



SANTA BARBARA RAPE CRISIS CENTER
CENTRO CONTRA LA VIOLACION SEXUAL

VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 10, ISSUE 4: APRIL 2005

ALCOHOL AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

This article was prompted by a case in NH where a judge sexually assaulted five victim advocates (who worked in his courtroom) at a dance party. This party occurred at a sexual and domestic violence prevention conference. He was allowed to plead no contest to reduced charges (simple, not sexual assault) did no jail time and was sentenced to one week of alcohol counseling. Several months later he returned to the Judicial Conduct Committee asking for his job back. That decision is still pending.

Alcohol and sexual assault often happen together. According to Greenberg (1998), 30 percent of all sexual assaults occur when the perpetrator is under the influence of alcohol. In some cases, the victim is also intoxicated. Drinking makes it easy for the perpetrator to ignore sexual boundaries, while the victim's intoxication makes it more difficult for her to guard against an attack. A common misunderstanding is that if people commit sexual assaults only when drunk, then (a) the drinking must have caused the assault and (b) sobriety and alcohol counseling are adequate to prevent future assaults. These erroneous conclusions confuse correlation and causation. To illustrate, consider the correlation between consciousness and sexual assault. Perpetrators of sexual assault typically commit sexual assaults only when they are awake, but it would be ridiculous to suggest that being awake caused them to commit sexual assaults. So, what is the relationship between alcohol and sexual violence?

First, alcohol use does not cause sexual violence. Putting alcohol into your system does not cause you to commit a sexual assault anymore than putting gasoline into your car causes you to drive to the airport. Gasoline makes it easier to do what you want to do (e.g., drive a car) while alcohol also makes it easier to do what you want to do (e.g., grope women). If you do not at least think about doing something when sober, you are not likely to do it when drunk. For example, no one worries about becoming so intoxicated that he will lose control and stab himself in the eye with a fork. Why? Because he would never consider doing that when sober.

Alcohol acts as a permission slip. By reducing inhibitions, alcohol often makes it more likely that someone will choose to sexually assault another person. As one man in a violent offender program noted, "When I first came to your program I told you that I hit my wife because I was drunk; now I realize that I drank so that I could hit her." He realized that alcohol did not excuse or even explain the abuse. Instead, alcohol was the way that he had tried to avoid responsibility for the abuse.

Sexual assault occurs despite alcohol use, not because of it. When someone is extremely intoxicated, we call that person "impaired." "Impaired" means that you have more difficulty performing tasks. Therefore, if you are going to sexually assault someone when drunk, you have to try harder, focus your attention and be more determined than if you were sober. In effect, people who sexually assault when

drunk, do so, not because they are intoxicated, but despite their intoxication. They have to overcome the impairment to commit the sexual assault.

Memory loss is not the same as lack of intent. If a perpetrator of sexual assault claims that he has no specific recollection of the assault, which does not mean that he had no intention of doing it at the time. All it means is that the perpetrator is currently either unable or unwilling to report his state of mind when the assaults occurred. For example, sometimes we hear perpetrators report on events that were acceptable (e.g., "I remember drinking and dancing") but not the events that could result in arrest and prosecution (e.g., "I don't recall fondling that person"). Or the perpetrator will not recall the offense, but will be able to assert with confidence what his state of mind was at the time (e.g., "I had no desire for sexual gratification."). How can you NOT remember what you did, but be absolutely certain what your motives were when you did it? How does alcohol know which memories to delete and which to keep intact?

Sexual assault and substance abuse are separate issues. If someone violates sexual boundaries while drunk, that person has two problems that need to be addressed. Taking responsibility for alcohol consumption addresses only half of the problem. The perpetrator also needs to take responsibility for the sexual violence. On the most basic level, the perpetrator needs to learn that all sexual contact without permission is sexual violence.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS (Excerpts from Ms. Magazine)

