



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**National Highway  
Traffic Safety  
Administration**



# Program Strategies For Increasing Safety Belt Usage in Rural Areas



People Saving People  
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# Technical Report Documentation Page

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16. Abstract The objective of this study was to identify effective safety communication messages and strategies for increasing safety belt usage among young males in rural areas. Focus groups were conducted with young males 16-19 and 20-26 years old who acknowledged that they do not consistently use their safety belts when driving in their pickup trucks. Two waves of focus groups were held at two sites in Kentucky, and at two sites in Texas. The Kentucky groups were comprised entirely of white non Hispanic males whereas the Texas groups split evenly between those composed of white non Hispanic males and those composed of Hispanic males. The study obtained results concerning appropriate message content and communication strategies, as well as cultural and psychological barriers that need to be addressed.  Strategies promoting safety belt use must consider several key factors. First the respondents emphasized that they tend to be more affected by the way in which their actions affect those close to them, and less affected by how their own actions affect themselves. Secondly, the message should be simple, brief, and clearly show the direct consequences of nonuse. Finally, the respondents' comments suggested they harbor many misconceptions about the effectiveness of safety belts, based both on misinformation from key influencers and their own defense mechanisms. Strategies must recognize these misconceptions and use developmentally appropriate social marketing messages to counter their effects.					
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# **INTRODUCTION**

## **Background**

Crash fatality data from the Fatal Accident Reporting System (FARS), operated by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), show males, particularly young males, contributing inordinately to the traffic safety problem. Geodemographic analyses describe the problem further by revealing rural areas to be over-represented in fatal crashes. This suggests a need to target young rural males for highway safety countermeasure activity in order to continue the strong gains that have been made in reducing injuries and fatalities over the past 15 years.

FARS data indicate that light truck occupants, particularly those driving pickup trucks, have become an increasing part of the problem during this period of improved safety. Comprising less than 15 percent of total occupant fatalities in the mid 1970s, they accounted for over 25 percent in 1994. Young rural males driving pickup trucks or sport/utility vehicles thus become a target of particular interest for safety professionals.

Almost all States mandate occupant use of safety belts; reflecting consensus that safety belt use is one of the most effective methods persons have for protecting themselves from injury in crashes. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that thousands of lives would be saved each year if belt usage increased substantially. While this points to the importance of exposing all segments of the population to belt use messages, the FARS data suggest that targeting young rural males for countermeasures designed to increase belt use would be a judicious use of resources. In fact, belt use becomes particularly important for users of pickup trucks and sports/utility vehicles because of a higher risk of ejection.

## **Objective**

This report provides a guide to safety professionals for developing and implementing programs to increase safety belt use among young male pickup truck drivers who reside in rural areas. It is based on research conducted for NHTSA in rural areas of the South, a region of the country over-represented in pickup truck crash fatalities, according to FARS data. While some of the findings reported may be specific to this geographic area, most of the study

recommendations should generalize to other rural areas inside and outside the South.

## **Targets**

Primary program targets are males ages 16-26, residing in rural areas, who drive pickup trucks and do not consistently use safety belts. The research focused on two specific subgroups; young white non Hispanic and young Hispanic males. The project identified the informational and motivational themes that would likely be most effective with these subgroups, as well as what types of public information and education (PI&E) materials and media messages would most effectively reach them.

## **Method**

Carroll and Floyd Counties, Kentucky; and Lamb and Mitchell Counties, Texas; were selected as study sites based on data analyses plus discussions with NHTSA staff and other key state and local persons involved in passenger safety initiatives. Appendix A presents relevant socio-demographic and traffic safety information for the respective sites. Young white non Hispanic males, ages 16-19 years and 20-26 years, were targeted in Kentucky. White non Hispanic and Hispanic males within the same age groups were targeted in Texas.

The Contractor developed preliminary profiles of the target groups from a socio-demographic literature review, discussions with persons having relevant expertise, analyses of 1990 U.S. Census Bureau and 1995 Prizm data, and examinations of previous behavior modification programs targeting young males.

The profiles were used to develop areas of inquiry for a first wave of focus groups with the target population. Four focus groups were conducted at each site using the Moderator Guide shown in Appendix B. In Kentucky, one-half of the groups were composed of 16-19 year old white non Hispanic males, and the other half composed of white non Hispanic males 20-26 years. In Texas, where the same age segmentations were used, half of the groups were composed of white-non Hispanic males, and the other half Hispanic males.

The first wave of sixteen focus groups provided information about rural lifestyle characteristics and media preferences for the male respondents. A second wave of sixteen groups (Appendix C) was then conducted to concept test program materials that were developed based on findings from the first wave. The recruiting requirements (Appendix D) and group segmentations for the second wave were identical to those used in the first wave.

## **Organization of Report**

The report begins with a chapter of general guidelines for developing programs designed to encourage young, rural male pickup truck drivers to buckle-up. This is followed by chapters presenting more detailed information on the key findings from the groups, including:

- Reasons Supporting the Nonuse of Safety Belts
- Lifestyle Information
- Message Communication Strategies
- Group Differences Affecting Programmatic Decisions
- Psychological Factors Contributing to Resistance to Change

The report concludes with a summary chapter which describes how the key focus group findings can be used to develop an effective message strategy which encourages young males who live in rural areas to use safety belts.

# GENERAL GUIDELINES TO PROMOTE SAFETY BELT USE

During the first and second waves of focus groups, the respondents shared their attitudes, beliefs, and feelings about relationships with family and friends; day-to-day lifestyle within their community; messages promoting health and safety; and issues related to driving and safety belt usage.

During their discussions, they provided important information indicating that strategies promoting safety belt use must consider several key factors. First, the respondents emphasized that they tend to be more affected by the way in which their actions affect those close to them, and less affected by the way in which their own actions affect themselves. Secondly, they related that any message designed to encourage them to use safety belts should be simple, brief, and clearly show the direct consequences of nonuse. Finally, the respondents' comments suggested they harbor many misconceptions about the effectiveness of safety belts, based both on misinformation from key influencers and their own defense mechanisms. Strategies must recognize these misconceptions and use developmentally appropriate social marketing messages to provide the target audience with important new information and decrease their tendency to utilize these coping techniques.

These key factors, when considered along with other data obtained from the *focus groups*, provided the rationale for offering the following general guidelines to promote safety belt use by young male pickup truck drivers.

**A multi-media approach with print, radio, and television public information and education (PI&E) materials would be most effective, although respondents said they do not want to be deluged with information.**

The respondents remarked that an effective safety belt campaign should include print, radio, and video materials. Visual images for print pieces such as posters and brochures should be colorful, eye-catching, and show powerful trucks, badly-wrecked vehicles, or other graphic depictions of the aftermath of a wreck. These print pieces should have few words, and deliver a believable message to which the reader can relate. The message needs to be direct and blunt, but does not need to include hyperbole, mocking, or sarcasm. Radio public service announcements (PSAs) should be short and catchy. Sports-related themes for radio PSAs tested well with younger males. Sexual themes grabbed the

attention of all listeners. Another radio spot in which a young girl spoke about missing her older brother, who was killed in a crash in which he was not belted, had great impact on the listeners. TV PSAs must be clever, or the viewer will immediately tune-out. Sex, sports (with professional athletes) and cartoons are potentially effective themes for television PSAs. The respondents indicated that it is important not to deluge them with information about safety belt use, but instead present them with intermittent reminders over a prolonged period of time.

**Messages focusing on death, separation from family and loved ones, and the grief suffered by those left behind are effective themes.**

Two poster concepts illustrating death and loss elicited consistently positive reactions. "Something Might Be Missing If You Don't Buckle Up" (Figure 1) portrayed a family with the young male member visually "missing" from the photo, while "You're Not the Only One Affected When You Don't Use a Seat Belt" (Figure 2) showed a young girl kneeling at a gravesite. Both of these poster concepts were described as attention-getting and impactful, with many respondents noting that it is important to remember that although you are gone, after you die, your loved ones will mourn their loss long after.

**For older males, appeals to tradition and family values can be effective.**

While both younger and older males remarked that tradition and family values have been emphasized in their lives from early childhood to young adulthood, only the older males seemed to respond positively to a poster concept which encouraged them to "Start a New Family Tradition - Buckle Up" (Figure 3). They indicated that as young men and for some, as recent parents, it is their responsibility to act in a more mature and responsible manner and set a good example for their children and other youngsters. In contrast, younger males had difficulty relating to the concept of safety belt use as a new family tradition, and noted that it seems to apply more to "older guys." They remarked that they see themselves as "free and independent," and added that it is premature for them to think about getting married and having children.

**Sports-related themes test well with younger males.**

The younger males reacted positively to both radio and television PSA concepts where sports was a dominant storyline. Most said they have been involved in high school athletics, either as participants or as spectators, and added that sports generally appeals to their age group. They easily related to the protection analogy between football equipment and safety belts (Figure 4), and liked the idea of a former high school football star talking about life in a wheelchair, following a serious crash in which he was not wearing a safety belt. The



Figure 1

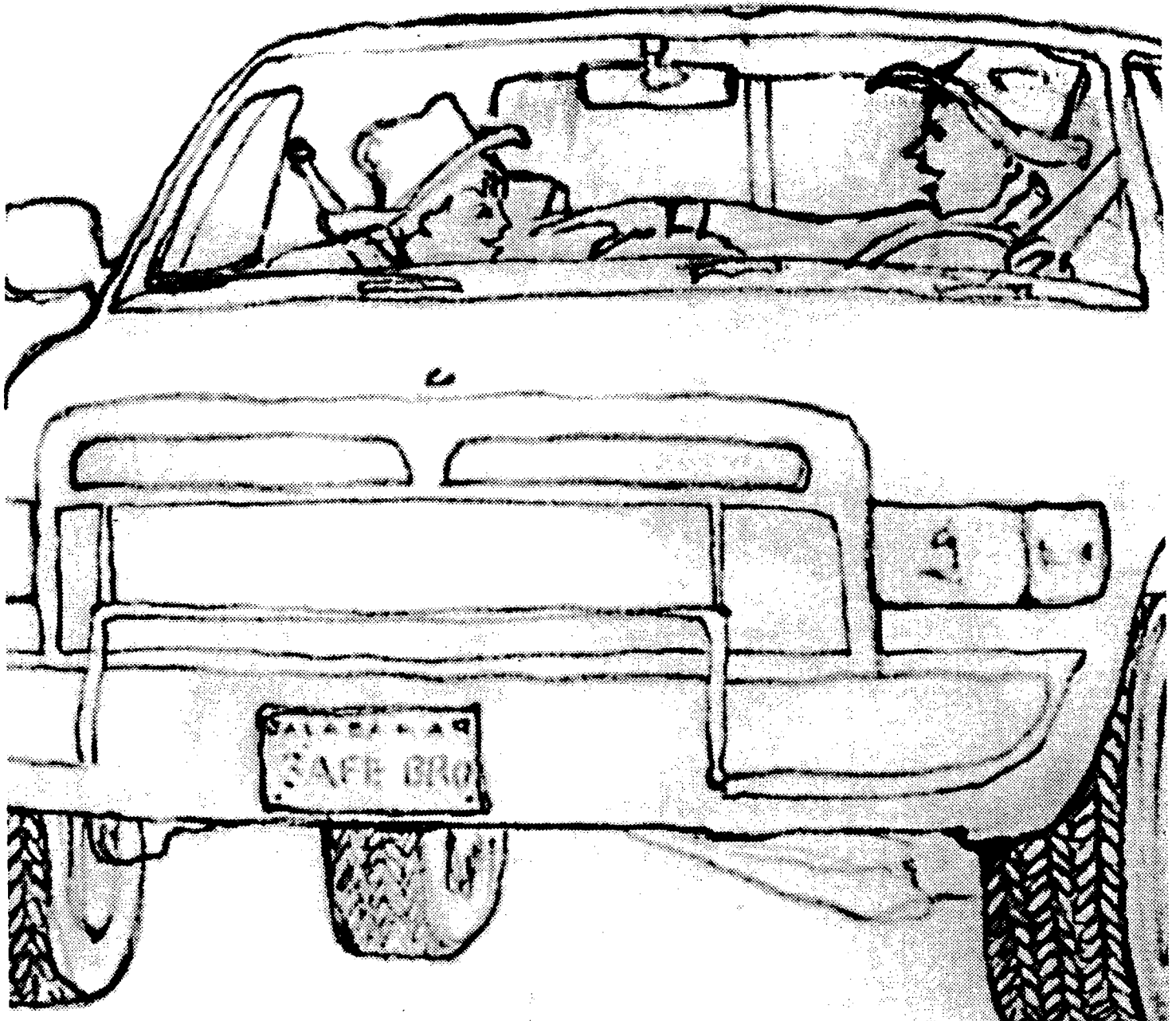
Something might be missing if  
you don't buckle up.

Figure 2

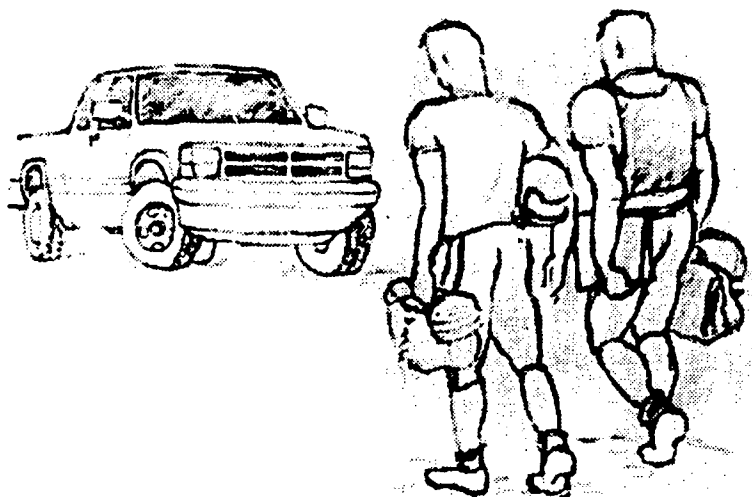


You're not the only one affected  
when you don't use a seat belt.

Figure 3

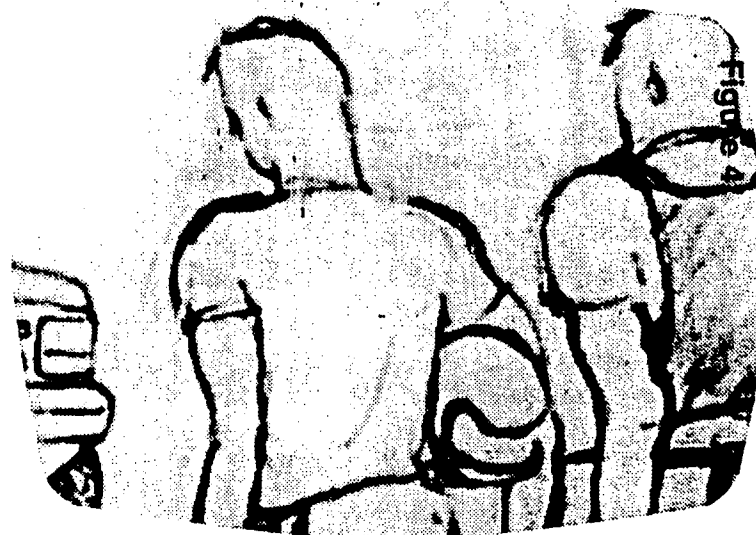


Start a new family tradition.  
Buckle up.

