

Perceptions/Misconceptions	Recommended Messages/Responses
<p>Drug smugglers are generally defined as people who transport large amounts of hard drugs into other countries for financial gain, fully knowing all risks and consequences of their actions. Transportation of soft drugs for personal use is not considered as "smuggling".</p>	<p>Drug smuggling is seen as a calculated risk and it is felt that any information targetted at "high rolling" smugglers is very difficult to relate to. Even first-time smugglers are difficult to relate to as smuggling is perceived to be a business decision based on all the necessary information.</p> <p>There is little sympathy for the smuggler and people do not feel a need for information targetted at the potential smuggler as it is felt that the risks and consequences are already well known.</p>
<p>People distinguish between hard and soft drugs and also feel that quantity is an important consideration. Smuggling is seen as crossing the border or clearing customs with a large quantity of hard drugs for financial gain.</p>	<p>People relate to the user of soft drugs. Transporting small/personal amounts of soft drugs into other countries or buying soft drugs in foreign countries is easier to relate to. Communication materials should focus on small quantities of soft drugs for personal use.</p> <p>Communications should also stress the fact that transportation of small amounts of drugs is considered as drug smuggling in certain countries and that very harsh penalties may apply.</p>
<p>Mode of transportation is an important consideration. People feel the risks of transporting drugs are greater when travelling by plane. Cars are perceived to offer more hiding places, to be less likely to be searched, and, hence, less risky.</p>	<p>Clearing customs in a foreign country is an important setting for communication materials. However, some materials should depict people travelling by car at border crossings.</p>
<p>The United States is hardly viewed as a foreign country. Many risks and consequences associated with transporting, buying or using drugs in foreign countries are not taken into account when travelling to the States. It is almost perceived to be an extension of Canada and people feel they are quite aware of U.S. laws and their penal system.</p>	<p>A particular focus should be placed on people travelling to the United States clearly emphasizing the consequences of getting caught when entering or leaving the States. The focus should be on people travelling to the States by car with small amounts of soft drugs. Communications should also emphasize the consequences of transporting even small amounts of drugs and should act as a reminder for people to check their luggage, pockets, glove compartment, etc.</p>