

WHO IS WATCHING OUT FOR YOU? THE SAM SPADY STORY

Teaching Social Responsibility; My Sister, My Responsibility®

Developed by the Sam Spady Foundation

TIME | 30 minutes

Objectives:

- Explain how, as an individual, you are responsible for yourself and others, especially in situations involving alcohol consumption.
- Describe how drinking alcohol can cloud assumptions and how assumptions shape intervention (or lack thereof).
- Identify a personal safety plan for situations involving alcohol.

Group size:

- The ideal group size is 50 to 100 people. This activity works best when there are enough people in the audience to represent all the people who had contact with Samantha.
- Increase/decrease the number of GRAY and GOLD cards to meet the needs of the group size. If you need to increase the number of GREY and GOLD cards, use the copiable resource at the end of this section or the printable resource online.
- The exercise has significant impact if every participant has a card.

Setup:

- Choose a room that allows everyone to sit as comfortably as possible in rows or a circle.
- The space should be open so that participants can look around and see who is standing in the interactive activity.
- You will play a PowerPoint presentation during the lesson, so you'll need to connect a laptop to a projector and screen.

Preparation:

- Be very familiar with the roles defined by the different cards, so that you can easily facilitate the interactive activity.
- Familiarize yourself with the enclosed deck of colored cards and the role each card color symbolizes.

Materials needed:

- Projector and screen
- PowerPoint
- Deck of *My Sister, My Responsibility*/Sam Spady cards to distribute to the audience after instructions are given
 - » Please note that this is the multi-colored deck of cards that is included in the MSMR binder.

Resources:

- The Sam Spady Foundation: www.samspadyfoundation.org

INTRODUCTION | 2 minutes

The facilitator should introduce himself/herself, welcome participants and thank everyone for attending the session.

Share:

- The purpose of this workshop is to demonstrate that under normal circumstances, you can examine your assumptions and make good decisions.
- However, when alcohol enters the picture, situations can become very cloudy, and the assumptions that once seemed so clear are not as well-defined.
- In this activity, we'll explore a real-life situation where the assumptions made under the influence affected the lives of many.

BACKGROUND | 5 minutes

Share:

Samantha Spady had a bright spirit; her charming innocence and optimism made her a joy to be around.

She was an honor student and accomplished artist and an unlikely candidate for an alcohol-related death; but as a coed at Colorado State University, she fell victim to the relentless pull of partying and binge drinking that has become so common with young adults across the country. It becomes increasingly clear as we learn the facts surrounding this phenomenon that all students may be at risk.

Far from her hometown in Beatrice, Nebraska, Samantha found a new way of life in college. The combination of the excitement of a grown-up independence that nearly all students feel and the culture of risky drinking led her to change her pre-college behavior.

On the evening of Sept. 4, 2004, Samantha and her friends attended a number of parties, and she drank more than her body could handle. All alone in an empty guest room of a fraternity house, she was left to sleep it off, and the unthinkable happened.

WHO IS WATCHING OUT FOR YOU? ACTIVITY | 13 minutes

- *This activity was created by Michelle Lee, an educator at Iowa State University, and is being used with her permission.*
- *Distribute the colored cards to the audience. If preferred, the cards can be given to audience members as they arrive. Make sure that the cards are shuffled prior to distributing them.*
- *After distributing the cards, put the photo of Samantha on the PowerPoint.*
- *The cards represent Samantha and the people who had direct and indirect contact with her on the last day of her life. Begin the activity by reading the script below and asking participants to stand as indicated.*

Who Is Watching Out for You?: The Sam Spady Story

Introduction

- The purpose of this workshop is to show that without alcohol, we're able to make clear decisions, but when alcohol is in the picture the answers may seem cloudy.

Samantha Spady



Card Key

PERSON(S) THAT CARD REPRESENTS	COLOR	NO. OF CARDS
Samantha	Blue	1
Samantha's close friend	Red	1
Person that gave Samantha alcohol	Orange	19
Samantha's roommate	Turquoise	1
Homeowner	Green	1
Friends who picked up Samantha after accident	Pink	2
Two carloads of friends	Gray	8*
People who shared bottles of vanilla vodka	Yellow	10
Friends who helped Samantha to a room where she passed out	Purple	2
Fraternity member and his mother	White	2
People at parties that Samantha attended	Gold	9*

**Numbers can be increased/decreased using copiable resource in MSMR binder or online.*

ACTIVITY SCRIPT

Sept. 4, 2004

It was a beautiful fall Saturday afternoon. Samantha, a sophomore at Colorado State University, was getting ready to enjoy a typical weekend of friends, football and fun. Please stand if you are holding the BLUE card, as you represent Samantha in this story.