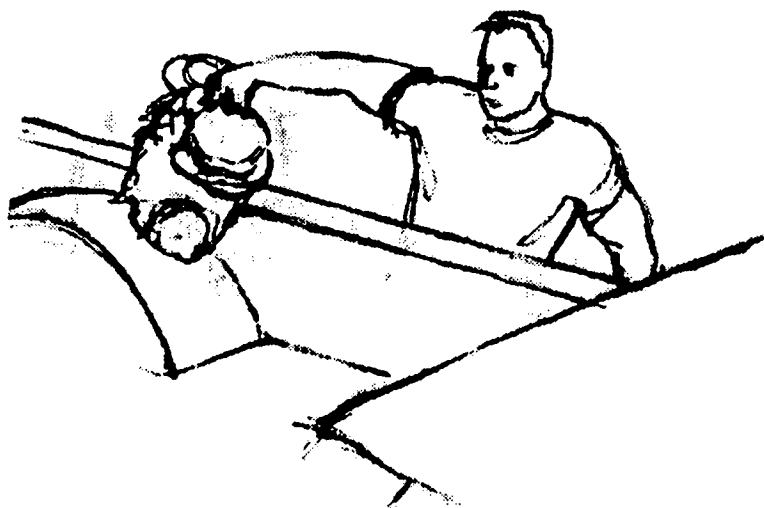


"I'd have to be crazy to play this game..."

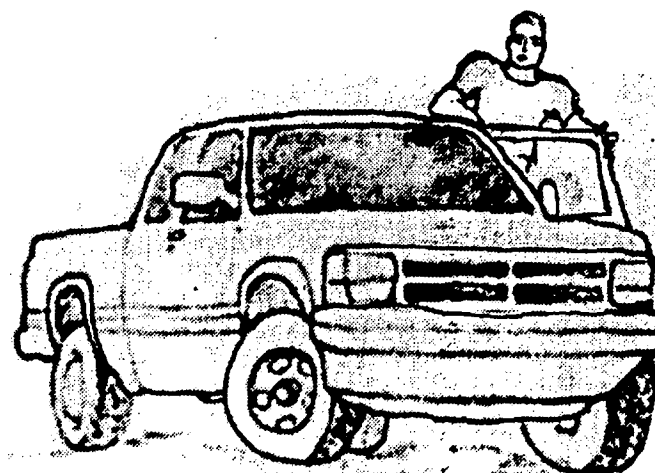
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...without the right protection."



"And I'd be just as crazy to drive without protection."



"Listen up. Buckle up."

information obtained from the older males was equivocal. Many said that while they remained interested in sports, they certainly did not have the same level of interest they held while in high school, and would be largely unresponsive to a PSA featuring high school athletes. Some indicated, however, they would pay attention to a PSA featuring a popular professional athlete.

**Younger males especially need a strong link between the action and the consequences of the action.**

Many younger respondents indicated that for them, it is important that campaign materials depict, in an accurate and powerful manner, the immediate consequences associated with being in a crash and not wearing a safety belt. Some indicated that a vivid and gory visual image of an emergency medical/rescue scene with a badly wrecked pickup truck, a seriously or fatally injured driver, and EMTs present would provide the strong link needed to emphasize the risk involved when driving without a safety belt. In contrast, the visual of a young man in a hospital bed was temporally too far removed from the actual crash, and viewed as relatively ineffective.

**Wrecked vehicles are very powerful images, and can be used as an educational tool.**

Many respondents said that a wrecked vehicle, particularly one resulting in a fatality, is a very powerful image. They further said that if such a vehicle were placed in a public place or was made available for viewing at a wrecking yard, they would likely take the time to inspect it. Some remarked they had been previously exposed to such an intervention (e.g., a wrecked vehicle placed on school grounds just before prom), and that the experience was, at least for the short-term, thought-provoking and impactful.

**Do not portray young men from the rural South as “country boys.”**

The respondents complained about artwork which seemed too stereotypic small-town South, and made fun of some of the young men in the ads who were portrayed in an unstylish, old-fashioned manner. They said they would prefer more of a “city look” for the visual images used in the campaign, and they emphasized that there is not a big difference between the appearance of young urban/suburban guys and young rural guys: jeans, button-down or polo shirts, and baseball hats worn backwards (by the younger guys) seem to be the norm.

**The concept of protection serves as an effective message for a safety belt campaign aimed at young men.**

The respondents remarked that they were familiar with this theme and saw it as effective in other types of advertising that targeted young males. Many reacted well to print ad and PSA ideas which drew an analogy between safety belt use and other forms of protection (e.g., condoms, football equipment).

**Humor is effective as long as it is perceived as witty and not too cute, condescending, or “corny.”**

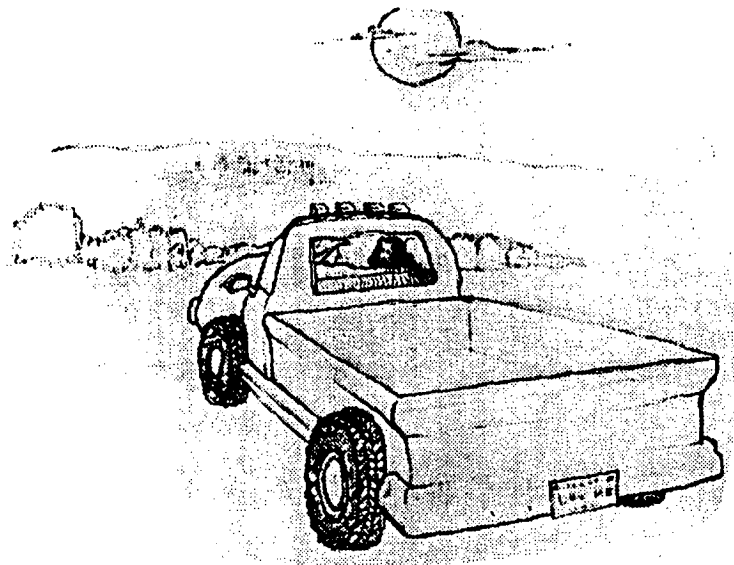
While there was general agreement that a campaign encouraging safety belt use must include “serious” PI&E materials, most respondents reacted positively to some of the humorous ideas that were concept tested. In particular, they enjoyed a mock radio PSA and storyboard for a video PSA (Figure 5) which, at the onset, sounded like a condom ad, but included a surprise ending punctuated by “Always Use Protection - Buckle Up.” They agreed that unlike most radio and television PSAs, they would listen to this one repeatedly, and even tell friends to listen as well.

**If possible, build on existing advertising concepts that are preferred by the target audience.**

The respondents said they enjoy commercials using popular television characters such as the *Budweiser* frogs, Wiley Coyote and the Roadrunner, the *Duracell* family, and the *Energizer* bunny. They suggested using such characters in print and television ads designed to promote safety belt use. During the first wave of groups, one respondent suggested filming a television commercial with the *Budweiser* frogs encouraging young guys to always remember to “Buc-kle-up.” This idea was subsequently presented to all of the groups, and was received with enthusiasm.

**While the idea of spending life in a wheelchair is abhorrent to most, the image of a wheelchair-bound young man may not be a very effective motivator.**

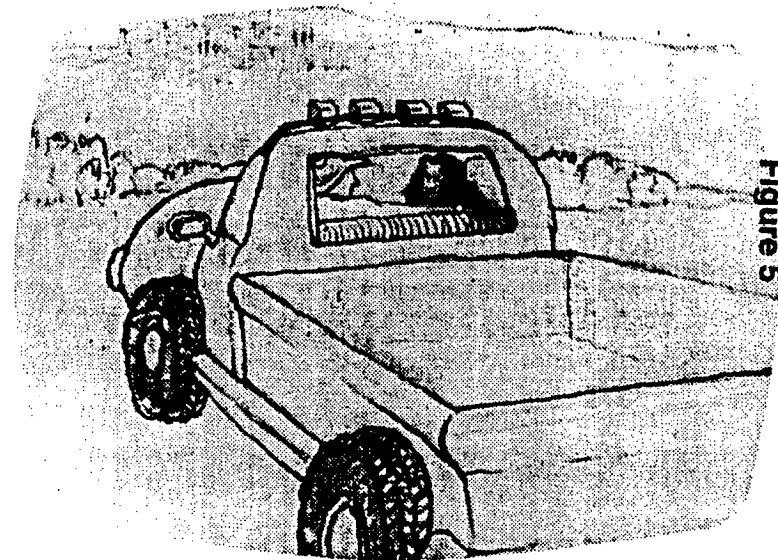
Most respondents said that they would prefer to die than to live in a chronically-incapacitated state. At the same time, reactions to some of the visual concepts using a wheelchair as the primary image indicated that this visual may be so emotionally powerful that it sets the occasion for defenses such as denial, distortion, avoidance, and repression. These defenses serve to effectively protect the viewer from anxious feelings associated with the prospect of spending life in a wheelchair.



Her: "Before we go any further, please put it on."

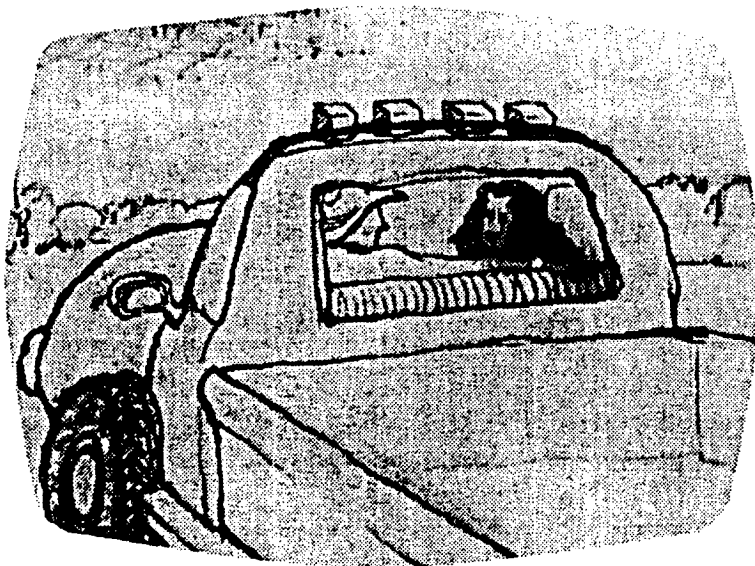
Him: "No, I don't want to."

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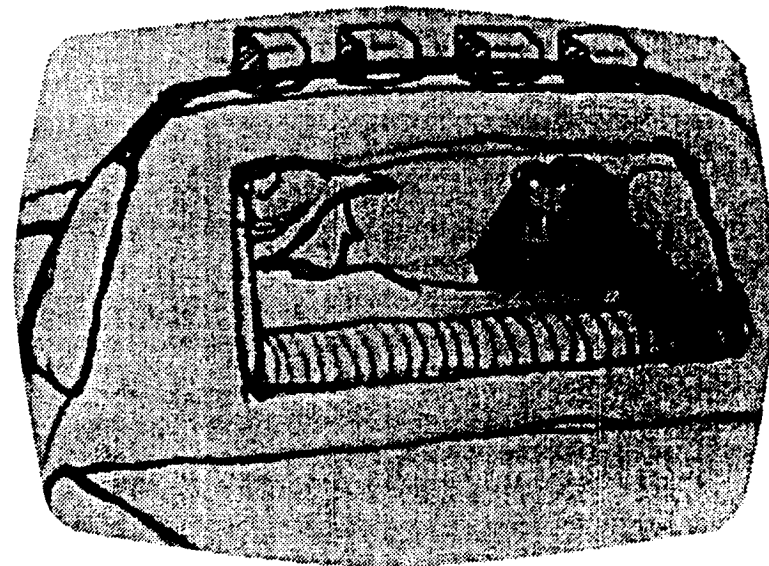
Her: "If you care about me you'll put it on."

Him: "But it's not comfortable. You know I don't like to wear one."



Her: "Please. let's be safe."

Him: "Oh, all right."



Protection is important.

Buckle up.

**Do not state or suggest that safety belts will always protect occupants during a crash.**

The respondents have been told otherwise by important influencers in their lives, including family, friends, police officers, paramedics/EMTs, and physicians. As a result, they simply do not view an “always/never” message as believable. Acknowledge that safety belts don’t always save lives, but *emphasize* that they do improve your chance of not being seriously injured or killed in a severe crash.

**Emphasizing that a person should use his safety belt because, “It’s the law!” can be counterproductive.**

During the first wave of groups, most respondents agreed that an appeal focused around buckling-up because, “It’s the law” will be ineffective, and possibly even elicit resentment. Respondents from Texas, in particular, stressed that respect for the law must be earned instead of commanded, and that the present primary<sup>1</sup> safety belt law does not deserve their respect. In Kentucky, the respondents were less vehement, but still objected to a campaign emphasizing the importance of obeying the safety belt law. Many offered that the secondary<sup>2</sup> safety belt law in Kentucky is considered by many to be “a joke.”

**Balance the use of real-life people and nationally-recognized personalities as spokespersons.**

The respondents indicated they would be interested in PSAs that featured a local/regional person with a relevant story to tell. Television and radio spots with personalities such as television star Tim Allen, NASCAR drivers Rusty Wallace or Jeff Gordon, or country music star Shania Twain would also appeal to the target audience. Live speakers with a relevant personal story can be effective, but the speaker must be energetic and personable.

**When possible, use the venue of a small group presentation or a small discussion group to emphasize the importance of safety belt use.**

The respondents complained that all too often, a large lecture format is used as the venue to provide young people with important health and safety information. This discourages participants from asking questions, sharing their ideas, and discussing their feelings; and typically results in a learning experience that is viewed by many as impersonal, irrelevant, and forgettable. They said that a

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<sup>1</sup> Primary enforcement allows a law enforcement officer to stop a vehicle solely for observing an unbelted driver or passenger.

<sup>2</sup> Secondary enforcement does not allow a law enforcement officer to stop a vehicle solely for observing an unbelted driver or passenger. The officer can only stop a vehicle for a violation other than a safety belt violation.

