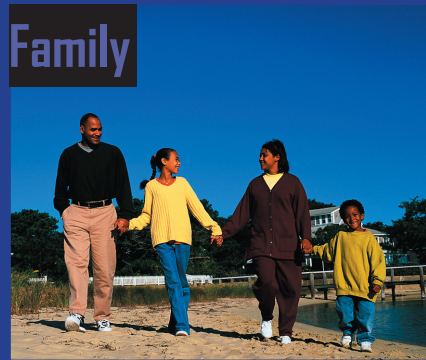


# Conducting the Bach Harrison Youth Survey in Your State



Gathering information that matters.  
Helping you plan for a healthy community.

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## **Introduction**

Bach Harrison staff has considerable experience conducting statewide surveys. The key to a well run and effective survey is to have a well-developed survey protocol and allow sufficient lead time to accomplish all of the necessary tasks. This proposal will describe the steps we typically follow in administering the survey including: finalizing the survey protocol and time line, modifying and printing the Bach Harrison Youth Survey (also referred to as the Prevention Needs Assessment Survey), preparing survey materials, administering the survey, tracking the survey process and completed surveys, scanning completed surveys, processing the data, creating and distributing reports at levels specified by the funding agency, and providing consultation on all aspects of the survey process as well as interpretation of the results.

## **Modifying and Printing the Survey**

R. Steven Harrison, Ph.D. has worked with several states (see Qualifications Section) to modify the Bach Harrison Youth Survey (also known as the Prevention Needs Assessment Survey) questionnaire and will work with state personnel to ensure that the questionnaire meets their needs. Special attention will be paid to any questionnaire changes. The length of the questionnaire needs to be monitored closely, and changes checked to ensure that they do not adversely affect the reliability of the risk and protective factor scales. While the basic questionnaire can be completed by most students in one class period, very few questions can be added before slower students are not able to complete the entire survey. The risk and protective factor scales have very good reliability and validity. Before any questions can be eliminated, their effect on the established scales must be considered.

Once the final set of questions has been agreed upon, an item dictionary will be prepared that lists the risk and protective factor scales, outcomes, demographics, and the questions that are used to measure each of those constructs.

## **Preparing Survey Materials**

Through working with several states on large, statewide surveys, Bach Harrison staff members have developed the procedures and materials necessary to successfully administer statewide surveys. We have developed marketing and promotional materials to help recruit schools by convincing superintendents, principals, and teachers that the survey is worthwhile and that it will produce important data that can be used at the school and regional levels, as well as by state agencies. If one or more statewide needs assessment surveys have been given previously in the state, one of the first tasks will be to review specific materials used in past administrations of the survey and make changes when necessary.

## **Administering the Survey**

Generally, once the school districts and schools that have agreed to participate in the survey have been identified, the number of classes and students in each school will be collected, surveys and instructions will be printed, and survey materials and instructions prepared. The appropriate number of surveys, instructions, and return envelopes will be mailed to the district survey coordinator for distribution.

A time period will be set during which surveys across the state will be conducted. The survey should be administered on Tuesday through Thursday, with Mondays and Fridays eliminated unless the school provides a valid reason for using the beginning or end of the week. Experience has shown that the best time of day for the survey is second period, as school has already started and most students who will attend on a given day are in class.

Another option for surveying students in grades 6, 8, 10, and 12 would be to identify and survey only the core classes that students in these grades are required to take (i.e. 10<sup>th</sup> grade History, 8<sup>th</sup> grade English, 6<sup>th</sup> grade Algebra, etc.). Teachers in these core classes would administer the survey to 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students throughout the day. No student would be allowed to take the survey more than once.

Schools participating in the survey will have the option to select either method for surveying the required grades. The survey will be conducted in the classroom. Students routinely take tests and surveys in their classrooms at their desks and will be likely to work diligently and independently in their usual environment.

Because trend data are very important to prevention planning and evaluation, it is important that the results for all surveys be comparable. Once the contract is awarded, the procedures that were used for previous surveys will be reviewed and every effort made to ensure that survey procedures for the current survey project are consistent with those used in past years. Consistency between sites will be ensured by providing all teachers with the same detailed instructions and script.

The survey is completely anonymous and an individual's responses are confidential. No names are included on the survey form, and procedures have been developed to ensure that no one has access to an individual's survey. Once students have completed the survey, they are asked to place their surveys in a large envelope that is sealed and taken to a collection area, usually the coordinator's office. The envelopes are then packaged and sent by Fed Ex to the Bach Harrison office where they are logged in and scanned. Once the analyses have been completed, the surveys are shredded by a commercial shredding firm.

