

# Summary of Challenge Day Student Survey Data Collected for 2005-2006

This summary contains information about the Challenge Day Student Surveys collected during the 2005-2006 school year.

## **Purpose of Challenge Day Student Survey**

The Challenge Day Student Survey used in this initial study was written to explore the effects of the program on students for eight factors related to Challenge Day's theoretical foundation: Relationship Skills, Respect & Safety, Bullying Reduction, Academic Skills, Loneliness Reduction, Emotional Expression, Substance Avoidance, and Low Substance Culture. The survey constructs confirmed high internal reliability scores.

The present summary highlights the first large-scale data collection and exploratory study performed by Challenge Day. It is intended to help provide assessment of subjective, self-perceived attitudes in students who have attended Challenge Day. It is also intended to raise questions for further study, highlight areas of the survey that need refinement, and assist with planning a more comprehensive evaluation program.

## **Challenge Day Program's Theoretical Foundation and Desired Outcomes**

### Positive Youth Development Constructs

In 1999, the Department of Health and Human Services defined and operationalized the concepts of Positive Youth Development (PYD) (<http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/PostiveYouthDev99/chapter2.htm>). As an assets-focused, non-categorical program that centers on supporting youth before problem behaviors occur, Challenge Day targets many of the defined components of PYD. Challenge Day:

- Promotes Bonding – Challenge Day programs promote bonding with adults, positive peers, school staff, and other community leaders. This is accomplished by creating an environment of perceived emotional safety and through small and large group activities that encourage open sharing of histories and emotions.
- Emotional Competence – Challenge Day programs enhance skills for identifying, acknowledging and accepting emotions in self and others through exercises which encourage empathy and healthy emotional expression.
- Moral Competence – Through the exploration of social oppression, youth increase their understanding of social justice and have increased empathy for its manifestations. By encouraging teens to explore issues of sexism, racism, classism, and other forms of oppression, Challenge Day programs help youth increase their capacity for empathy, ethical decision-making, and social justice.
- Fosters Belief in the Future – During the Challenge Day program, internal locus of control and personal accountability are enhanced leading to optimism for a healthy, productive future, and a paradigm shift from pessimism to hope and possibility.
- Fosters Pro-social Norms and Encourages Pro-Social Involvement (combining this and the one before it) – As Challenge Day strives to “make kindness cool” participants adopt social norms and standards for positive, healthy social interactions. They are encouraged to create or take actions that can have a positive impact on their peers, school, and community.

## Survey Content

The Student Survey consisted of 37 questions, divided into eight factors. The questions for the first 6 factors used a scale of -3 (strongly disagree) to +3 (strongly agree). The questions for the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> factors regarding substance abuse used a scale of 0 (not at all) to 10 (a lot). The factors and questions included for each factor are as follows:

- 1) **Relationship Skills:** I speak up when problems arise, I can easily express feelings, I am good working w/others, I am good at improving relationships, I ask others for feedback, I provide feedback to others, I am comfortable being a leader, I am good at facing conflicts, and resolving them.
- 2) **Respect & Safety:** I am open minded, I respect people, I am a loving person, I feel safe here at school, I am accepting of fellow students.
- 3) **\*Bullying:** I see students tease each other, I see teachers tease students, I tease other students, I see students hurting others physically, I hurt others physically, I hurt others emotionally.
- 4) **Academic Skills:** I am interested in coming to school, I am a good listener, I am involved in extra-curricular activities, I do my homework, I get good grades, Adults listen to me.
- 5) **\*Loneliness:** I am lonely, I feel lonely with I'm at school.
- 6) **Emotional Expression:** I share my feelings easily
- 7) **\*Substance Avoidance:** I used tobacco within 2 weeks, I used alcohol within 2 weeks, I used drugs within 2 weeks.
- 8) **\*Low Substance Culture:** Students in this school use tobacco, Students in this school use alcohol, Students in this school use drugs

\* The questions for these factors were reverse-scored.

A t-test (one-factor ANOVA) was performed that compared self-reported student attitudes for those who had never attended a Challenge Day to those who attended a Challenge Day. Thirty schools participated in the survey process, submitting a total of 3,485 surveys. Of these, 2,476 surveys were completed by students who had not attended a Challenge Day and 1,009 surveys for students who had attended a Challenge Day. For the purposes of this analysis, no other variables were considered.