**small, interactive group forum would be a more effective venue for an educator or spokesperson to provide them with important health/safety information. They remarked that participation in the present focus groups “got them thinking,” and suggested that similar discussion groups conducted in schools could help promote safety belt usage.**

## REASONS SUPPORTING THE NONUSE OF SAFETY BELTS

The respondents offered a large array of personal reasons to account for their failure to wear safety belts. They also spoke about institutional, familial, and peer influences on their behavior. For some, fate and determinism play a role in their decision not to buckle up. Many also remarked that freedom of choice is important for them, and that safety belt use should not be mandated, but should be up to the individual. A large number expressed negative feelings about the safety belt law, and added that uneven and ineffective enforcement of the law contributes to their refusal to comply and their feelings of resentment. Finally, some of the respondents harbored misconceptions about the overall safety of pickup trucks, providing information which suggested they feel protected when driving their pickup.

### Personal Beliefs

The respondents readily acknowledged that they recognize safety belts as a safety device, but admitted that even with this knowledge, they typically do not buckle up. They offered a number of different reasons to account for this. Some indicated that they simply forget to buckle up.

*"It just slips my mind." - Texas*

*"I don't wear it all the time, just when I remember to." - Kentucky*

*"It just doesn't come to mind. There's not a lot of traffic here so you don't expect something major to happen. It's not a matter of taking a risk; you just don't think about it." - Kentucky*

*"If you get in the habit you'll do it, but its hard to get in the habit when you're in and out of your truck a lot. You just don't think about it" - Texas*

Many complained that safety belts are uncomfortable and too confining and expressed their belief that the design technology should exist to develop a safety belt that is easily adjustable, comfortable, and effective.

*"I don't like to be strapped down. It makes me claustrophobic." - Texas*

*"In a small- or mid-size truck, there's just no give; the belts are uncomfortable." - Texas*

*"If you're wearing a seat belt and drop something, you can't pick it up." - Texas*

*"Seat belts are just uncomfortable. If they were big and fluffy it might be different." - Kentucky*

*"It makes me hot in the summertime." - Kentucky*

*"No two drivers are built the same way. They can make seats that adjust; why can't they make a seat belt that fits?" - Kentucky*

*"I don't like that it locks up if you put the brakes on real hard." - Kentucky*

The respondents frequently stated their belief that safety belts are not really needed or important to use for short and routine trips around town. They offered that when driving long distances on the highway, or while driving in a city, safety belts are more important to use. They cited a number of reasons, including faster driving speeds; encounters with aggressive drivers; unfamiliar road signs and traffic patterns; and stricter safety belt law enforcement by state and city police. They added that they typically will wear their safety belts at such times.

*"You could have a wreck on a five minute trip, but there is less chance than if you are on a 45-minute trip." - Texas*

*"Everything is so close here; five to six minutes to get anywhere. There's just no need to wear them." - Texas*

*"I'll take a short drive I have made 100 times before and never had a problem. It would take more time to put it on and take it off than to get there." - Kentucky*

*"I don't use a belt if it takes five minutes to get there, but if I'm going to Paintsville, I'll wear it." - Kentucky*

*"There's a lot more cars in Lubbock, and you almost always get in an accident. Everyone there is in a hurry, not like here. I put my seat belt on in Lubbock, turn the radio down, and watch behind me." - Texas*

*"I get nervous in a big town like Abilene. I wear my seat belt there, but not here. You're more likely to get stopped there. People are flying. The cops here warn you, but don't give you a ticket." - Texas*

A number of respondents provided personal anecdotes and indirect accounts (e.g., reports by police, EMTs, physicians, and friends) of situations where safety belts did not protect the driver and, in fact, may have contributed to a more serious crash-related injury or death.

*"It's probably 50/50. My friend was in a bad wreck where he wasn't wearing a belt. He totaled his truck, but he didn't have a scratch." - Texas*

*"Do seat belts help? It depends. I've seen somebody get killed. If the wreck is that bad, you're going to die anyway." - Texas*

*"It's just a big 'if' when it comes down to whether seat belts help." - Texas*

*"There are some situations when people die because they were wearing their belts; like when you go into the river and can't get your belt off and drown." - Kentucky*

*"My cousin's seat belt jammed during an accident and he couldn't get out." - Texas*

*"Seat belts can kill you in certain situations. One ripped a girl right in two." - Kentucky*

*"People have died from wearing a seat belt and being trapped in the car." - Kentucky*

*"I got broad-sided and flew 200 feet out of my pickup. I might have been injured more with the belt on. When a vehicle is crushed around me, the cab is the last place I want to be." - Texas*

*"I worry that it wouldn't come off after a crash, and I wouldn't want to be in there if it caught fire." - Texas*

*"What if the electronic belt locks up? You're a dead man." - Kentucky*

*"If I was in an accident and the car was mangled, they might not be able to get me out." - Kentucky*

A number of other general reasons for nonuse, while less common, were also cited.

*"The buckle is always shoved back into the seat, so I let it stay there." - Kentucky*

*"I drive different without other kids in the car. I drive real fast when I'm alone, and I don't wear my belt. I make others wear seat belts, and I drive slower with them." - Texas*

*"When I'm alone in my truck, I don't bother with a seat belt. When I have passengers, I put it on. When I drive with my fiancée, I will make sure she puts it on." - Texas*

*"If I drink a little, I put a belt on. It keeps you from getting stopped." - Texas*

*"I don't consider myself a dangerous driver. I do everything right except wear a belt." - Kentucky*

### **Institutional Messages and Behavior Contraindicating Safety Belt Use**

The respondents remarked that while the state police are often adamant about enforcing the state safety belt law, local police seem to have little interest in enforcement. They have observed that the local police often do not wear safety belts. Also, many respondents said that police and rescue squad professionals have shared stories suggesting that in some situations, not wearing a safety belt saved a person's life.

*"Cops don't even wear them here." - Texas*

*"A state trooper told me about somebody that would've died if he was wearing his seat belt." - Kentucky*

*"I've heard a lot of stories from the police and rescue squad about people who survived because they weren't wearing a seat belt." - Texas*

*"I've been in two wrecks, and in both the officer said I probably would have been killed if I was wearing a belt." - Texas*

### **Parental/Family Messages and Behavior Contraindicating Safety Belt Use**

While family tended to serve as a major influencer for many of the rural respondents, they said that their older family members often do not wear safety belts. Many also stated that while their parent(s) would probably prefer that they buckle up, they do not consider this preference seriously, and typically face no consequences for failing to wear their safety belt. Some of the respondents remarked that if a younger sibling, child, or girlfriend/wife requested that they buckle-up, they would comply with their wish.

*"My dad emphasized proper maintenance and to avoid the oncoming car, but neither of my parents wear seat belts." - Kentucky*

*"All of our dads are fast drivers, and they don't wear seat belts." - Kentucky*

*"My parents never told me to wear it." - Texas*

*"A lot of parents don't wear them." - Texas*

*"Most parents don't wear their seat belts either." - Kentucky*

*"My parents are not safe drivers, and they don't wear their belts." - Kentucky*

*"My mom is a speed demon. She thinks if I wear my belt it's fine, but if I don't it's fine too." - Kentucky*

*"My mom asked me, 'Can this thing really do 100 mph,' so I showed her." - Kentucky*

*"My two year old niece will tell me to buckle-up, and I do." - Texas*

*"Who might be able to change your behavior? Wives, girlfriends, and people you really love." - Texas*

### **Peer Messages and Behavior Contraindicating Safety Belt Use**

For many of the respondents, peers were cited as major influencers. Safety belt use is not part of their peer culture and value system, and it would be unusual that a young male would ask his friend to buckle up. Some respondents indicated that they would comply with such a request, while others stated they would not. A number offered that within their peer group, a person who wears a safety belt while driving may do so because he does not have confidence in himself as a driver. In a similar manner, a passenger who puts on a safety belt is expressing a lack of confidence in his friend's driving.

*"Your friends' influence is pretty important. What they say does affect the way you drive." - Texas*

*"Your friends make fun of you for wearing a seat belt; not always, but it does happen." - Kentucky*

*"Your friends wouldn't insist that you wear a belt. If they always tell you what to do, you won't be friends anymore." - Texas*

*"It makes me feel uncomfortable if I'm in someone's truck and he puts his belt on and I don't, but this doesn't happen much." - Texas*

*"If a friend (who was driving) told me to, I'd wear the belt. Why? Respect, and so he doesn't get a ticket." - Texas*

*"If a friend put his belt on when he is driving, I would put it on too." - Kentucky*

*"I'll ask a friend, 'What are you putting your belt on for, I'm not going to wreck.'" - Kentucky*

*"I'll sometimes wear a belt if my friend can't drive worth shit." - Kentucky*

### **Role of Fate and Determinism**

Many respondents remarked that they believe events in their life are predetermined, and that if they are meant to die in a crash, there is nothing they can do to prevent this outcome. At the same time, a large number said that they recognize they can tempt fate by driving in a reckless, stupid manner. They cited drunk driving as an example. They typically did not, however, view safety belt nonuse as a way to tempt fate.

*"What's meant to be is what's meant to be." - Texas*

*"You can't let fear be the guiding force in your life." - Texas*

*"You can't live life scared, but don't act reckless." - Texas*

*"Don't be stupid; you know when you're crossing the line." - Texas*

*"I'm not going to drive 70 mph through town and try to get in an accident and then say God meant for it to be." - Texas*

*"If it's meant to happen it's going to happen. I used to be the safest driver ever, but someone hit me and then I just didn't care anymore." - Texas*

*"Do I tempt fate by not wearing a seat belt? No; either way I drive the same." - Texas*

*"When your number is up, it's up, whether or not you're wearing a belt." - Texas*

## **Role of Freedom of Choice**

The respondents were often adamant about their feeling that safety belt use should not be mandated, but should be a matter of personal choice. They complained that government already intervenes too much in their lives, and should stay out of matters that do not affect anyone else other than the person who is making the choice.

*"I don't see how the law has the right to tell you to wear it if (not wearing) it can only hurt you. It's not going to hurt anyone else. It should be your choice." - Texas*

*"You should make the decision yourself. You're in your own car, and they shouldn't tell you what to do. It makes me feel resentful." - Texas*

*"I don't like government limiting the ways I can hurt myself. It's a personal decision." - Texas*

*"Seat belts are a good idea, but wearing one should be a personal choice." - Kentucky*

*"The seat belt laws are a violation of civil liberties." - Kentucky*

*"It should be an age issue. Younger kids are not old enough to understand the consequences of their own choices, while we are." - Texas*

*"There's pros and cons, but you ought to have the option. If you're old enough to drive, you're old enough to make the choice." - Texas*

*"Most people who refuse to wear a seat belt do so because of stubbornness. They don't like being told what to do." - Texas*

*"My uncle cut the seat belts out of his pickup, because he believes it's freedom of choice." - Kentucky*

*"Seat belt use is pretty much your choice. I hate to be told what to do." - Kentucky*

## **Negative Attitudes Toward Safety Belt Laws and Other Issues Involving Effective Law Enforcement**

Respondents in Texas complained that the primary<sup>3</sup> safety belt law in the state is largely ineffective, and is certainly not enforced by local police. In Kentucky, which has a secondary<sup>4</sup> safety belt law, the respondents remarked that the present law is a joke, and that if safety belt use was really that important, there would be a primary law. They also remarked that there is minimal enforcement of the law at the local level.

*"You have to remember that when everybody here learned to drive, there was no law." - Texas*

*"Is it a good law? Yes, if you're doing something wrong and get stopped and you're not wearing it. But it's not good if you get stopped only because you're not wearing it." - Texas*

*"In (a nearby) town, the local police got tough for three months because the city council told the police to enforce the law. People started wearing their belts because of the fine. You never hear that they do it for safety; they do it for the fine." - Texas*

*"It's a stupid law. They can't pull you over as a primary offense and its only a \$25 fine." - Kentucky*

*"If they're going to make it a law and they can't pull you over for it, then it's not a law. If it's not a primary offense, there doesn't need to be a law." - Kentucky*

*"The seat belt law stinks. If they want to have a law, it should only affect kids. We're consenting adults and we should be able to decide." - Texas*

*"It's just the county and state trying to get more money out of you." - Kentucky*

*"This is Small Town USA. We don't have more than 2-3 cops on duty at any one time. The police are under-manned, over-worked, and have to concentrate on more hardened criminals." - Kentucky*

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<sup>3</sup> Primary enforcement allows a law enforcement officer to stop a vehicle solely for observing an unbelted driver or passenger.

<sup>4</sup> Secondary enforcement does not allow a law enforcement officer to stop a vehicle solely for observing an unbelted driver or passenger. The officer can only stop a vehicle for a violation other than a safety belt violation.

*"There's better things the police can do than to look for people who aren't wearing belts. They came on too strong. They hit us with, 'It's the Law.' You can't demand respect, you have to earn it. The police are demanding respect." - Texas*

*"There's very little enforcement here." - Texas*

*"They don't reinforce the law. I got cited but I never had to pay the fine." - Kentucky*

Many of the respondents admitted that a strictly enforced primary law, coupled with a large fine, would probably encourage them to wear their safety belt regularly.

*"It would only take one time of paying the fine to make me wear my seat belt." - Texas*

*"If enforcement was strict, people would think about it more and just do it." - Texas*

*"Strict law enforcement would make a difference. A higher fine would make a bigger difference." - Texas*

*"If they raised the fine, I would develop the habit of wearing it, but it would make the resentment worse." - Texas*

*"I think people would buckle-up more if they were paid to buckle-up, not fined if they don't." - Kentucky*

*"What would work? State-wide enforcement and consistent enforcement. Show the reality of the consequences - \$65 is a lot, but \$150 would be better. Have the same consequences as the DWI law." - Texas*

### **Misconceptions About the Safety of Pickup Trucks**

Many of the respondents remarked that they believe pickup trucks offer numerous safety advantages to the driver in emergency situations or during a crash. They admitted that this gives them more confidence to take risks they might not otherwise attempt. When asked about the dangers associated with pickup truck rollover, most of the respondents minimized this, and some said they have been unhurt in rollovers, even when they have been ejected from the cab.

*"You're safer in a crash. Pickups are larger, stronger, and higher off the ground than cars." - Texas*

*"Cars are more dangerous. A Geo in a crash is history." - Texas*

*"People get out of the way of your truck." - Texas*

*"If you're in a pickup, you've got to get hit pretty hard to fly out." - Texas*

*"I feel more secure in a truck. You can run right over a car if it hits you." - Kentucky*

*"I feel safer in a truck. You crawl down into a car, I don't like it. I like to climb up into a truck." - Texas*

*"In a big pickup, when you get hit it offers more protection." - Texas*

## **LIFESTYLE INFORMATION**

### **Personal Interactions with the Community**

Most of the young rural males who participated in the focus groups have lived in their home town for their entire lives. They spoke about the feeling of safety and security they enjoy, and remarked that they perceive larger cities as dangerous, unpredictable, and unfriendly. At the same time, they complained that life in their town is often boring, with few outside activities available. On a typical weekend night, they often will "hang out" with friends at a local spot (e.g., the car wash, a drive-in restaurant, a point by the river) to catch up on local gossip. Sometimes they attend a local high school athletic event, or travel to a larger town for entertainment. Some said they travel thirty miles or more just to see a movie or go to a club. Employment opportunities are also limited. Many of the respondents mentioned that jobs in their area have low wages and offer little opportunity for advancement. Some in Kentucky spoke bitterly about the way in which the declining economy has forced some of the coal mines to close, eliminating some of the better paying jobs in the region. Many in Texas said they are involved in ranching and agriculture, and expect they will always work on their family's land.