## **Survey Administration Consultation**

Bach Harrison staff are available to help with the survey administration as little or as much as your state requires. We have worked with various states and communities in different capacities -- from providing guidance, to providing in-depth consultation and training, to coordinating the entire survey effort from beginning to end. Staff are available to guide you through your customized survey process, and can provide coordinator trainings, direct recruitment of school districts and schools, informative presentations to superintendents and state prevention specialists if you deem necessary.

## **Tracking the Survey Process and Completed Surveys**

It is important to track the survey process at the school and regional levels. Information that is important at the school level includes: the number of students who will take the survey in each grade, the number of classrooms where the survey will be administered, the receipt of the survey packages with sufficient materials, when the survey will be administered, and when completed survey booklets were mailed to Bach Harrison. By carefully tracking the survey process, any problems can be identified as they arise. If problems are discovered early in the process, they can usually be solved without compromising the quality of the survey.

Bach Harrison has also built into the survey process strict procedures for tracking survey packets and completed surveys. Once the students have completed the survey, care will be taken to ensure that the questionnaires are organized and cataloged so that every survey packet can be accounted for and the return rate accurately calculated. Your Survey Project Coordinator at Bach Harrison will regularly check the list of returned surveys and follow up with any late or problem schools. Schools that have a low return rate will be contacted to determine the reason that students did not complete the survey.

## **Processing Data**

Completed surveys will be sent to Bach Harrison, where they will be scanned, a database created, and the data analyzed. Bach Harrison staff has over 10 years of experience in developing databases and conducting analyses for needs assessment surveys in states such as Wyoming, Utah, Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Arizona, Michigan, Nebraska, and Montana. In several states, Bach Harrison has completed multiple survey administrations.

Bach Harrison staff have the technical skills to program the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and have developed programs to produce risk and protective factor scale scores, the percentage of youth at risk and with protection, ATOD use levels, rates of antisocial behavior, etc.. While the surveys are being scanned and during analysis, the database elements necessary to complete analyses for statewide, school district, and individual school level analyses will be entered.

## Reporting

Conducting appropriate analyses and presenting the results in easy to understand formats is an ongoing process at Bach Harrison. Through work with various individuals who plan and implement prevention services, reports have been developed that present survey results in user-friendly formats. One of the advantages of working with Bach Harrison is our ability to customize the survey process from the development of the survey questionnaire to the presentation of results in customized report formats. Additional reports for different populations and custom analyses can be requested by a state desiring information about specific regions or populations.

In working with other state surveys, Bach Harrison has also developed a more comprehensive state report which can be modified to fit the needs of individual states. The state report, due to the large number of surveys gathered throughout the state, will contain more detailed analysis on such topics as substance use by grade and gender; delinquency; age of initiation; violence; use of handguns; perceived harmfulness of substances; perceived availability of substances; and use of substances by such factors as father's education level, academic performance, perceived parental and peer acceptability, depression, and probationer status. The state report will also display comparisons to the national Monitoring the Future survey.

For states with more than one year of Bach Harrison Youth Survey data, profile report and state report tables and charts will present results of each survey year.

## Consultation and Training on the Risk and Protective Factor Model of Substance Abuse Prevention

The staff of Bach Harrison have considerable experience providing consultation and training on the Risk and Protective Factor Model of Substance Abuse Prevention. In order for prevention personnel to fully utilize the information obtained through the Bach Harrison Youth Survey, they need to be able to read and interpret the data they receive through profile reports and the state report, understand the Risk and Protective Factor Model, thoroughly understand how the needs assessment helps prioritize risk and protective factors, and use the prioritized risk and protective factors to lead them to the selection of prevention programs to address the areas of elevated risk and low protection. Consultation and training on the risk and protective factor model of substance abuse prevention also generate local and state-wide interest in participating in the survey and an appreciation of the valuable information that the survey provides.

## Quality Assurance

Quality assurance is very important in all aspects of the survey process. Careful attention to detail is important in printing the survey, scanning the completed questionnaires, conducting the analyses, and producing the reports. Analyses of the survey data also present many challenges. Issues such as identifying respondents who are honest in their responses, dealing with missing responses, calculating scale scores, establishing cut-points to determine the percentage of students at risk, and determining levels of substance use must be dealt with before reports can be produced. By working with the Bach Harrison Youth Survey (also known as the Prevention Needs Assessment Survey) for the past 10 years, Bach Harrison staff has developed many checks to ensure that all aspects of the survey process are done accurately.

