

The impact of a mock crash

[Business](#)



Sitting there, watching, as cars supposedly speed into one another, leaving a tangled mass of mangled metal and bodies. We are merely watching in the silver stands as our own stagger across the parking lot, our only apparent worry shading our eyes from the sun with our pamphlets. It was called “ In the Blink of an Eye,” but I can assure you, it took much, much longer. A minute. Fifteen minutes. A half-hour.

Forty-five minutes. An hour. A couple hundred hearts beat – while theirs “ stop.” This was the event that occurred in my school’s parking lot—a mock crash performed by our own classmates, along with local emergency services, not to mention our friendly neighborhood coroner and funeral services. It is vital for as many schools as possible to perform mock crashes in front of all high school students, so they can be aware of the actual ramifications of choosing—with good judgment or not—to drink and drive. To convince the world of this, I will illustrate its importance through discussion of what a mock crash is, how it works, and why it works, with a focus on the psychology of the program.

A mock crash is, essentially, a fake crash that is enacted as though it were real, with classmates serving as the victims and local emergency services going through the entire process of triage, car extraction, even a field sobriety test of the “ drunk” teen driver—all the things they would do at an actual crash scene. The basic idea is to incur a sort of placebo effect from the horrid shock of seeing classmates flung onto the hoods of cars. And it really does have some effect: I have never seen my school so deathly quiet as it was after the crash, except, of course, for last year’s crash. The placebo effect, however, is not solely the reason the crash is meant to work. Mock

<https://assignbuster.com/the-impact-of-a-mock-crash/>

crashes work for another, more cynical reason, as well: grief is social. When you have approximately four hundred other teenagers crying at the fake loss of their best friend, or their cousin's brother's mother's friend's sister "died," it becomes contagious.

Oftentimes, any one of those grief-stricken teens won't remember that the only reason they really started crying was because the person next to them was. "If everyone else is crying, you should be, too" is the common train of thought. People will only recall that it was so sad, and will not ever want to have to go through that again. There is yet one more key component to the psychology of a mock crash. Society constantly pushes the idea that "it could happen to anyone," which brings up the point that a mock crash should include people everyone knows, most especially classmates.

This of course makes mock crashes even more effective in small schools, but not impossible in larger areas. I myself received a wholly unwelcome shock when I opened the pamphlet the crash organizers handed me and saw, under "Student Participants," the first name—the name of one of my friends. In addition to that, I either knew other participants personally, or knew their siblings personally. Needless to say, it was not exactly the best pamphlet I've ever received. Essentially, when the ordeal—for, this is not for the faint of heart—is made personal, and there are people you know staggering around the scene, and lying unmoving on the asphalt under a blanket—that's when it works, when it seeps into the subconscious "gut" feeling that will rear its knowledgeable head when the path to drinking and driving pops up, and we must decide. There is, however, more to a mock crash than fake dead people and ambulances, one more little ingredient that <https://assignbuster.com/the-impact-of-a-mock-crash/>

sets some more reality in: after our mock crash, we had a mother and father who had lost not one but three sons to a drunk driving accident near our town.

The boys were not drunk, but the driver of the other car was. He swerved, they didn't, and two boys were dead on impact. The third died of severe brain injuries that morning. Though the tears had come during the “accident” of ours, the placebo reality soon made way for true reality as presented by those two sad adults in the front of our auditorium. I for one am glad that this was presented to us, that our school respects us enough to tell us all this.

Some may not think it worth the tears and sadness just for one dose of said reality, but it was really more like a triple dose (most especially because it will not be again performed for another four years, due to budget cuts). The speakers, while a little reserved, opened their lives of grief to us, and that is what truly cemented it all in. The fact that this is a real horror for about 1150 families of teens killed in drunk driving accidents in 2008—and that's only one year, from “Drunk Driving Research & Statistics” of the Century Council website. 12 May 2010. To finish up, the point I am trying to make is that mock crashes are important for all high school students to witness. Drunk driving is one of the most important issues for us as a society and us as teens to reduce and eradicate; mock crashes help us to do this by showing what happens in a crash, and by yes, fooling us all into making the consequences part of our immediate thinking processes and our “gut” reactions.

I believe that as many schools as possible should implement this program, and show it to all high school students 9-12, in order to show what drunk driving really leads to—and why it's more emotional than any newspaper report will ever make it. As Jim Davis once said, “ The truth will set you free, but first it will make you miserable.”