### **Important Influencers**

The respondents reported that they maintain close, multi-generation ties with family members, and continue to value the advice and guidance offered to them by family members. They emphasized the importance of both tradition and family values, and suggested that these are probably more important influencers in small town environments than they are in larger cities.

*"Traditionally, family influence sets a path for you, and this is a very traditional part of the country." - Texas*

*"I listen to my parents. What they tell me has a lot of weight." - Texas*

*"I go to my father for advice. It's a lot better than friends' advice." - Texas*

*"Your dad may be the best friend you ever have. His advice might make you mad, and you don't want to listen, but you do anyway." - Texas*

*"I always listen to my family. My dad wants me to make the right decisions." - Kentucky*

*"Most of the time if my mom tells me something and I don't do it, it (something bad) will happen." - Kentucky*

*"I'm not going to let down the people who have confidence in me. I respect my parents." - Kentucky*

Peers are also important influencers in their lives. They have known many of their friends since early childhood, and expect to know these same people throughout their lives. Since most do not leave home after high school to continue their education, they do not seem largely affected by new, outside influencers during their late teens and early twenties. They are conformists because it is expected that they will conform to "local norms," and they react to new ideas presented by outsiders with suspicion and resistance.

### **Learning to Drive and Subsequent Driving Behavior**

Many of the respondents indicated they were driving a vehicle (e.g., a tractor, pickup truck) on farm lands and back roads by the time they were ten years old, or for some as soon as they could reach the pedals; and most were driving into town before they took a driver education class or were licensed to drive. Few spoke about receiving occupant protection information before they began to drive. Instead, most were simply told to keep the vehicle on the road and travel at a safe speed.

The respondents acknowledged that they often travel at high speeds and attempt dangerous maneuvers while driving their pickups. Some spoke about the excitement associated with these behaviors, while others remarked that they enjoy "scaring" their friends by driving "fast and crazy." A large number of respondents said they have been involved in one or more crashes, some of which resulted in their being ejected from the cab of their trucks. Even persons injured in such crashes said they still do not wear their safety belts regularly. A number seemed to use the fact that they had survived the crash, while unrestrained, as the rationale for continuing to not wear a safety belt.

Many of the respondents said they wear their safety belt when driving on a highway, or when traveling in a "big town" or city. Some commented that they view highway driving as more dangerous, primarily because the driving behavior of other people is more unpredictable. They remarked that when driving in more congested metropolitan areas, they are at higher risk for a crash because traffic patterns change quickly and people tend to drive more aggressively. The respondents also said that they are more likely to wear their safety belt because

both the state police (on highways) and city police (in metropolitan areas) are more rigorous in enforcing the safety belt ordinance.

### **Relationship with Law Enforcement Officials**

The respondents indicated they know the local police officers, see them almost every day, and relate to them in a friendly manner. Safety belt offenses are generally treated by local police as less serious than moving violations, and a verbal warning by the officer will usually suffice. In the event that a person is actually cited for a safety belt or other violation, some respondents said that it is easy to find someone at the court house who can "take care of it." A few, in fact, said that they have received multiple traffic citations, but have never been convicted or paid a fine.

*"I know the cops here; recognize their faces. I know which ones will let it slide." - Texas*

*"Once you're 14 and driving on the road, if a cop goes by he won't stop you cause he knows you can drive." - Texas*

*"The cop pulled us over and gave us a warning. Most of the time they won't give you a ticket." - Kentucky*

*"I got pulled over six times in two weeks; no seat belts, no tickets." - Kentucky*

*"All you need (to avoid the fine) is to have some pull in the court house; you've just got to know even a janitor. I know someone with nine DUIs who still got away because he knew the cops well." - Kentucky*

*"If you know somebody in the court house, your ticket is thrown away. Even in (name of town), my grandmother knew somebody in the court house and my ticket was changed from speeding to faulty equipment." - Kentucky*

*"Politics here is as good as money can buy." - Kentucky*

In contrast, the respondents indicated that the state police and highway patrol are adamant about enforcement, including safety belt laws, and added that it is difficult for them to avoid the conviction and fine if they are ticketed. Many said they wear their safety belts when traveling on the highway or in a city because it is more likely they will encounter a state policeman there.

*"It depends on who stops you. If they're straight out of the academy, they'll give you a ticket." - Kentucky*

# **MESSAGE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES**

## **Informational Needs of the Target Audience**

The respondents generally agreed that while safety belts do not always save lives, they do offer the driver who uses one greater protection in most types of crashes. It is therefore unlikely that they would increase their safety belt use in response to a PI&E campaign aimed at convincing them that safety belts are a useful and proven safety device. Furthermore, the respondents indicated that they are aware of the state safety belt law, and certainly do not need to be told or reminded that they should buckle up because, "It's the law!" Many agreed that for PI&E materials to catch their attention and get them to think more about buckling up, the materials must contain certain elements to "hook" their attention, and play on certain "themes" to maintain their attention.

During the first wave of focus groups, the respondents provided information indicating that humor, truthfulness, drama, familiar images, and powerful visuals are elements that will "hook" them into paying attention to an ad. They added there are several popular themes which add to the appeal of a particular ad. These themes included tradition, family values, protection, responsibility, freedom of choice, sex appeal, friendship, sports, dogs/young kids, mutilation, and fate. However, not all of these tested well during the second wave of groups.

## **Concept Testing - Print Materials and PSAs**

The "hooks" and "themes" cited by respondents during the first wave of focus groups were used as stimuli for developing the print, radio, and television PI&E materials that were concept tested during the second wave of groups. At least one hook and one theme was combined for the different concepts tested. Whenever possible, multiple hooks and themes were combined. For example, for one of the television PSA storyboards showing a boy with his dog, humor and a familiar image served as hooks, and tradition, protection, and a boy/dog relationship served as themes.

Tested materials included one-panel and two-panel posters, as well as copy written for each.

## One-Panel Print Concepts

The respondents between 20-26 years preferred the one-panel poster concepts, noting that a single-panel graphic provides the viewer with a simple, straightforward, and unmistakable message. Most indicated that images depicting a driver suffering a severe crash-related head injury (Figure 6); a little girl mourning the loss of her older brother or father (Figure 7); and a mother and her two young children standing over a gravesite (Figure 8), were visually powerful and effective. Comments included:

For Figure 6 (windshield):

*"[It] shows what actually happens, it hurts." - Kentucky*

*"[It] makes me put myself in that person's place." - Kentucky*

*"[It] starts making you think about your face hitting the windshield." - Texas*

*"I like it; he's eating the shield. A guy getting his teeth knocked out by three inches of glass will get my attention." - Kentucky*

For Figure 7 (child at grave):

*"It makes you think twice." - Texas*

*"The little girl makes you think about the loved ones you're leaving behind." - Texas*

*"[There's] someone who hasn't lived long and doesn't understand [what has happened]." - Texas*

*"The little kid grabs the attention of all ages." - Kentucky*

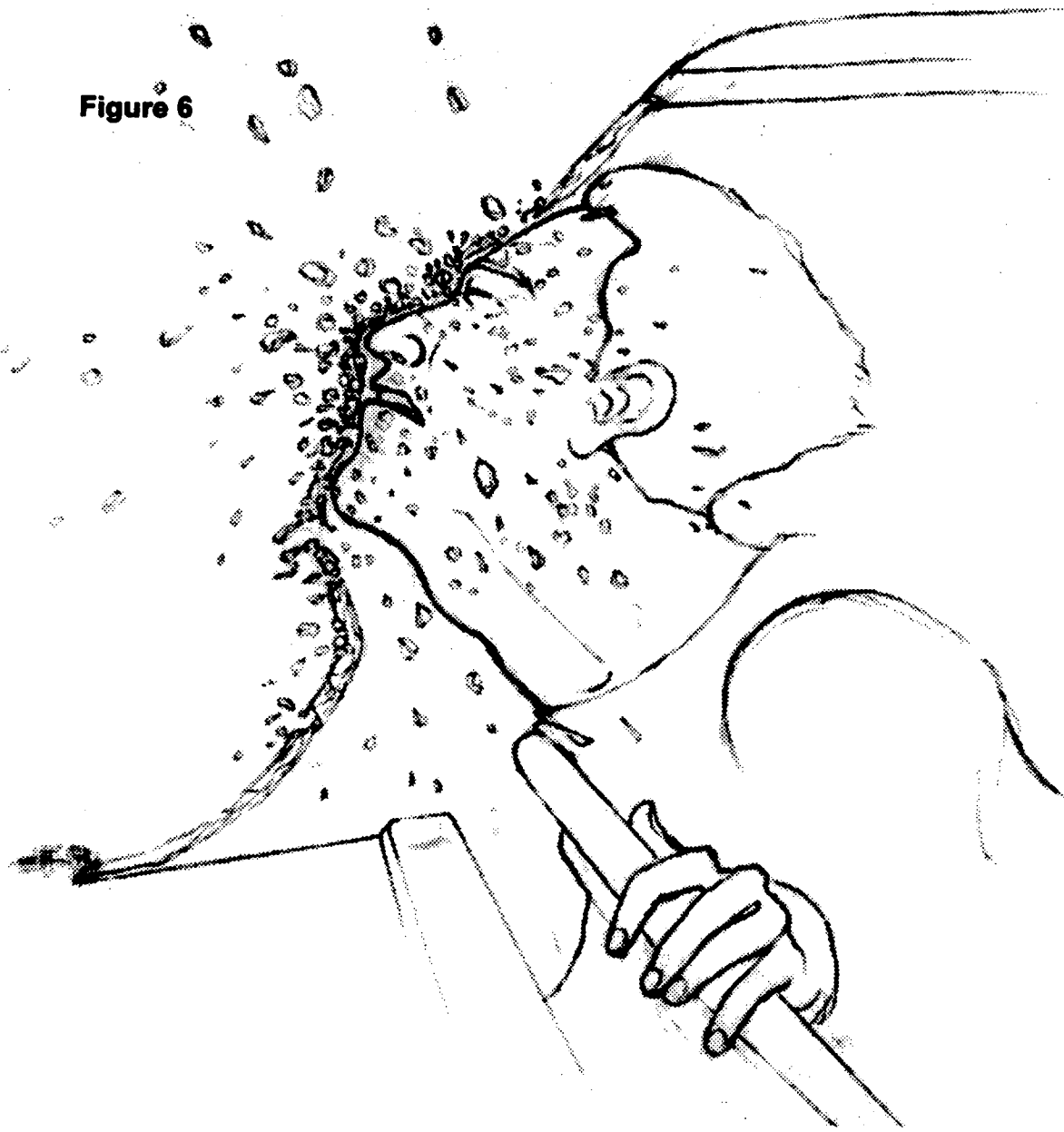
*"You feel more for a younger child." - Kentucky*

*"It's effective...She's alone and doesn't understand." - Kentucky*

*"It's real good. It makes you realize what could happen." - Kentucky*

*"It would be a good idea to have the tombstone show the age of the person who was killed." - Kentucky*

Figure 6



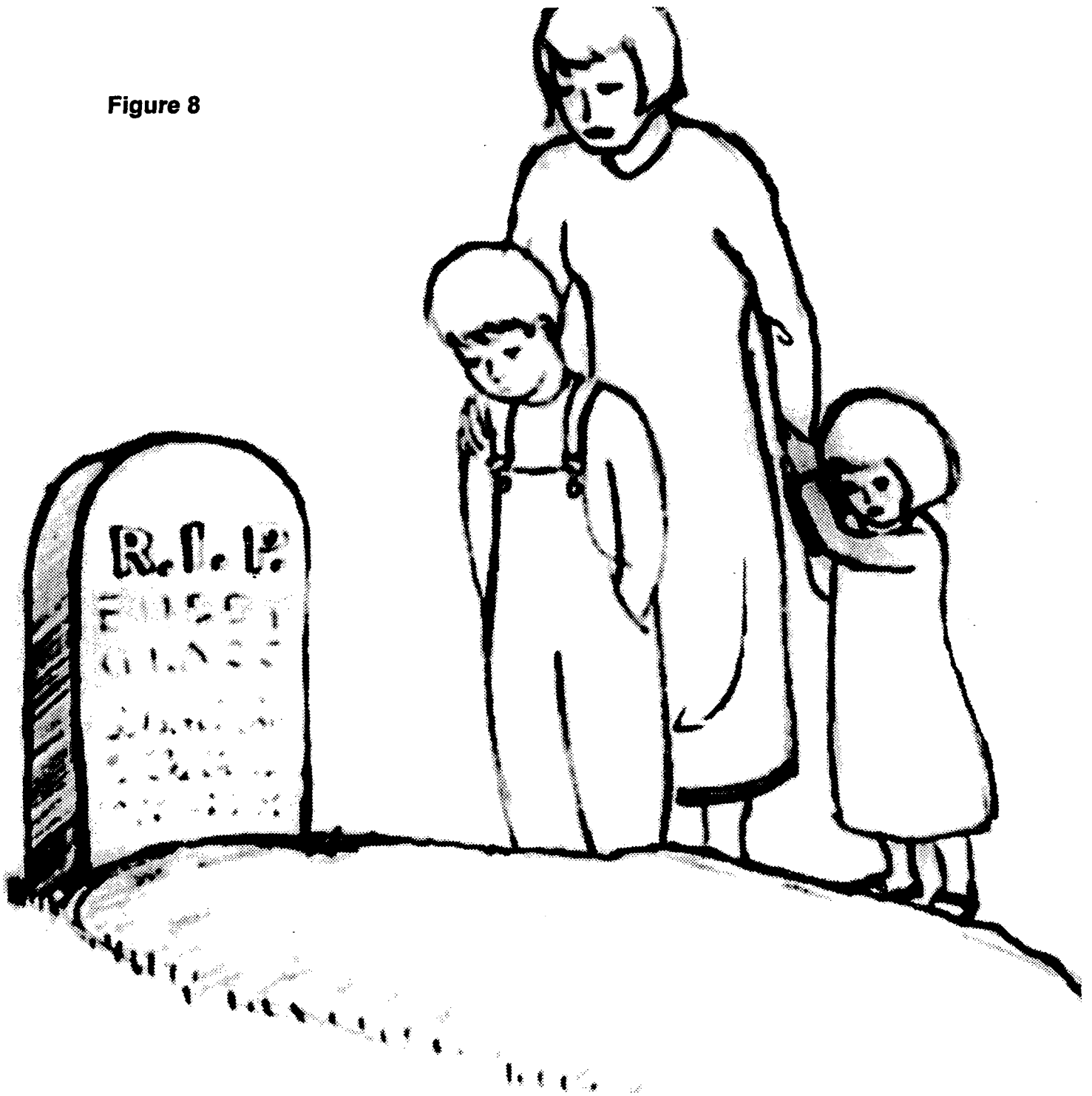
With a seatbelt, you'll never go  
through the windshield.  
Buckle up.