## Method of Gathering Survey Data

Schools were asked to administer the Student Survey to students prior to their scheduled Challenge Day(s). The surveys were to be given to a random sample of students, some of whom would attend the Challenge Day program and some who would not. In cases where schools planned to include their entire student body, all students were asked to complete the survey.

The schools administered the survey again 4-6 weeks prior to the end of their school year, or 60 days after their Challenge Day(s), whichever date was latest. In a few cases, less than 60 days elapsed between the pre and post-Challenge Day surveys, because the Program occurred late in the school year.

## Limitations

Schools administered the surveys as best fit their schedules and resources. This resulted in surveys that were given at different times of the year, no defined control groups, and lack of control by Challenge Day regarding the length of time before and after the program for survey administration. The only variable considered is whether or not a student has attended Challenge Day. Not considered are data about the percentage of school population attending, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic factors, other school programs that might impact Challenge Day's effectiveness, or what Challenge Day follow up activities were conducted by the school.

**Analysis of the Eight Factors**

Though the analysis showed positive improvement in all factor areas, statistically significant differences were seen in the areas of Relationship Skills and Respect and Safety.

Relationship Skills	N	Mean	Std Deviation
Has Not Attended	2476	8.44	8.01
Has Attended	1009	9.06	8.39
<b>Total</b>			

  

Respect and Safety	N	Mean	Std Deviation
Has Not Attended	2476	8.32	8.01
Has Attended	1009	8.67	8.39
<b>Total</b>	3485	8.42	8.12

Relationship Skills	Sum of Sq.	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	276.65	1	276.65	4.19	<b>0.04</b>
Within Groups	229866.34	3483	65.99		
<b>Total</b>	230142.99	3484			

  

Respect and Safety	Sum of Sq.	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	90.33	1	90.33	3.70	<b>0.054</b>
Within Groups	84968.18	3483	24.39		
<b>Total</b>	85058.51	3484			

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**Analysis of Individual Questions**

Of the 37 questions on the survey, six questions showed statistically significant positive differences for student who attended a Challenge Day when compared with those who did not, and most of the remaining questions showed differences in a positive direction.

Students who have attended a Challenge Day report that they:

- Share feelings more easily
- Are more accepting of fellow students
- See students tease each other less
- Feel less lonely at school
- Ask others for feedback more readily
- Are comfortable being leaders

**Relationship Skills**

Asking others for feedback and feeling comfortable being a leader were significantly higher for students attending the Challenge Day program. There were no significant results indicating unfavorable outcomes for any of the questions.

**Respect and Safety**

Students reported that they were more accepting of other students after attending the Challenge Day program.

**Low Bullying**

Students who attended the Challenge Day program reported that they saw less teasing of students by other students after attending Challenge Day. These results were statistically significant.

**Academic Skills**

Though more students who attended Challenge Day agreed with the statements in this category, there were no statistically significant differences for responses to the questions included in this factor.

**Loneliness Reduction**

Students who attended Challenge Day reported feeling less lonely overall and significantly less lonely at school than students who did not attend Challenge Day.

**Emotional Expression**

A higher number of students who attended Challenge Day reported that they shared their feelings more easily when compared to students who did not attend Challenge Day. This difference was statistically significant.

**Substance Use and Perceived Culture of Substance Use at School**

The Challenge Day Program focuses primarily on Social and Emotional Learning factors and goals and does not claim to be a substance prevention program. There have been a number of studies that correlate improved social and emotional skills with a decrease in substance abuse. These questions and factors were included in the Challenge Day student survey in an effort to discover whether this correlation exists for students who have attended the Challenge Day program. The survey analysis did not yield significant results in these categories.

**Conclusions and Future Plans**

The analysis results from the 2005-2006 student survey data are encouraging for the Challenge Day program.

Challenge Day plans to refine the student survey to more accurately target stated goals of the program and continue to gather data. In addition, the organization will expand evaluation efforts to include more control of the timeline for administration of the survey and gathering and analyzing data regarding school demographics, percentage of student attending Challenge Day, Challenge Day-related activities occurring both before and after the program days(s) conducted at the schools, and level of administrative support for the program. Ideally, Challenge Day will conduct the evaluation with control groups of demographically similar schools that do not participate in the program.

**Appreciations**

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