

April 30, 2012

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To Whom It May Concern,

Over the past year, I have had the privilege of working with Mirror Theatre under the direction of Professor Joe Norris on a project about student risky behavior with alcohol. It has been an impressive experience to observe Joe lead this troupe of mostly students through the process of creating two scripts, based upon the concepts that we provided. The resulting two video presentations will make a significant contribution to Student Health Services enabling us to engage students in discussing such risky behaviors. More importantly, the product has opened a window into allowing our students to have a very real example of what can happen during a student "night of partying". It will help them as they reflect on their own experience and make decisions on how drinking, if it becomes dangerous drinking, impacts not only their lives, the lives of others and perhaps their academic success.


These two health education videos relate the stories of two students (One male and one female) who have been transported to the emergency department, in various stages of alcohol overdose. It was been amazing to observe Joe as he directed the troupe through the ideas around dangerous drinking. He enabled the cast to bring out their various perspectives, issues and the many pressures that are present with student partying. The script that was developed provided relevant critical real-life situations that students are faced with as they drink with their peers. This accurate portrayal will allow facilitators from Student Health Services to discuss consequences of drinking through realistic scenarios that have happened to university students.

Joe produced and directed these two scenarios over a period of approximately 30 hours at several locations. This was no easy task but through guidance, sensitivity and patience Joe directed the cast through some very sensitive issues, including those of sexuality, coma and death. He expertly managed the students and the development of the two "drinking party" experiences with expertise.

Student Health Services is grateful to Joe and the cast for the amount of volunteered time, professionalism, skill and energy into this drama about young adult drinking. While I was initially unsure of what to expect, not having a specific script, it unfolded into a wonderful rewarding experience and I cherish my opportunity to have been able to work with the Mirror Theatre troupe. Through Joe's adept leadership, the Mirror Theatre group surpassed my expectations. The possible consequences from partying, dangerous drinking, intoxication and the consequence of potential death are difficult to discuss especially when students don't typically want to think about this or believe that it will ever happen to them. These videos will help intensify the reality of the discussion. This will be extremely well used as a teaching tool in our Drinking Choices Seminar to encourage students to think about the choices they make regarding alcohol use and to help everyone be safer.

I highly recommend Joe and Mirror Theatre for any type of social issues theatre for live and/or video performances. They listen to clients needs and collaboratively blend their expertise to achieve a product of which all can be proud.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Melodie Shick-Porter".

Melodie Shick-Porter, R.N., B.N.  
Director, Student Health Services