Figure 7



You're not the only one affected  
when you don't use a seat belt.

Figure 8



Buckle up for the ones you love.

For Figure 8 (family at grave):

*"Perfect. It almost makes you want to cry." - Kentucky*

*"[You] could put yourself in that situation." - Kentucky*

*"[It] makes you think twice." - Texas*

Another poster concept depicting a young male family member "missing" from a family photo (Figure 9) was also well-received by the respondents. They remarked that the visual concept emphasizes the importance of family and sensitizes the viewer to the loss their family would suffer. They added that pairing 'family' with 'death' is frightening for them.

*"It shows the consequences." - Texas*

*"It makes you relate to your own family experience." - Texas*

*"That could be you or your little brother or sister." - Texas*

*"It hits the heart." - Kentucky*

*"It works well with the young and old." - Kentucky*

*"It gets you to think that you could get killed if you don't wear your seat belt. It's straightforward." - Kentucky*

## **Two-Panel Print Concepts**

Most of the younger males, ages 16-19, preferred the two-panel poster concepts over the one-panel concepts. Many said they liked the way in which the two-panel designs "tell a story." Information from the first wave of focus groups served as stimuli for developing the two-panel concepts. For each poster, the first panel included verbatim statements offered by respondents when they were asked to explain why they did not always use their safety belts. The statements were shown as being said by a young guy facing the reader. The second panel included a message and graphic designed to refute the first-panel statements. The second panel graphics and copy illustrated a range of possible outcomes: a wrecked pickup; bodily injury requiring treatment by an EMT; hospitalization; confinement to a wheelchair; and death and the pain of a family mourning the loss of a loved one. Figure 10 provides an example of the two-panel concept.

Although the respondents did not seem to strongly prefer any two-panel concept over the others, the images that evoked the strongest reactions were those of a



Figure 9

Something might be missing if  
you don't buckle up.



I've driven there 100 times  
and never had a problem.



It only takes once.

badly wrecked pickup truck and a gravesite surrounded by loved ones. Most agreed that a very graphic image of a crash site (e.g., wrecked vehicle, police and rescue squad vehicles, EMTs, a body on the side of the road) would grab the attention of young male viewers, who typically will “rubberneck” when they drive past a crashed vehicle. The respondents also remarked that a gravesite scene is especially effective because a message emphasizing death as a consequence is clear, concise, and impactful.

*“A wreck scene is very powerful. You can have a cloth over the victim; show he’s dead. You definitely need to combine the wreck with death; that’s the kind of thing that will catch people’s attention.” - Kentucky*

*“Gore is good; it gets right to the point.” - Kentucky*

*“Combining death and family is a good idea.” - Texas*

*“The grave gets right to the finality of it all.” - Texas*

*“There has to be something that makes you think about death.” - Texas*

The reactions provided to the visual image of a young man in a wheelchair were equivocal. Some respondents indicated this was a powerful graphic which resonated with them because they would actually prefer death to spending the remainder of their life in a wheelchair. Others, however, said the wheelchair graphic would not effectively catch their attention. Some offered statements suggesting they were confused as to whether the wheelchair signified a “good” or “bad” outcome. Others indicated the person’s injury might not be too serious, and that he might be able to walk again later. Some said that the idea of being confined to a wheelchair elicits thoughts and feelings that are so negative that they would actually “block out” the image by either not attending to it (denial), or devising a coping strategy to make the image less intense (distortion).

*“Nobody really wants to think about himself as being in a wheelchair, but if you have blood and gore, it will catch your eyes and you’ll want to read it.” - Texas*

*“Death is clear and understandable, but a wheelchair is almost too scary; you can still get along, but you’re stuck forever in the chair.” - Kentucky*

Other images that did not clearly show a catastrophic outcome were deemed relatively ineffective. Some respondents said that crash victims are routinely strapped to a backboard, regardless of the severity of the injury, so showing an EMT performing this procedure was not particularly powerful. Likewise, a person lying in a hospital bed was viewed by many respondents as a weak image, with many noting that five minutes later, the person could get up and walk around.

The respondents suggested additional images which could be used effectively in the two-panel format. For example, they recommended a graphic showing a body, covered with a blanket, lying next to a severely wrecked pickup truck. They also suggested a graphic showing a two-vehicle crash, which would possibly be viewed with less defensiveness by some because it raises the possibility that someone else was responsible for the crash. The younger respondents indicated that it would be more powerful to use additional panels to portray, in greater detail, the sequence of events resulting in the death of a young person who was not buckled-up in his truck: an unrestrained driver, a bad wreck, an ER or ICU hospital scene, and finally, the family standing over a gravesite. Respondents also suggested that to increase the effectiveness of the two-panel designs, it would be better to include powerful images in both panels, instead of the more neutral image that was used in the first panel during the concept testing.

*"Why not combine the bad wreck and the smashed windshield?" - Kentucky*

*"Maybe you should have a truck speeding in the left panel, and have the gravesite with a couple of friends there in the other." - Kentucky*

### **Radio PSA Message Testing**

Six radio public service announcements (PSAs) were developed on the basis of information obtained during the first wave, and then tested during the second wave. Figure 11 presents the copy for these radio PSA concepts.

The respondents consistently identified the little girl talking about her older brother (#5) and the "steamy" dialogue between the young couple (#6) as the most effective radio PSAs. As was the case with the one-panel poster concept that showed the little girl by the gravesite, the radio PSA of the little girl grabbed the attention of the majority of respondents. Although a few respondents in the younger male groups said that they would not pay attention to the little girl because they don't have children or younger siblings, the little girl's voice and message "hit home" for most of them.

*"More people would listen to a little girl." - Texas*

*"If you take the time to protect your little sister, why not [take the time to protect] yourself." - Texas*

*"I'd buckle up after listening to it." - Texas*

*"It works." - Kentucky*

**Figure 11**

1.	Sound of car skidding and crashing, followed by ambulance sirens. Narrator concludes with, "Are you wearing your seat belt?"
2.	Voice of young guy saying, "When I'm in my pickup, I like to have the odds on my side. That's why I always wear my seat belt. Listen up. Buckle up."
3.	Young guy's voice saying, "My friend and I were riding in his pickup, listening to the radio and talking. The other car came out of nowhere. Billy was thrown out part way. He's crippled now. I know if I hadn't been wearing my belt, it could have been me. Buckle up."
4.	Voice of young guy saying, "We were state champs my junior year, the last year I played. I used to be able to run the 100 in 9.5. That's just one of the things I can't do anymore, now that I'm in a wheelchair. You know, I considered myself a pretty good driver. The only thing I didn't do was wear a seat belt in my pickup. Two words of advice - Buckle up."
5.	Voice of little girl saying, "I really miss my brother. There were so many things he helped me with. He used to take me for rides in his truck, and he always made me wear my seat belt. I just wish he had worn his, too."
6.	Voices of a young guy and a young girl. Her: "Before we go any further, please put it on." Him: "No, I don't want to." Her: "If you really care about me, you'll put it on." Him: "It's not comfortable. You know I don't like to wear one." Her: "Please, let's be safe." Him: (Sighs) "OK." Her: "I love you." Narrator: "Always use protection. Buckle up on every trip."

*"It's got a lot of feeling in it." - Kentucky*

*"When anybody hears the innocent voice of a little girl, it will catch their attention." - Kentucky*

The radio PSA with the couple talking about "protection" was preferred by most of the respondents. They reacted enthusiastically to the spot, which begins with dialogue suggesting a condom ad, but then ends with a "buckle up" message. They indicated the use of "misdirection" in the ad, coupled with a humorous surprise ending, both grabbed and maintained their attention. They also said that unlike their reaction to most radio PSAs, they would not necessarily change the radio station when it came on, and would listen to it more than once.

*"I'd definitely listen." - Texas*

*"It's funny; you want to listen to it." - Texas*

*"It will still be funny tomorrow." - Texas*

*"[It] sure will get people listening." - Kentucky*

*"The humor catches your attention." - Kentucky*

*"[I] would tell others to listen to it." - Kentucky*

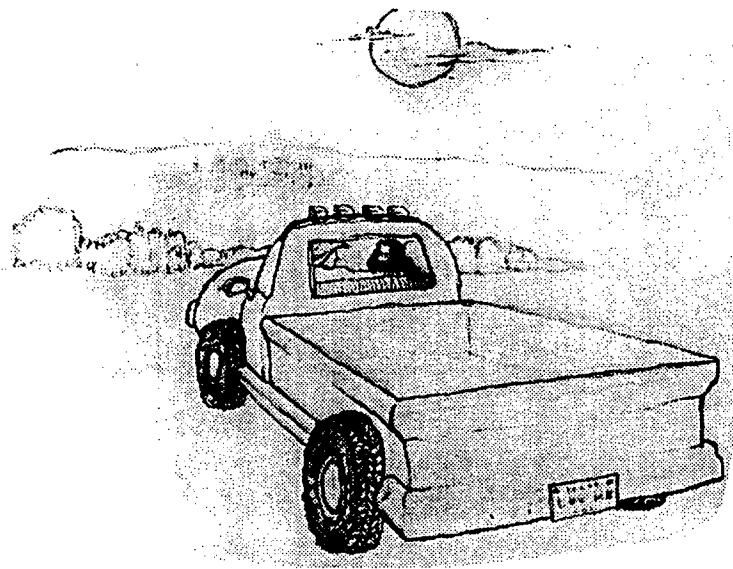
*"You'd have to listen till the end of it to find out what they're talking about. Even though it's long you'd want to listen." - Texas*

### **Television PSA Message Testing**

Several television PSA concepts were developed using hooks and themes obtained from discussions during the first wave of groups. These PSA ideas were subsequently tested during the second wave. Four-panel, black and white storyboards were designed to illustrate each of the PSA concepts.

The radio PSA with the young couple was illustrated for one of the storyboards, with the couple's dialogue remaining the same (Figure 12). Similar to the radio PSA testing, the respondents reacted very favorably to this concept, noting that it was attention-getting, funny, reinforced the "safety" message with the surprise ending, and would be worth watching repeatedly.

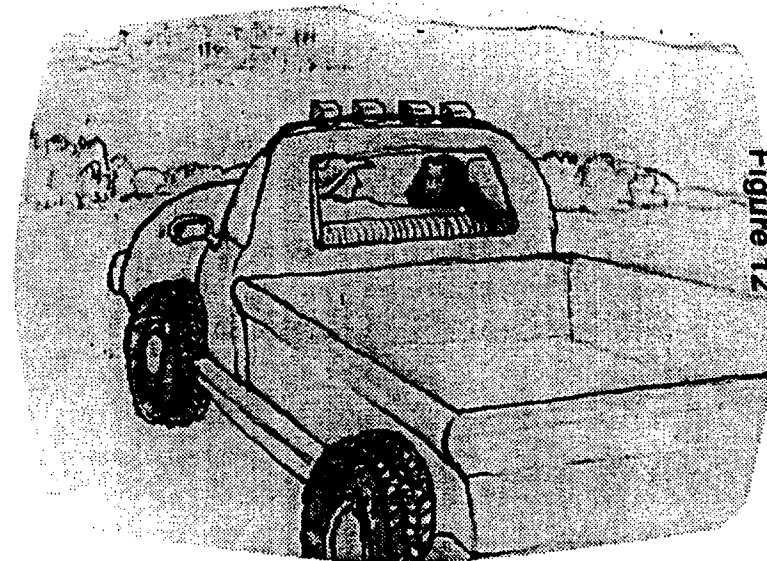
*"This one is really good. It keeps the viewer wondering and keeps him in suspense." - Texas*



Her: "Before we go any further, please put it on."

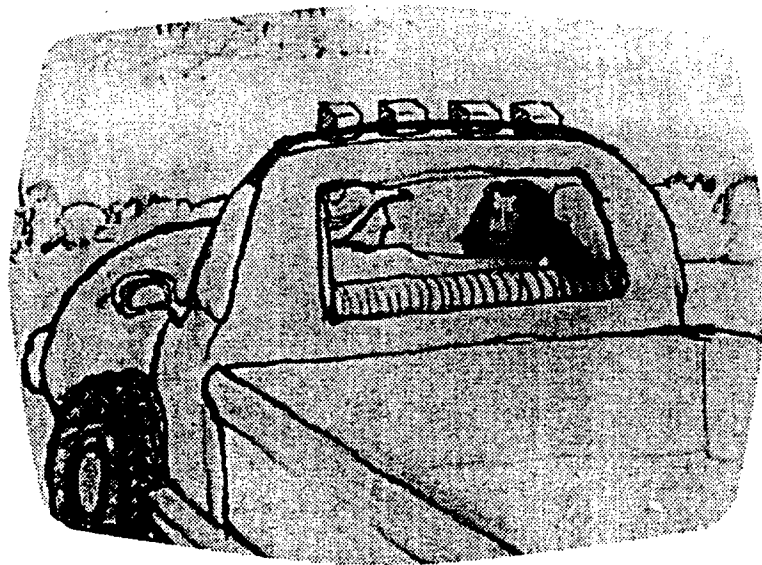
Him: "No, I don't want to."

40



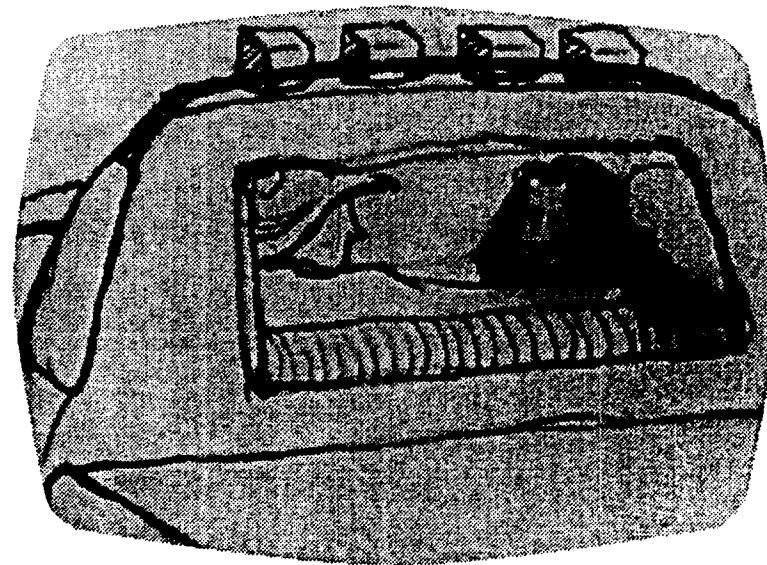
Her: "If you care about me you'll put it on."

