

Drugs and Alcohol

Page address: <http://www.mnsu.edu/here4you/assault/drugs.html>



The Connections

What does getting drunk have to do with sexual assault? 75% of the time, the offender, the victim, or both have been drinking (Fisher, Bonnie S., Francis T. Cullen, and Michael G. Turner (2000). The sexual victimization of college women. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice. Available at [PDF] www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/nij/182369.pdf (959 KiB)) Alcohol use does not cause sexual violence, and a victim who consumed alcohol is no more to blame for being assaulted than a victim who wasn't. Nobody asks or deserves to be hurt or violated. Drinking too much alcohol does not give somebody the right to rape you. Women who are assaulted under the influence of alcohol often blame themselves. Men who commit rape under the influence often blame the alcohol. Remember, the person who committed the crime is always responsible, never the victim.

Yet alcohol can contribute to an atmosphere where anything goes, including sexual assault.

People often drink to feel uninhibited, rowdy, aroused, and aggressive. Peer pressure can further encourage this behavior. Research shows that, while under the influence of alcohol, men are more likely to interpret a woman's smile, laughter, clothes, or body language as evidence that she wants to have sex.

Alcohol use also causes impaired judgment and lowered inhibitions, making it easier to ignore "No" and force sex on an unwilling partner. Assaultants take advantage of the fact that drugs and alcohol can slow reflexes and impair the victim's ability to recognize and react to a potentially dangerous situation.



Perpetrators frequently use drugs and alcohol, separately or in combination, as a weapon for sexual assault. Drugs such as **Rohypnol** (aka Roofies, Mexican Valium, or Roche) or **Gamma Hydroxy Butyrate** (aka GHB, Liquid Ecstasy, or Grievous Bodily Harm) are increasingly accessible within local communities. These drugs have varying effects depending on the dosage, ranging from slurred speech and lack of coordination to sedation or being rendered unconscious.

There are social decisions you can make to decrease your risk of inadvertently consuming these drugs:

1. Be aware of your glass/cup when drinking. Remember that drugs can be put in non-alcoholic drinks, as well.
2. Watch the bartender make your drink.
3. Only take drinks from the bartender/wait staff.
4. Do not accept open-container drinks.
5. When hosting a party, avoid having punch bowls/trash can containers that can easily be adulterated.
6. Be aware of the behavior of your friends (for example, if a friend looks disproportionately intoxicated to the number of drinks s/he has had).

From the [University of Michigan Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center](#).