



Voluntary Intoxication – It’s Not Consent for Sex You Know...

There is a profusion of sexual assaults that occur while the victims are under the influence, to some degree or another, of alcohol. It is common knowledge in the field of Criminal Justice that alcohol plays a significant role in many if not most crimes, however it plays a special role in Sexual Assault.

US Society has an interesting and paradoxical relationship with alcohol. On one hand, we live in an alcohol saturated society where the alcohol industry is worth over 113.5 billion dollars annually. For many, alcohol is a part of their weekly or even daily existence. It is “normal” to socialize with alcohol and it is “normal” to use alcohol to relieve stress.

On the other hand, if a victim was drinking or drunk during his or her sexual assault, data shows that there is a very low likelihood of that victim will receive justice. There is a clear and measured bias that victims are often blamed for their own sexual assaults if they had been drinking. Many police won’t send the report for charging, if they do- many prosecutors won’t charge the case.

However, if we consider that alcohol plays a clear role in the social spectrum of dating, mating and pursuing sexual encounters, we would have to concede that is “normal” to use alcohol in the dating environment and we would have to consider the sexual assault just like any other crime. If a person is drinking and kills someone while driving, they are still held accountable and the victims are not as likely to be blamed.

Further, culturally speaking, alcohol is understood to be used as tool used to lubricate and facilitate hook ups and to loosen inhibitions. This cultural understanding sets the tone for sexual predators. They depend on this attitude as they set the scene for their hunting ground.

This presentation is not a judgement on alcohol use or even an analysis of the growing problem with alcoholism. But, it will be a thorough description and understanding of this complex issue is at the heart of this presentation. The speaker will provide detailed strategies on becoming better at recognizing the effects of alcohol on victims and illustrating that it is the drug of choice for sexual predators.

Multiple visual examples, and ample time for discussion is provided during this block, in order to help participants to recognize and evaluate varying degrees of intoxication; this will assist in providing a foundation for assessing substantial incapacitation, and how that term fits within the realm of a complete and thorough investigation.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the role of alcohol on public and private decision-making
- Differentiate between the impact of alcohol on males and females
- Make determinations on the levels of incapacitation and consent
- Explore current dating norms and the culture of drinking and alcohol