



# Mass Media as A Means of Engagement and Reach During Alcohol Free For 40 (AFF40)

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## Background:

Research suggests that temporary abstinence programs among individuals without known alcohol dependence can have both physiological and psychological benefits. Alcohol Free for 40 (AFF40) is an annual 40-day voluntary alcohol abstinence challenge that is hosted by the Ochsner Eat Fit™ team of registered dietitians (RDs). Participants are challenged to abstain from alcohol consumption for 40 days to promote better personal health. The AFF40 challenge provides the opportunity for participants to observe changes in health outcomes and reflect on their relationship and behaviors with alcohol. Little published research explores the development, implementation, and process evaluation of community-based temporary alcohol abstinence programs.

## Objective:

To report the process evaluation findings as it relates to mass media methods used to recruit and engage participants in AFF40 2021 programming.

## Theory:

Social Marketing Theory

## Methods:

A variety of communication channels were used to promote AFF40, provide social support for behavior change, and inform participants during the challenge: mass media (local newspaper, television, and radio outlets); digital media (AFF40 website, a podcast, and Ochsner blog spots); and social media (Instagram and Facebook).

To measure engagement and reach of the communication campaign, social media analytics were collected directly from each platform. For the mass media and digital media channels, television stations and web managers provided the number of page views and impressions for AFF40 content.

Media Type	Communication Channel	Engagement and Reach	Timeframe
Social Media	Facebook + Instagram	Engagement rate: 6.97% Impressions: 127,590 Reach: 104,080 Followers: increased by 530 Profile Visits: 4,530 Total Post: 62	January – April 2021
	Alcohol Free For 40 Facebook Group	1,472 total members 934 active members 1,596 comments 4,189 reactions 185 posts	January – April 2021
Mass Media	Print	3 newspaper articles 750,000 impressions	February 2021
	Television	6 news segments	January-February 2021
	Radio	3 different stations Aired 5x/day for 7 days 276,500 impressions	January-February 2021
	Podcast (FUELED Wellness + Nutrition)	2 podcasts episodes Total downloads: 1,563	February 2021
Digital Media	<a href="http://www.AlcoholFreeFor40.com">www.AlcoholFreeFor40.com</a>	719 unique pageviews	January - March 2021
	Ochsner Health To Your Health Blog	6 blogs spots 4,796 unique pageviews ( $\bar{x}$ = 799 page views)	

## Results:

Facebook and Instagram allowed the Eat Fit team to reach over 104,000 people in 4 months. The AFF40 specific Facebook group reported 934 active participants with over 4,000 reactions.

Newspaper articles from local outlets about AFF40 reached 750,000 people. The Eat Fit team also appeared on 6 television stations in the span of 2 months.

The AFF40 dedicated landing page had over 700 pageviews in a span of three months. The Ochsner Health blog reported close to 5,000 pageviews.



## Conclusion:

Using technology in the form of various media allowed for wide participant recruitment, reach, and program engagement in AFF40. Future community-based program efforts may consider the use of *multiple* communication channels in recruiting, engaging, and disseminating program information. The use of *multiple* channels, rather than singular, was key to program success in promoting behavior change. Future work will consider surveying program participants to see how they heard about AFF40 and preferred communication channel.

## References:

Grier, S., & Bryant, C. A. (2005). Social marketing in public health. *Annu. Rev. Public Health*, 26, 319-339. doi.org/10.1146/annurev.publhealth.26.021304.144610