5:45 p.m.

Samantha picked up a friend who lived in a residence hall on the CSU campus. Please stand if you are holding the RED card, as you represent Samantha's close friend.

6 p.m.

Samantha and her friend arrived at a party to watch the CSU/University of Colorado football game on television. At the party, Samantha consumed at least two beers, downed two or three shots of tequila, munched on some food and left about two hours later.

8 p.m.

Samantha and her friend visited another party where they watched the end of the game. During the party, Samantha was given a "super-sized" cup that held beer from a keg for the next one and a half to two hours.

After the game was over

Samantha and her friend left the party in search of an ATM and got lost in south Fort Collins. Due to hard rain and poor visibility, Samantha hit the center median flattening both driver-side tires. She parked her car, called her roommate (Please stand if you are holding the TURQUOISE card, as you represent her roommate.) asking for help. Samantha and her friend walked to the nearest residence, where she spoke with the homeowner asking for directions to their location (Please stand if you have the GREEN card, as you represent the homeowner.). The homeowner did not believe the two women were intoxicated. Two friends, a male and female (Please stand if you are holding the PINK cards, as you represent these friends.), picked them up at 11:10 p.m., and they went to a friend's house for a short time. From there, they went with two carloads of people (Please stand if you are holding a GRAY card, as you represent these people) to another party. They remained there for only a few minutes and left without consuming any alcohol. They re-grouped at the Sigma Pi fraternity house for a few minutes—again not consuming any alcohol—and left for another party.

Sept. 5, 2004

12 a.m.

Samantha and her friends arrived at another party. Samantha consumed at least four to five beers, may have consumed shots of vanilla vodka and may have engaged in drinking games.

2 a.m.

Samantha and her friend left the party and returned to the Sigma Pi fraternity house where approximately 25 people were present. Samantha was provided with beer.



3:30 a.m.

Most people left the Sigma Pi fraternity house. Samantha and seven to 10 people remained and shared one or two bottles of McCormick's Vanilla Vodka (Please stand if you are holding YELLOW cards, as you represent these remaining party goers.).

4:30–5:30 a.m.

Samantha's friend tried to persuade her to walk back to the dorm with her, but she was not able to do so. Sam had become intoxicated to the point where she could not stand up. Two friends helped her to a spare room in the fraternity house and then left (Please stand if you are holding PURPLE cards, as you represent these friends.). Sam's friend stayed with her for a short time before walking back to the dorm. Samantha was last seen lying on the couch on her stomach, using her hands as a pillow.

Later that day

6:22 p.m.

Later that day, about 12 hours after Samantha had been left to sleep off the drunken night, a fraternity member who lived off-site discovered Samantha's body while giving his mother a tour of the house (Please stand if you are holding a WHITE card, as you represent this member and his mother.).

If you are NOT standing and you have an ORANGE card, please stand because you are the people who gave Samantha alcohol the night she died. The people you represent were each charged with at least one alcohol-related offense.

Anyone remaining holding a GOLD card, please stand because you represent the people at parties Samantha attended.

When her body was found at the Sigma Pi fraternity house, Samantha had a blood alcohol content (BAC) level of 0.436 percent, more than five times the legal limit for driving in Colorado. Police estimated that Samantha died Sunday morning, so she may have been in the empty room about 12 hours before they were called. Samantha Spady was an honor student, head varsity cheerleader, homecoming queen and senior class president before graduating from high school in the small Nebraska town of Beatrice in 2003. She was majoring in business at Colorado State University at the time of her death.

Ask participants to be seated.



DISCUSSION | 5 minutes

Share:

- Samantha's death had an impact on a large number of people who may have played just a small part in her evening. The Sigma Pi chapter was shut down, and the house Sam died in closed, which forced its residents to find new housing immediately — a difficult task in a college town. After the investigation, the 19 people who provided alcohol to Sam faced one or more alcohol-related charges. In the activity we just did, orange cards represented these people.
- Although Samantha's family feels that Sam was ultimately responsible for the decisions she made, it's important to understand the assumptions that Samantha made that night.