Him: "But it's not comfortable. You know I don't like to wear one."



Her: "Please. let's be safe."

Him: "Oh, all right."



Protection is important.

Buckle up.

*"You would sit there and watch the whole thing." - Texas*

*"This is definitely a way to get people to listen." - Kentucky*

*"Sex will always get your attention." - Kentucky*

Another popular concept was one which used a sports analogy to emphasize the importance of "protection." (Figure 13). Most of the younger respondents indicated that because they are actively involved in sports, they would enjoy watching this PSA. Some of the older respondents objected to the use of high school athletes, and suggested instead that the PSA could feature either two NFL stars, or an NFL player talking to a high school athlete. With respect to the latter idea, they emphasized that having a highly-recognizable and respected NFL player serve as a role model and mentor for a high school athlete would likely attract the attention of viewers and encourage them to emulate the behavior. While the younger respondents indicated that the message would be strong enough without NFL stars, they agreed that the PSA would likely catch their attention if it had famous football players such as Emmitt Smith, Troy Aikman or Steve Young.

*"I like sports. It makes me think." - Texas*

*"[NFL stars] are better than [using] high school guys because they have more adult appeal." - Texas*

*"It's catchy because it shows friends talking to each other, watching out for each other." - Kentucky*

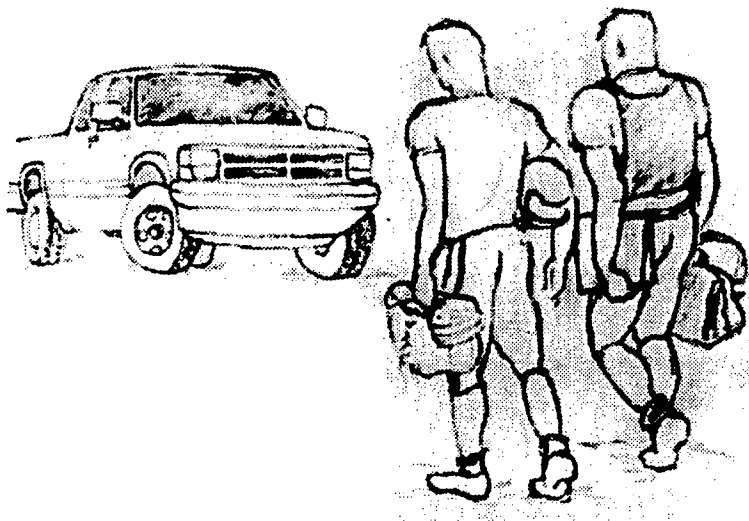
*"I like that. Have a pro player talking to a younger guy." - Kentucky*

The respondents' reactions to the other storyboards seemed largely predicated on individual taste; with no consistent preferences noted. They offered many suggestions to improve the format and content of the PSAs, and provided information suggesting that humor and catastrophic outcomes are both effective ways to attract and maintain their attention.

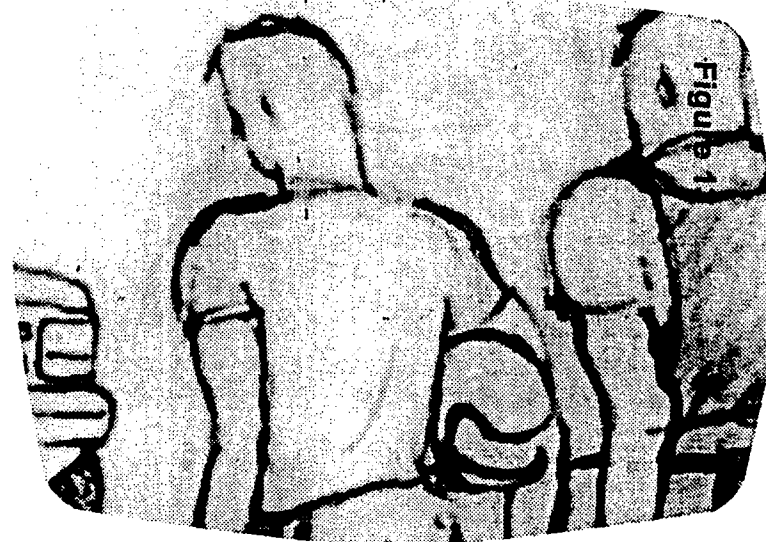
*"It's got to be either very serious or funny; otherwise it's dull." - Kentucky*

### **Spokespersons**

When asked about possible spokespersons for a campaign targeting young male pickup truck drivers, the respondents suggested including both popular personalities and persons with a story relevant to occupant protection.

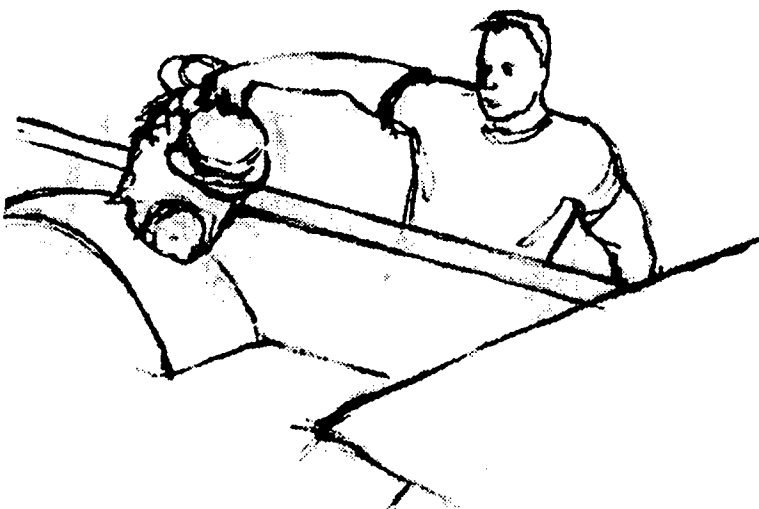


"I'd have to be crazy to play this game..."

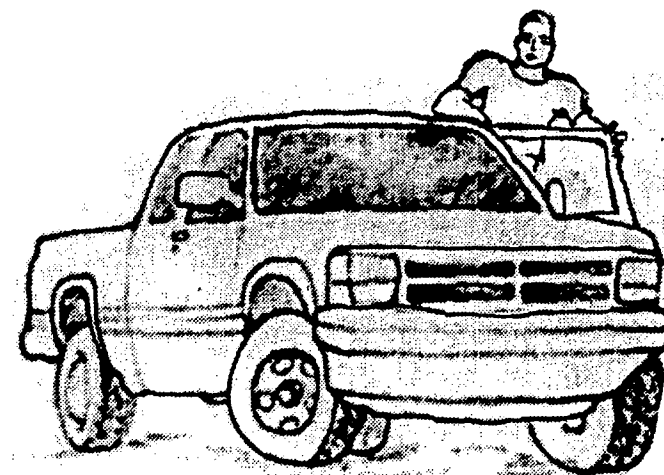


...without the right protection."

42



"And I'd be just as crazy to drive without protection."



"Listen up. Buckle up."

They remarked that given their high-level interest in leisure activities such as music, sports, and television, there are well-known media personalities who could serve as effective messengers. For example, many remarked that country music star Shania Twain (whose parents were killed in a car crash) would be an excellent choice. Some suggested that one of the female MTV V-jays would also be effective. Football and racing are extremely popular spectator sports for this audience, and athletes such as Troy Aikman, Emmitt Smith, Rusty Wallace, Dale Earnhardt, and Jeff Gordon were cited as favorite personalities. Most of the respondents indicated they enjoy watching TV sitcoms, and Tim Allen from *Home Improvement* was frequently mentioned as a star who could serve as an effective messenger promoting safety belt use for young men.

Many respondents also said that it would be useful to recruit spokespersons who had a relevant story to share about the consequences of not wearing a safety belt. For example, they offered that a former young athlete who was driving unrestrained and suffered crash-related injuries that left him as a paraplegic or quadriplegic could be an effective messenger. Likewise, a police officer or rescue squad professional who could graphically share their experiences at crash scenes involving an unrestrained driver who was seriously or fatally-injured would be viewed as a relevant and believable spokesperson. The respondents agreed that a story involving a person whose life was dramatically changed, or ended because of safety belt non-use would have greater impact than a story about a person whose life was saved because of wearing a safety belt.

The respondents also stressed that it would be important to find a spokesperson who could tell a story in a dramatic and engaging manner. Many spoke about the negative experiences they had in school, sitting through boring presentations by unskilled speakers. They also complained that all too often, a large lecture format was used as the venue to provide them with important health and safety information. This discouraged them from asking questions, sharing their ideas, and discussing their feelings; and typically resulted in a learning experience that was viewed by many as impersonal, irrelevant, and forgettable. They said that a small, interactive group forum would be a more effective venue for an educator or spokesperson to provide them with important health and safety information. They also remarked that participation in the present focus groups "got them thinking," and suggested that similar discussion groups conducted in schools could help promote safety belt usage.

### **Media Use and Preferences**

The respondents stressed that a PI&E campaign promoting safety belt use should include print materials, radio, and television PSAs. There was no clear-cut distinction made regarding which medium should be emphasized, although it appeared that the greatest resources should be devoted to radio and television.

Some respondents preferred radio, stating that this “makes the most sense” because a person is typically listening to the radio while he is riding in his truck, and a radio PSA would be a timely way to remind him to buckle up. Others said they tend to switch radio stations when they hear someone talking, and preferred instead a clever television PSA stressing the importance of safety belt use. A number suggested that print materials such as posters and pamphlets could be effectively placed at locations such as gas stations (alongside the pumps), fast food restaurants, department stores, mini-markets and convenience stores, liquor stores, bars, and other places they frequently visit. Billboards were also suggested as a venue, with the respondents emphasizing that visual images should be colorful and graphic, and written copy should be minimal.

## **GROUP DIFFERENCES AFFECTING PROGRAMMATIC DECISIONS**

### **Age**

The differences noted in the information provided by the younger (16-19 year old) and older (20-26 year old) focus group respondents have implications for programmatic decisions. While the older respondents were able to relate readily to the use of "family tradition" as a concept useful for designing PI&E materials, this concept did not resonate with the younger respondents, who indicated this is more appropriate for "older guys" who are married and may have children. The older respondents also preferred simple, parsimonious visuals (single-panel posters) with clear and concise copy, while the younger respondents generally preferred visuals telling a complete story (two-panel posters), with more elaborate copy. This finding seemed consistent with developmental expectations for the respective groups. While the younger males are still "collecting" salient information needed to shape their behavioral and emotional responding, the older males, with their more established response styles, require less information. The older respondents also remarked that PI&E materials with a sports theme would catch their attention if professional athletes were used; in contrast, the younger males seemed to prefer using a believable high school athlete.

Certain PI&E hooks and themes were found to resonate well with both groups and could be used as stimuli to generate materials designed to appeal to 16-26 year old males. For example, most could relate well to the concept of family loss, and remarked that it is important that multimedia materials be designed to increase awareness that your loved ones will suffer long after you are gone. Likewise, they appeared sensitive to the distress suffered by a young child, noting that regardless of whether the medium is print, radio, or television, they would pay attention to a message including the voice or image of a young child. Humor also was appreciated by both groups, with most responding positively to the idea of "masking" a radio/television PSA about safety belts with a script suggesting an ad for condoms. They appreciate clever stories with surprise endings, and said they would not tire of PSAs using this type of format.

## **Race/Ethnicity**

While the Kentucky groups were comprised entirely of white non Hispanic respondents, half of the Texas groups were comprised of Hispanics, while the other half were comprised of white non Hispanics. The Hispanic participants were not the first-generation from their family in this country, and seemed to be comfortable with a small-town, west Texas way-of-life. The information they provided during the groups was largely indistinguishable from their white non Hispanic counterparts, suggesting they share the same attitudes, beliefs, and values with regard to family life, safety belt use, and effective PI&E strategies targeting young men. Furthermore, they indicated they prefer to receive their messages in English, rather than in Spanish.

The absence of discernible ethnic group differences suggests that in rural areas that do not contain a significant number of first-generation Hispanics, similar English-language program strategies can be used for a target audience comprised of both Hispanic and white non Hispanic young males.

## **Regionalism**

While there were some expected differences found between Texas and Kentucky respondents with regard to interests and activities (e.g., rodeo in Texas, NASCAR racing in Kentucky), for the most part, the respondents shared similar attitudes and feelings about small-town life, their family and friends, safety belt use, and effective PI&E strategies. While some acknowledged that they would be more likely to attend to a message that began with, "in west Texas ...," or "in eastern Kentucky...", they did not indicate it is necessary to personalize PI&E materials. Instead, they emphasized they are interested in any approach, whether regional or national, that presents information in a clever, eye-catching manner. Some even complained about campaigns, often designed elsewhere, that are meant to catch the attention of a rural audience, but instead insult the audience with "corny" visuals and misperceptions about rural life. This finding highlights the importance of conducting the social marketing research required to determine "consumer reality;" the values, beliefs, motivations, needs, and behaviors of the target audience.

# **PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO RESISTANCE TO CHANGE**

## **Individualism and Freedom of Choice**

The respondents were often adamant about their feeling that safety belt use should not be mandated, but should be a matter of personal choice. They complained that government already intervenes too much in their lives, and should stay out of matters that do not affect anyone else other than the person who is making the choice. Some indicated that such government interference provokes resentment, and that resentment can set the occasion for behaviors that are vengeful and self-defeating. The respondents expressed confidence in their own ability to decide what is best for themselves, and remarked that personal autonomy and self-sufficiency are values that have been stressed throughout their lives. For this reason, messages aimed at changing behavior should not have either a "commanding" or "preaching" tone.

## **Respect**

The respondents stressed that they believe respect, even for the law, is something that must be earned, and cannot be commanded. Many complained that they have no respect for the safety belt law, and that they will not respect it just because "It's the law!" In fact, many said they feel especially resentful because they believe it is a stupid law that has been unjustly imposed on them. Some said that even with the threat of being cited and fined for refusing to buckle-up, they simply will not comply with a law that, in their opinion, makes no sense.

## **Pragmatism**

While some respondents insisted they would continue to disobey the safety belt law, even if it was rigorously enforced and fines were increased, many respondents said that if the law was better-enforced and the penalty made greater, they would, with resentment, regularly buckle-up. The reason for this was simple economics, with most noting that they could not afford to pay the attorney's fees, fines, and insurance costs they would incur for violating the law.

