the campaign materials, 40% of StFX students and 44% of UPEI students reported scanning the QR code on the campaign. Reasons students gave for not scanning the QR code were lack of time and feeling as though the campaign was not relevant to them.

Evaluation

The majority of StFX and UPEI students correctly identified the intended message of the campaign



Prior to seeing this campaign, only 18% of StFX students and 8% of UPEI students rated their knowledge of Canada's Guidance on Alcohol and Health as "very good or excellent"



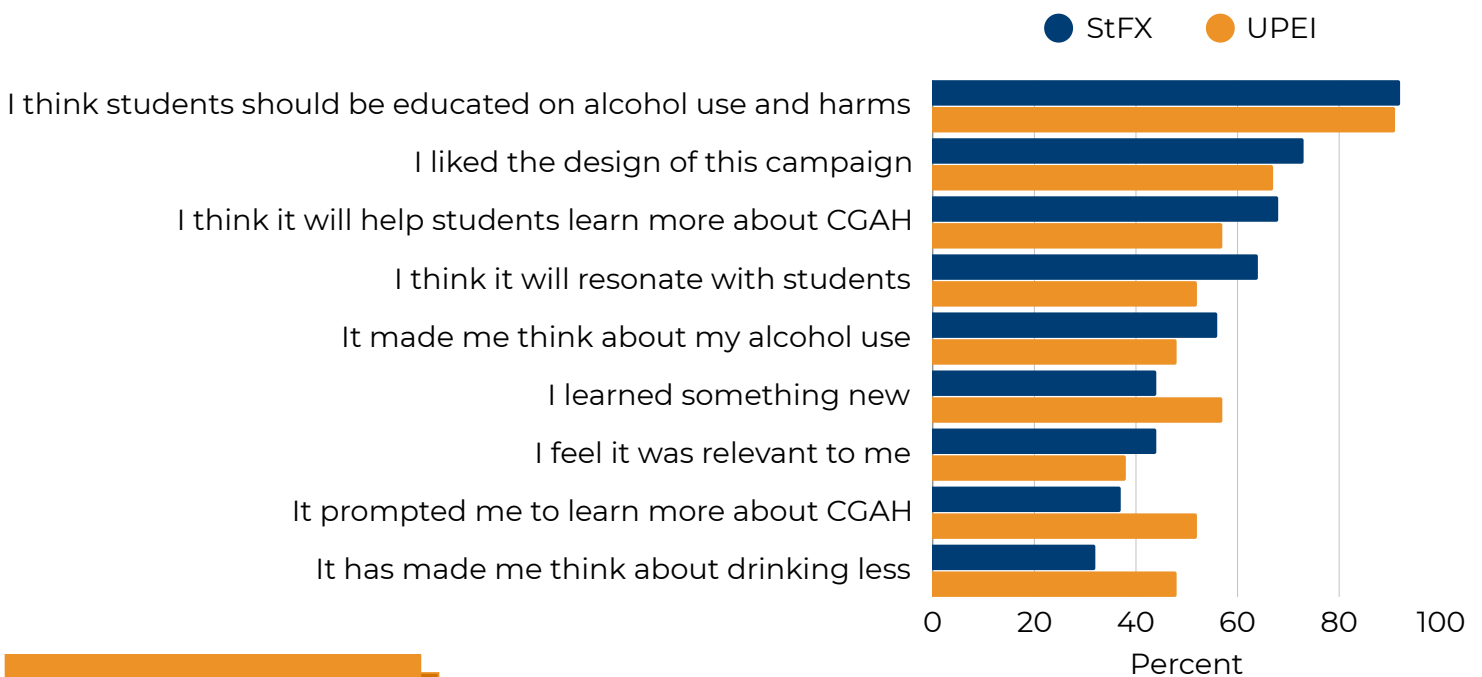
After the campaign

34% of StFX students and 36% of UPEI students reported having "very good or excellent" knowledge of the Guidance



Evaluation

73% of StFX students and 67% of UPEI students liked the design of the campaign. Overall, students felt that the campaign would resonate with students and help students learn more about CGAH.



Student feedback

Overall student's seemed to like the campaign and commented positively on the design and language of the posters.

“Very well advertised around campus. The posters are eye catching and the captions are intriguing” and “I like the tone of the campaign. Neither too authoritative nor too kind.”

Incorporating peers into the campaign was viewed favourably by students. One student wrote,

“Seeing real students participating made the campaign more unique and resonated with me because of the involvement of my peers”.

Some students felt the campaign was too indirect and should include more information. One student wrote,

“Some more info on the poster would probably be more effective, like some stats or facts instead of just the slogan of Your Drink Your Call”.

Discussion

WHAT WE LEARNED:

The “Your Drink. Your Call.” pilot campaign evaluation offered valuable feedback on the current design, messaging, and overall effectiveness of the campaign. Overall, we learned that:

- **The campaign successfully increased post-secondary students’ knowledge of CGAH.**
- **The “students say” posts were a strength of this campaign. It was identified as a unique feature that resonated with students and increased interactions on social media.**
- **Post-secondary students’ takeaways were consistent with the campaign’s intended main messages.**
- **Post-secondary students were receptive to the campaign and campaign materials.**

Based on the feedback from the student evaluation survey, a few small changes will be made to the campaign assets. The campaign will be freely available to post-secondary campuses across Canada in the fall of 2025.

REFERENCES

- Canadian Substance Use Costs and Harms Scientific Working Group. (2023). Canadian substance uses costs and harms 2007–2020. Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research and Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction.
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