## Qualifications of the firm

The Project Manager, R. Steven Harrison, Ph.D., has considerable experience in survey design and administration. Through his work with the Center for Substance Abuse (CSAP) funded, Six-State Consortium Project, he participated in the development of the core questions included in the Bach Harrison Youth Survey (also referred to as the Prevention Needs Assessment (PNA) Survey or the Communities That Care (CTC) Survey). The survey is designed to measure alcohol, tobacco, and other drug (ATOD) use, antisocial behavior, and levels of risk and protective factors. Dr. Harrison also participated in the NIDA Diffusion Project where the survey was further refined, and is currently working on a second NIDA funded project using the survey. Through this work, Dr. Harrison has developed an in depth knowledge of the survey and is aware of the latest improvements and changes that have been made to the survey. For example, there are three newly developed protective factor scales that should be considered for addition to previously used Bach Harrison Youth Survey questionnaires.

Bach Harrison's qualified staff members have had considerable experience conducting various statewide and regional school survey projects. Survey administration services available include developing the survey instrument; printing the questionnaire booklets; training state and local level survey coordinators; recruiting superintendents, principals, and school coordinators; shipping the booklets and instructions to survey coordinators; providing return postage for completed surveys to our office; scanning the completed questionnaires; providing reports at the school, school district, parish, various regions, and state level; and presenting final results to state and local level school administrators and prevention specialists. The following page lists survey administration projects that

- Montana PNA Survey for four administrations (1998, 2000, 2002, 2004, and 2006) with approximately 20,000 students participating each year.
- Utah PNA Survey in 2003 and 2005, with approximately 15,000 students participating in 2003 and 150,000 participating in 2005. Bach Harrison, L.L.C. is currently planning the 2007 Utah PNA Survey.

- Davis School District (Utah) PNA Survey in 2001, 2003, and 2005, with approximately 23,000 students participating each year. Bach Harrison, L.L.C. is currently planning the 2007 Davis School District PNA Survey.
- Arizona Youth Survey in 2002 (analysis and reporting only), 2004, and 2006. Approximately 13,000 students participated in 2002, 45,000 students participated in 2004, and approximately 70,000 participated in 2006.
- Louisiana Communities That Care Survey in 2001 and 2002 (analysis and reporting only), and the Louisiana Caring Communities Youth Survey in 2004. Approximately 100,000 students participated in each administration. Bach Harrison, L.L.C. is currently planning the 2006 Louisiana PNA Survey.
- Oklahoma Prevention Needs Assessment Survey in 2004, with approximately 15,000 students participating; and the 2006 Oklahoma Prevention Needs Assessment Survey in 2006 with approximately 75,000 students surveyed.
- Nebraska Risk and Protective Factor Student Survey in 2003, with approximately 26,000 students participating; and the 2005 Nebraska Risk and Protective Factor Student Survey in 2006 with approximately 28,000 students surveyed.
- Michigan Mid-South Substance Abuse Commission (MSSAC) Prevention Needs Assessment Survey in 2004, with approximately 18,000 students participating. Bach Harrison, L.L.C. is currently planning the 2006 MSSAC PNA Survey.

We have also consulted with the Utah Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH) during the administration of the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) Diffusion Project surveys. These surveys occurred in six Utah communities throughout Utah in 1998, 2000, and 2002. Other Utah surveys in which Bach Harrison staff has played a role include: a statewide survey of 1,000 youth on probation, the 1997 statewide student survey, two treatment need surveys (1996 and 1999), three adult household surveys, and the statewide 2003 Utah Higher Education Health Behavior Survey (a survey of students in eight Utah colleges). Additional youth surveying using risk and protective factor surveys have been administered at the community or program level in New York, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Alaska, Texas, Tennessee, and Virginia,

Other staff experience involving the Risk and Protective Factor Model of Prevention includes working with the original CSAP funded Needs Assessment Projects to develop methods to assess levels of risk and protection at the state and local levels (Six-State Consortium and Four-State Consortium), CSAP funded State Incentive Grants, NIDA projects (Diffusion and Community Youth Development Study), and numerous state and local survey and evaluation projects.