## **Denial and Distortion**

When asked about the use of a wheelchair as a stimulus for PI&E materials encouraging young men to buckle up, many respondents said they did not believe this image would be particularly effective. This reaction, obtained during the concept testing (second wave), seemed disparate to the earlier statements (first wave) provided by many suggesting they would "rather die than live their life in a wheelchair." Further discussion about this apparent "inconsistency" revealed that for many respondents, the prospect of being confined to a wheelchair is so abhorrent that they simply "block" their emotional-responding to such an image. Their use of primitive defenses such as denial and distortion serves them effectively and allows them to minimize the potential catastrophic outcome of being involved in a serious crash. For others, a wheelchair is a "confusing" image in that a person confined to a wheelchair may not be permanently restricted, and may one day be able to walk again. In developing PI&E materials designed to encourage young men to buckle up, it may therefore be more beneficial to select images that are less likely to elicit such powerful defense mechanisms, or cognitive confusion.

## **Fatalism**

Many of the respondents admitted that they have adopted a fatalistic approach to "life and death." Some emphasized that they believe when it is your time to die, there is nothing you can do to alter this outcome. Others, while also acknowledging the role of fate, said that while it might not be possible to change "what is meant to be," a person should not act in a reckless manner and then attribute the outcome to fate. For example, a number mentioned that driving while intoxicated would be an example of "tempting fate." Most did not, however, view safety belt nonuse in a similar manner. For this reason, it is unlikely that PI&E materials emphasizing safety belt use as a way of mitigating fate would be effective.

## **Cognitive Dissonance**

Many respondents indicated that they have difficulty reconciling the message, "Seat Belts Save Lives" with their personal experiences, as well as with information they have obtained from family, physicians, law enforcement officials, and EMTs indicating that in certain types of crashes, a person may suffer less severe injuries if he is not wearing a safety belt. While most acknowledged that safety belts probably improve your chance of not being thrown into the windshield in a front-end crash, many also provided anecdotes about a driver surviving a potentially fatal crash because he was ejected from the cab of his pickup truck. A number of respondents said they would like to see some accurate figures that would tell them how effective safety belts actually are for reducing serious injuries in pickup truck crashes.

## SUMMARY

An effective consumer-based health and safety communication campaign relies on both epidemiological and consumer research. The epidemiological research points to the recommended health behavior, while the consumer research identifies the values, beliefs, motivations, needs, and behaviors that comprise the "consumer reality." Both are critical for developing a message strategy aimed at influencing the target audience to change their behavior.

Six key questions must be addressed when developing a message strategy:

- What is the **purpose**?
- Who is the **target**?
- What is the **promise**?
- What is the **support**?
- What is the **image**?
- Where are the **windows**?

A review of crash fatality data from the Fatal Accident Reporting System (FARS) identified rural young male pickup truck drivers (the **target**) as over-represented in fatal crashes, and as such, a group of particular interest for safety professionals. State reports from Kentucky and Texas, the two NHTSA sites selected for this project, indicated that rural young male pickup truck drivers consistently had low rates of safety belt usage. This data, when considered along with the FARS data, suggested the importance of targeting these young males for countermeasures designed to increase safety belt use (the **purpose**).

The information obtained from the focus groups revealed that the respondents viewed safety belt usage as incompatible with a sense of personal control, independence, comfort, and driving enjoyment. Furthermore, they indicated that mandated safety belt usage violated their freedom of choice and constituted needless government interference in their lives. Finally, they questioned the effectiveness of safety belts, and suggested that even important influencers in their lives had not encouraged them to use safety belts.

So for these young men, what are the subjective benefits (the **promise**) of wearing a safety belt? The focus group results indicated that one effective promise is that if you wear a safety belt, it is less likely that your family and

friends will have to grieve your loss and otherwise cope with your death after a serious crash. Another effective promise, for the older (20-26 year old) males, is that if you wear a safety belt, you are promoting family values, and even starting a new family tradition. A third effective promise is that if you wear a safety belt, you are demonstrating to significant others that “protection” is an important value for you, in all areas of your life. A fourth effective promise is that if you wear a safety belt, there is certainly no guarantee that you will escape injury or survive every crash, but for most types of crashes, the odds are far greater that you will benefit by using your safety belt. Finally, a fifth potentially effective promise for many, predicated on stricter enforcement and a higher fine for violating the law, is that if you wear a safety belt, you will not have to spend your hard-earned money paying a fine.

The focus group information indicated that in order to make the first four promises believable (the **support**), it is necessary to design public information and education (PI&E) materials using various “hooks” and “themes” which remind young men that if they want to be perceived as caring, protective, and empathic family members who respect those around them and do not want to cause loved ones terrible pain (the **image**), they will use their safety belt. A variety of venues, times, and places (the **windows**) need to be considered to support these promises and convey the desired image. The respondents suggested using a multimedia campaign with graphic crash images and reminders of loved ones who are left behind to grieve. They indicated that other PI&E materials could use clever humor and familiar images to reinforce the theme of protection (e.g., the radio and television public service announcements with the couple in the pickup truck), adding that humor can be memorable and can reinforce the saliency of a message. They remarked that they did not want to be inundated with a single message or image. Some said they would be more receptive to PI&E materials while at home, while others said they would be more receptive while driving in their pickups.

The fifth effective promise cannot be supported simply by PI&E materials, but will only be made believable by strict state and local enforcement of the safety belt law (preferably a primary law). While some respondents remarked they would resent such strict enforcement, many agreed they would use their safety belt because they would not want to waste their money (the **image**) paying a large fine. As with the other PI&E materials, there would be numerous windows available to support this image.

Clearly, for this target audience, it would be unproductive to simply emphasize that for their own personal safety, they should use safety belts. Likewise, it would be unproductive, and probably counterproductive, to emphasize that they should use safety belts to comply with the present safety belt law, which they view as both unreasonable and ineffectively enforced. Instead, they need to be reminded, in a variety of ways, of the immediate consequences associated with

**safety belt nonuse, and the ways in which these consequences can dramatically affect the lives of people closest to them.**

**Both NHTSA and state crash data underscore the importance of program activity designed to increase safety belt use by young male drivers living in rural areas. The results from the present study suggest there are numerous obstacles to overcome with this target audience, including misinformation, misconceptions, personal defense mechanisms, and local norms which do not promote safety belt use. The use of developmentally and culturally appropriate PI&E materials with these young males will address their informational needs and erode their personal resistance to change. Local norms that inhibit safety belt usage will change over time. Many of the respondents spoke about their belief that it is dangerous and irresponsible to drive under the influence of alcohol. They also stressed the importance of infants and young children being correctly restrained in vehicles. Both of these perceptions likely reflect a change in local norms about occupant protection and safe driving. It is likely that attitudes, feelings and behavior pertaining to safety belt use will undergo a similar evolution.**

## **APPENDIX A - DESCRIPTION OF STUDY SITES**

Floyd County falls within the Eastern Kentucky Rural Office of Traffic Safety (ROOTS) service area. According to the 1990 Census data, all residents of Floyd County live in rural areas. Information obtained from demographic reports and anecdotal sources indicate that approximately 30% of adult residents have less than a ninth grade education, and less than 8% graduate from college. The median household income is below \$20,000, and approximately 40% of the adult residents earn less than \$15,000 annually. Farming and coal mining are the main sources of income for the area. Unemployment averages approximately 6%.

Floyd County has approximately 45,000 residents, of whom 98.9% are non-Hispanic white. Despite the fact that the total number of vehicle crashes declined by 12.9% from 1992 to 1993, the county has one of the higher percentages of truck crashes per 10,000 persons (35.9), and is in the top five counties for percentage of fatal crashes and percentage of crashes involving excess speed. Also, the percentage of drivers involved in crashes who were restrained was only 37.2%, below the state average of 52.2%. In the *1994 Analysis of Traffic Accident Data in Kentucky (1989-1993)*, Prestonberg, the county seat for Floyd County, was designated as one of the five priority towns in the state needing increased occupant safety efforts

Carroll County falls within the Northern Kentucky Rural Office of Traffic Safety (ROOTS) service area. All residents live in rural areas. Carroll County has fewer than 10,000 residents. 97.3% of all residents in the county are non-Hispanic white. Approximately 20% of adults have less than a ninth grade education, and about 10% graduate from college. The median household income is slightly over \$20,000, and approximately 40% of the adult residents earn less than \$15,000 annually. Farming and coal mining are the main sources of income for the area. Unemployment averages approximately 5-6%.

The total number of vehicle crashes in Carroll County increased by 6% from 1992 to 1993, and the county has one of the highest percentages of truck crashes per 10,000 persons (46.9). Also, Carroll County is in the top five counties in Kentucky for percentage of fatal crashes.

Mitchell County is located in west-central Texas. According to the 1990 Census data, all residents live in rural areas. The county has approximately 7,500 people, 95% of whom are white. Of these, approximately 30% are of Hispanic descent. Approximately 23% of adults have less than a ninth grade education, and about 11% graduate from college. The median household income is slightly over \$19,000, and approximately 40% of the adult residents earn less than \$15,000 annually. Unemployment averages slightly more than 3%.

Colorado City is the county seat for Mitchell County and was one of the sites observed during the *1994 Study of Safety Restraint Use in 25 Rural Texas Towns*. Observational data indicated that between 1993 and 1994, passenger restraint use for all vehicles observed decreased by 28%. While almost 32% of all passenger vehicle drivers used safety restraints, only 16% of all pickup truck drivers used restraints. Overall, pickup trucks comprised 26% of the observational sample. According to data obtained from the Accident Records Bureau at the Texas Department of Public Safety, in 1994 there were 13 pickup truck crashes in Mitchell County involving male drivers ages 16-39 years.

Lamb County is located in northwest Texas, 40 miles northwest of Lubbock. According to the 1990 Census data, all county residents live in rural areas. The county has approximately 14,000 people, 88% of whom are white. Of these, approximately 37% are of Hispanic decent. Approximately 24% of adults have less than a ninth grade education, and about 11% graduate from college. The median household income is slightly under \$23,000, and approximately 32% of the adult residents earn less than \$15,000 annually. Unemployment averages just under 4%.

Littlefield is the county seat for Mitchell County and was one of the sites observed during the *1994 Study of Safety Restraint Use in 25 Rural Texas Towns*. Observational data indicated that between 1993 and 1994, passenger restraint use for all vehicles observed increased by 23%; however, only 14% of all pickup truck drivers used restraints, versus 43% for other passenger vehicles. Overall, pickup trucks comprised 33% of the observational sample. According to data obtained from the Accident Records Bureau at the Texas Department of Public Safety, in 1994 there were 22 pickup truck crashes in Lamb County involving male drivers ages 16-39 years.

**Floyd County (KY)**

**Population - 44,481**

**Percent HS/College Graduates - 51.00%**

**Median Household Income - \$19,457**

**Unemployment - 5.69%**

**Other Information:** Located within the Eastern ROOTS region, Floyd County had a very high percentage of crashes resulting in fatalities (1.11%) and crashes involving speeding (17.7%). The belt use for drivers involved in crashes was only 37.2%. Also, the rate of 35.9 truck crashes per 10,000 persons fell within the high range for the state.

**Carroll County (KY)**

**Population - 9,714**

**Percent HS/College Graduates - 59.13%**

**Median Household Income - \$20,692**

**Unemployment - 5.64%**

**Other Information:** Located within the Northern ROOTS region, Carroll County had one of the highest rates in the state for truck crashes per 10,000 population (46.9%). Also, crashes increased by 6% from 1993 to 1994 and there was a very high percentage of crashes involving fatalities (1.20%).

**Mitchell County (TX)**

**Population - 7,425**

**Percent HS/College Graduates - 59.15%**

**Median Household Income - \$19,363**

**Unemployment - 3.30%**

**Other Information:** Colorado City, the largest town in Mitchell County, showed the greatest decrease (-28%) in overall belt use for the towns reported in the observational survey. Pickup truck belt use was found to be only 15.9%, compared with 31.8% for drivers of other types of passenger vehicles.

**Lamb County (TX)**

**Population - 14,270**

**Percent HS/College Graduates - 56.32%**

**Median Household Income - \$22,944**

**Unemployment - 3.87%**

**Other Information:** Located in northwest Texas, Littlefield, the largest town within Lamb County, showed a 23% overall increase in seatbelt use from 1993 to 1994. Pickup truck rates, however, were poor (13.9%) compared with the rates observed for drivers of other passenger vehicles (42.9%).

## **APPENDIX B - MODERATOR GUIDE FOR FIRST WAVE**

### **I. INTRODUCTION [10 minutes]**

Hello, my name is ( ) and I would like to thank you for coming today/tonight. During the next two hours, we're going to discuss a number of topics related to yourselves, living here in ( ), and your driving. You will all have the opportunity to share your thoughts, ideas, and feelings about these different topics.

Before we begin, I would like to give you some ground rules for this group session. Please speak clearly and loudly so that everyone in the group can hear you. Also, because everything you say is important, I ask that you speak one-at-a-time and avoid side conversations. I am taping our meeting because later, I have to write a report describing the important information I learned from the group. None of you will be identified by name in the report.

I would like for each of you to introduce yourselves by giving your first name and a brief description of where you would be and what you would be doing if you weren't here right now.

Do any of you have questions before we start?

### **II. EXERCISES [100 minutes]**

#### **A. COMMUNITY TIES AND ACTIVITIES**

1. You live in a rural area. How do you think living in ( ) County is different from living in a suburb/city? What are the important differences? How are the people different? - probe for opportunities; quality of life; simplicity; privacy; issue of 2nd best
2. How would you compare living in ( ) County to living in surrounding counties? What kinds of competitiveness or rivalry do you feel with neighboring counties?
3. How do you learn about events in your community? - probe for local newspapers, local radio and TV; civic and/or church newsletters
4. While you are at home, what is your preferred type of entertainment? - probe for reading vs. radio vs. television, and the reasons one may be preferred over the others; probe for select preferences within each media form (e.g., certain writers, TV shows, athletes, teams, musicians, other celebrities)

5. Television, radio, and magazines ads designed to get your attention are typically developed elsewhere. What feelings do you have about the way in which these messages are presented? - probe for likes and dislikes; what catches their attention in ads (e.g., fast and powerful cars)

6. Away from home, what are your favorite forms of relaxation and/or recreation? - probe for social activities; clubs and organizations; athletic events/activities; night life

## **B. LEARNING TO DRIVE**

1. How did you learn to drive?

2. What type of on-the-road training and driver education did you have?

3. I already asked you how living here is different from living in a suburb/city. How is driving different here than it is in a suburb or city? - probe for perceptions about safety, number of crashes

4. What is it that you enjoy about driving? - probe for feelings of autonomy, freedom

5. If you were teaching a friend or younger brother or sister how to drive, what are the most important things that you would tell them?

6. What kind of information were you given about safety? How about occupant safety/using seatbelts? Where did you get this information? In what way, if any, does it affect your behavior?

## **C. DRIVING A PICKUP TRUCK**

1. All of you drive pickup trucks. What do you like about driving a truck?

2. How is driving a truck different from driving a car? - probe for emotions, perceptions about safety

3. Most of you probably know the song "Pickup Man?" What do you think of it? Is it true that "there's something women like about a pickup man?"