Discuss:

- What assumptions do you think Sam made when she started out that evening?
 - » *You're seeking answers like the ones below. Reiterate them, especially if they are not covered by the group.*
 - *Samantha probably assumed that she would be safe and able to consume alcohol without incident.*
 - *Samantha likely assumed that if she did have too much to drink, someone would make sure that she was safe.*
 - *Samantha may have assumed that all she would need to do is go to sleep and that she would be okay in the morning.*
- What assumptions do you think the other people Sam encountered made that night?
 - » *You're seeking answers like the following; reiterate them, especially if they are not covered by the group.*
 - *They likely assumed Samantha would be safe as well.*
 - *The first person who provided her with a drink that night had no way of knowing the impact that his/her decision to give her alcohol would have.*
- Through understanding the course of Samantha's night, you know that under normal circumstances, you are able to examine your assumptions and make good decisions. But when alcohol enters the picture, situations can become very cloudy, and the assumptions that once seemed so clear are not as well-defined.
 - » What assumptions have you made or seen others make before drinking or going out with friends?
 - » How can those assumptions help or harm them?

Discussion

- What assumptions do you think Sam made when she started out the night?
- What assumptions do you think the other people Sam saw made that night?
- What assumptions have you made or seen others make before drinking or going out with friends?
- How do those assumptions help or harm?

TEACHING SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

DO IT TOGETHER. BE BETTER. BY RESPONSIBILITY.



Share:

- We're not having this conversation today because we want to "kill your college experience." It's about taking control of your actions and being responsible for yourselves and others. They said it best at her funeral; "no one intended" for Samantha to die that night. It's never something you want or expect when you head out for an evening or event; but in Sam's case, no one prevented her death either.

Lead the group through a series of reflective questions to sum up the lesson:

Discuss:

- If you don't intend negative things to happen, how do you prevent them?
- Who is responsible when you and friends go out for the night and alcohol is involved?
- How should you discuss responsibility before drinking begins?
- How do you plan for your own personal safety?
- When people drink, what behaviors concern you?
- How do you intervene when these behaviors are occurring?

Discussion

- Who is responsible when you and friends go out for a night and alcohol is involved?
- How should you discuss responsibility before the night begins?
- How do you plan for your own personal safety?
- Once people have been drinking, what behaviors concern you?
- How do you intervene when you see those behaviors?

TEACHING SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY SEE THE DIFF. BY DRINK. BY RESPONSIBILITY

Share:

- You should immediately call 911 if a person has any of the following symptoms:
 - » Lack of consciousness
 - » Breathing less frequently than 10 times per minute or breathing irregularly (check every two minutes)
 - » Cold, clammy, pale or bluish skin
 - » Inability to be awakened by pinching, prodding or shouting
 - » Vomiting without waking up
- Remember, you are responsible for yourself and each other. You should never leave an intoxicated person alone. Drink responsibly when you choose to drink, and always make a personal safety plan.

Call 911 if a person has any of these symptoms:

- Unconscious or semiconscious
- Breathing less than 10 times per minute or irregular breathing (check every two minutes)
- Cold, clammy, pale or bluish skin
- Can't be awakened by pinching, prodding or shouting
- Vomiting without waking up

TEACHING SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY SEE THE DIFF. BY DRINK. BY RESPONSIBILITY

OTHER ACTIVITIES

If your organization would like to use the Sam Spady story to help educate others, explore these additional opportunities and ideas. These ideas are meant to get you thinking about your projects. The Sam Spady Foundation is excited to see what your chapter will create! If you have any questions or need additional guidance or support, please feel free to contact the foundation. For more information, visit www.samspadyfoundation.org

- Team up several other college organizations for the “Who is Watching out for You?” activity.
 - » The most important goal is to spread the message of alcohol poisoning!
- Provide SOS (Start Off Safe) bags during the first week of the term.
 - » Ask your campus bookstore to provide the bags. This can also be done before any major event on campus, like big sporting events, Greek Week activities, spring break, etc.
 - » Contact your local hospital for first-aid kits and dentists for toothbrushes.
 - » Include a small bottle of water.
- Get posters in all campus housing before the start of school.