## **D. SELF-ESTEEM**

1. What kinds of things have you done that make you feel good about yourself? - probe for both self-statements and outside messages, feelings of independence, self-reliance and self-sufficiency; autonomous decision-making, emotional support from family/others

2. What types of things in life do you feel you now have control over? Which have control over you? - probes include achievements, day-to-day successes; worries and fears

#### **E. FAMILY INFLUENCES**

1. Most people are influenced to some degree by the people closest to them. Often, family members are these people. How do your parents/grandparents affect the choices you make? How do they influence the way in which you practice safety when you drive? - probe for importance of multi-generation theme, methods of influence

#### **F. PEER INFLUENCES**

1. In addition to the influence exerted by your family, many of you may be influenced by your friends. How important is this influence in your lives? In your driving? - probe for concerns about being perceived as a "weenie" if you wear a belt

2. What are the differences between how you and your friends drive, and how your parents or older relatives drive?

#### **G. MUTILATION/PHYSICAL HARM ISSUES**

1. How do you think your life would be changed if, because of a crash, you were injured/disfigured? Have you considered this before and is it a concern for you? - probe for thoughts; daydreams; worries; nightmares

2. How about the safety of your passengers? Have you considered the impact of injury/disfigurement to them?

#### **H. ROLE OF FATE OR DETERMINISM**

1. In the Joe Diffy song, "Third Rock From the Sun," there's the line "We've got one life to live, let's get it over with." This suggests that you might as well have fun today, because you're going to eventually die anyway. Can you identify with this kind of thinking? If so, how?

2. Some people believe that everything that happens in their life is really decided ahead of time. What do you think about this?

## **I. SEATBELT USAGE ISSUES**

1. (Moderator displays picture of a seatbelt). What do you call this?
2. What do you think of when you hear ... (use terms provided in response to #1)?
3. All of you have indicated that you either do not use a seatbelt or only use one sometimes when you travel. What are some reasons for this? - probes include forgetting; not believing they will ever be involved in a crash; not believing they really help following a crash, worrying they might actually be dangerous (e.g., get stuck after a crash and prevent escape), traveling short distances, not enough belts for all passengers, discomfort, other negative feelings
4. In what ways, if any, do you believe seat belts could possible help during a crash? - probes include helping driver stay behind the wheel of the car; preventing passenger from colliding with driver
5. Are you really taking much of a risk by not wearing your belt? If not, what makes you think so? - probe about No Fear logo on clothing; identification with invincible characters from movies (e.g., Die Hard, Terminator, Lethal Weapon)
6. Even if the actual risk of being in a crash is low, are there any possible crash outcomes so catastrophic that you would always want to protect yourself against?
7. What if anything, might influence you to change your behavior? - probes include significant others (friends, family, girlfriends/spouses), serious law enforcement, other reminders

## **J. LAW ENFORCEMENT AS AN INFLUENCER**

1. In Kentucky/Texas, the state law indicates that if the driver of a vehicle fails to use a seatbelt, he can be given a ticket and fined ( ). What do you think about this law? - probe for both emotional reaction and how this law may influence behavior; is the law really a "suggestion," rather than a "mandate"
2. How strongly is the seat belt law enforced by the town/county police? How about the state police? - probe for differences in terms of personal relationships/familiarity with local vs. state authorities
3. If the seatbelt law was enforced very strongly, would it make a difference is whether you use a belt? What are some reasons?

## **K. CAMPAIGN SLOGANS**

1. We have developed several campaign slogans that aim to promote the use of seatbelts by young guys who live in rural areas and drive pickup trucks. I am going to present them to you one-at-a-time and ask about your reaction to each. (moderator presents each of the slogans and asks the following questions):

What do you picture or imagine when you hear this slogan?

Does this slogan appeal to you? If so, how?

What problems might be associated with using this slogan?

How would you improve on this slogan?

2. After hearing all of these slogans, which appeals most to you? What makes it most appealing. Which would be your second choice? Why? Which slogan is least appealing? Why?

3. Use your imagination again. What are some other ways to present the message about the importance of using seatbelts that would be appealing to you?

## **L. ART CONCEPTS**

Show the respondents the various poster concepts, one-at-a-time, ask the following questions:

What is your immediate reaction to this?

Would it catch your attention?

What makes it appealing? unappealing?

Any other thoughts?

## **M. SPOKESPERSONS FOR PSAs**

1. (Moderator displays sheet with the letters PSA in large print). Does anyone know what this means? (If no or yes, continue) You have all probably at one time heard or seen a public service announcement (PSA). A PSA is intended to get your attention and provide you with information about an important issue. Typically, a person who is well-known, well-liked, popular and respected by the audience is chosen to deliver the message in the PSA. If you were to select people to talk about the importance of always using a seatbelt,

one time heard or seen a public service announcement (PSA). A PSA is intended to get your attention and provide you with information about an important issue. Typically, a person who is well-known, well-liked, popular and respected by the audience is chosen to deliver the message in the PSA. If you were to select people to talk about the importance of always using a seatbelt, whom would you recommend. Remember, the people chosen have to "connect" with the audience, who in this situation is young white/Hispanic males under the age of 20/between the ages of 20-29 years.

#### **N. FINAL THOUGHTS**

1. You have seen a lot of different materials and discussed some ways we might be able to encourage young men who drive pickup trucks to wear seatbelts. What final thoughts do you have about what is needed for an effective program to encourage you to wear your seatbelt in your pickup?

#### **III. CLOSING [10 minutes]**

Thank you again for taking the time to meet with me today. Before closing, do you have any additional comments that you would like to offer about the topics we discussed? (If not, conclude the session; if so, briefly allow further discussion). Let me give you your stipend for participating today/tonight. Again, thank you.

## **APPENDIX C - MODERATOR GUIDE FOR SECOND WAVE**

### **I. INTRODUCTION [10 minutes]**

Hello, my name is ( ) and I would like to thank you for coming today/tonight. During the next two hours, we're going to discuss a number of topics related to occupant safety for pickup truck drivers. You will also be viewing a number of advertising ideas the Department of Transportation is considering for the purpose of promoting increased seatbelt usage for young men who drive pickup trucks.

Before we begin, I would like to give you some ground rules for this group session. Please speak clearly and loudly so that everyone in the group can hear you. Also, because everything you say is important, I ask that you speak one-at-a-time and avoid side conversations. I am taping our meeting because later, I have to write a report describing the important information I learned from the group. None of you will be identified by name in the report.

I would like for each of you to introduce yourselves by giving your first name, and a brief description of where you would be and what you would be doing if you weren't here right now.

Do any of you have questions before we start?

### **II. REASONS CITED FOR NONUSE OF BELTS [10 MINUTES]**

1. When you were selected to participate in tonight's group, you indicated that you do not always wear a seatbelt when driving in your truck. What are some reasons why you don't use your seatbelt?

### **III. ADVERTISING CONCEPT TESTING [40 MINUTES]**

[Note: Moderator tests the one-panel and two-panel designs separately]

1. I am going to show you some artwork that have been developed for the purpose of increasing awareness of the importance of using seatbelts at all times. The intended target audience for this advertising is young men who drive pickups and live in rural areas. The advertising concepts I will show you are in rough form. I'm not looking for comments about the quality of the artwork; instead, I'd like to hear your reactions to the ideas and issues the ads bring out, what feelings the ads leave you with, and how much they might motivate you to do something as a result of seeing them or hearing them.

What is the main point of this ad?  
How does this ad make you feel?  
What might you do as a result of seeing this ad?  
To what extent do you believe this ad?  
How relevant does this ad seem to you?  
How attention-getting is this ad?  
What is appealing to you? Unappealing?  
What is understandable? Not clear?

#### **IV. COMPARISON/CONTRAST [10 MINUTES]**

1. Now that you have seen all of the artwork, write down your three top choices for posters or ads. (Allow respondents to complete this task). Now, write down your two least favorite choices.
2. Let's go around the room. I'd like each of you to share the responses you've written down.

[Note: Moderator asks the following questions]:

What makes this your top choice? Your second choice?  
What could be done to improve the ads you liked best?  
What makes this your bottom choice?  
What other information, if any, would you want or need?

#### **V. STORY BOARDS [20 MINUTES]**

1. I'm going to show you some story boards. These are meant to tell a story that conveys an important message. They will be used to develop short television or radio commercials promoting the importance of seatbelt usage. As with the other artwork, these are in rough form. Again, I'm looking for your reaction to the idea of the story, not the specific artwork you are viewing.

[Note: The story boards will be shown one-at-a-time. Respondents will be asked to write down brief responses to the first two questions before discussing the other questions]

What is the main point of this story?  
How does this story make you feel?  
What might you do as a result of seeing/hearing this story?  
To what extent do you believe this story?  
How relevant does this story seem to you?  
How attention-getting is this story?  
What is appealing to you? Unappealing?  
What is understandable? Not clear?

[After all of the story boards are displayed, the moderator continues]:

Which story board is the most appealing? What makes it so?  
Which is your second choice?  
Which is your least favorite story board?

## **VI. RADIO PSAs {10 MINUTES}**

1. Play the five radio PSAs one-at-a-time and then ask the following questions:

What is your immediate reaction to this?  
How relevant does this story seem to you?  
How attention-getting is this story?  
What is appealing to you? Unappealing?

After all of the PSAs have been played, ask:

Which PSA is the most appealing? What makes it so?  
Which is your second choice?  
Which is your least favorite PSA?

## **VII. MEDIA PREFERENCES AND DISTRIBUTION IDEAS [10 MINUTES]**

1. You have had the chance to look at and hear a lot of different ideas for print ads, radio, and television spots designed to encourage you to wear seat belts. Which medium; print, radio, or television would be most effective for reaching you with this information?
2. How frequently would you like to hear the message repeated?
3. What are some other creative ways that this seatbelt message can be presented? Are there some key places around here that could serve as distribution sites? How about key people to help in promoting the message?
4. What, if anything, would encourage you to attend a community health/safety fair?
5. Is there any other information you would like to have about the way in which seat belts can help protect pickup truck drivers and their passengers?

### **VIII. CLOSING [10 minutes]**

Thank you again for taking the time to meet with me today. Before closing, do you have any additional comments that you would like to offer about the topics we discussed? (If not, conclude the session; if so, briefly allow further discussion). Let me give you your stipend for participating today/tonight. Again, thank you.

## **APPENDIX D - RESPONDENT SCREENERS**

### **RESPONDENT SCREENER FOR KENTUCKY FOCUS GROUPS**

**Note to Recruiter:** For Floyd/Carroll County, consider only white male respondents. Recruit 10-12 participants for each group.

Hi, my name is ( ) and I'm calling about a study sponsored by the Department of Transportation. All persons selected for the study will be paid \$35.00 for participating in a 2-hour group session. During the group, you will be asked to talk about yourself, living in Floyd/Carroll County, and your attitudes and feelings about passenger safety. The group will be scheduled on ( ) and will be held at ( ). Before I continue, are you interested in participating? (If yes, continue; if no, thank and terminate)

Now, I have to ask you several questions to determine if you are eligible to be part of the study.

1. What is your age?

- ( ) under age 16; thank and terminate
- ( ) 16-18; consider for **Group 1 and 2**; continue
- ( ) 20-26; consider for **Group 3 and 4**; continue
- ( ) over age 27; thank and terminate

2. Do you own or drive a pickup truck as your main vehicle?

- ( ) yes; continue
- ( ) no; thank and terminate

3. When you are driving your pickup, how often do you use a seatbelt?  
(Provide the following choices)

- ( ) never; continue
- ( ) sometimes; continue
- ( ) most of the time; no more than 3; continue
- ( ) always; thank and terminate

4. Have you driven your truck during the past week?

- ( ) yes, continue
- ( ) no; thank and terminate

5. How long have you lived in Floyd/Carroll County?
- (        ) more than three years; continue  
(        ) less than three years; thank and terminate
6. Have you participated in a research or focus group in the past year?
- (        ) no; continue  
(        ) yes; thank and terminate

**[FOR GROUPS 3 AND 4 ONLY]**

7. Are you married (not separated)?
- (        ) yes; at least 3, no more than 8 per group, continue  
(        ) no; at least 3, no more than 8 per group, continue

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Group Assignment: \_\_\_\_\_

**Notes to Recruiter:**

1. Vehicle ownership is not a variable.
2. Employment status is not a variable.
3. Educational level is not a variable.
4. Public assistance participation is not a variable.

## RESPONDENT SCREENER FOR TEXAS FOCUS GROUPS

**Note to Recruiter:** For Lamb/Mitchell County, consider only white Anglo males for Groups 1 and 3; and white Hispanic males for Groups 2 and 4. Recruit 10-12 participants for each group.

Hi, my name is ( ) and I'm calling about a study sponsored by the Department of Transportation. All persons selected for the study will be paid \$35.00 for participating in a 2-hour group session. During the group, you will be asked to talk about yourself, living in Lamb/Mitchell County, and your attitudes and feelings about passenger safety. The group will be scheduled on ( ) and will be held at ( ). Before I continue, are you interested in participating? (If yes, continue; if no, thank and terminate)

Now, I have to ask you several questions to determine if you are eligible to be part of the study.

**Note to Recruiter:** Groups 1 and 3 will include Anglo males only; Groups 2 and 4 will contain Hispanic males only.

1. What is your age and race/ethnicity?

- ( ) under age 16; thank and terminate
- ( ) 16-18; consider for **Group 1 and Group 2**; continue
- ( ) 20-26; consider for **Group 3 and Group 4**; continue
- ( ) over age 27; thank and terminate

2. What is your ethnicity?

- ( ) Anglo; consider for **Group 1 and Group 3**; continue
- ( ) Hispanic; consider for **Group 2 and Group 4**; continue

3. Do you own or drive a pickup truck as your main vehicle?

- ( ) yes; continue
- ( ) no; thank and terminate

4. When you are driving your pickup, how often do you use a seatbelt?  
(Provide the following choices)

- ( ) never; continue
- ( ) sometimes; continue
- ( ) most of the time; no more than 3; continue
- ( ) always; thank and terminate

5. Have you driven your truck during the past week?
- ( ) yes, continue  
( ) no; thank and terminate
6. How long have you lived in Lamb/Mitchell County?
- ( ) more than three years; continue  
( ) less than three years; thank and terminate
7. Have you participated in a research or focus group in the past year?
- ( ) no; continue  
( ) yes; thank and terminate

**[FOR GROUPS 3 AND 4 ONLY]**

7. Are you married (not separated)?
- ( ) yes; at least 3, no more than 8 per group; continue  
( ) no; at least 3, no more than 8 per group, continue

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Group Assignment: \_\_\_\_\_

**Notes to Recruiter:**

1. Vehicle ownership is not a variable.
2. Employment status is not a variable.
3. Educational level is not a variable.
4. Public assistance participation is not a variable.