- **Spain:** The new Socialist governments' eight women ministers may constitute half of Prime Minister Jose Luis Zapatero's Cabinet – but they're already in trouble with the women's movement. The Spanish edition of last September's Vogue featured the ministers in a 16-photo fashion shoot, with the women lounging in model-like positions at the presidential complex. Although interviews about some ministerial policies accompanied the feature, the photos drew ire from Spanish feminists. Lourdes Hernandez, president of the Association of Neighborhood Women, observed that Cabinet ministers should not have to "pose like models," and said, "We don't have to do this to show our worth."
- **Canada:** Two women in Ontario, Canada's most populous province, were granted the nation's first same-sex divorce in September: the provincial court ruled the traditional definition of spouse in Canada's Divorce Act was unconstitutional. Ontario is one of four jurisdictions where same-sex marriage is legal, although federal divorce law defines marriage as between a man and woman. The federal government did not challenge Ontario's decision, acknowledging that the Divorce Act's narrow definition of spouse violates the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The governing Liberal Party is awaiting a Supreme Court ruling on the constitutionality of same-sex marriage before introducing legislation to legalize it nationally.
- **Vatican City:** The Vatican has released a new, 37-page statement on the roles of men and women. Its author, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, blames feminism for an "ideology of gender" and for "ignoring biological differences between men and women." Women are apparently naturals at "listening, welcoming...and waiting." The document also urges governments "to manage conditions so that women do not need to neglect their families if they want to pursue a job."
- **Mexico:** Amalia Garcia, president of the center-left Democratic Revolution Party (PRD), has been elected governor of the state of Zacatecas – the first elected woman governor in the country since 1989, and the third since women won national suffrage in 1953. Garcia delivered a resounding defeat to President Vicente Fox's National Action Party right in its northern USA-border stronghold.

- **Romania:** An intensified cooperative assault against sex trafficking in southeastern Europe has resulted in identifying 545 traffickers and charging 328 of them. The Bucharest-based Regional Center for Combating Transborder Crime, which opened in 2001, has conducted three regional sweeps against trafficking in persons, primarily young women for sexual exploitation. An estimated 200,000 women are trafficked annually from and to the region.

JUDGES EMBRACE MANDATORY MAKEUP, *Chicago Tribune, March 1, 2005*

Female employees over the years have fought requirements about their appearance that employers have tried to impose on them. They've won lawsuits over having to wear circulation-stopping fishnet stockings, maintaining rigid weight standards and conforming to specific hairstyles. But recently, female employees suffered a grooming rules setback in the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Reno, Nevada, when a three-judge panel ruled that women can be required to wear makeup.

The court upheld the right of Harrah's Resorts to do so as part of its business marketing policy. The full court has been asked to review the ruling. According to Riki Wilchins, of the Gender Public Advocacy Coalition, a national organization that works to end discrimination and violence caused by gender stereotypes, the decision "would be "right at home in the 19th Century." The resort, according to Wilchins, has a new "personal best" policy that states women must wear "foundation, concealer and/or face powder, blush, mascara, nail polish and lipstick." Wilchins adds that some Nevada hotels also "are working to make their female workforces younger and [conventionally] prettier by the simple expedience of requiring longer hours and higher heels. Few women over 50 can work a 12-hour shift in three-inch heels, so--presto--the female workforce magically and legally gets younger."

Darlene Jespersen, a 20-year employee at Harrah's, was fired when she refused to comply. The court said Jespersen, a bartender, had not shown that "the standards were significantly more burdensome than those imposed on men." Jespersen is represented by Lambda Legal. According to Wilchins, "male bartenders at Harrah's were only required to wear their hair above the collar and have clean and neatly trimmed nails." What, no mascara?

FLORIDA SCHOOL BOARD BANS GIRL IN TUXEDO. February 28, 2005

A decision was reached to ban a straight-A high school student from her senior yearbook for wearing a tuxedo instead of a dress and pearls. Even though there is no written dress code for senior pictures, the principal in Green Cove Springs, Florida pulled Kelli Davis's picture and fired the yearbook editor. The school board let the decision stand. "It is outrageous that county school officials would force female students to wear low-cut gowns or risk exclusion in their own yearbook. Kelli Davis is a member of the community and she should be honored and respected as such," said GenderPACs Youth Program Director, Kristin Effland. "And that principal should get back to what's really important – educating young people, not policing their choice of outfits." The school board's decision conflicts with new National School Boards Association guidelines that say there is no legal justification for gender-specific dress codes.

Kelli explained that she felt uncomfortable exposing her chest in a photo. Kelli's parents support their daughter and took out an ad in the yearbook featuring the banned photo. "We hear a lot of talk these days about family values. This young woman's parents are showing *real* family values by supporting their daughter," said Effland. "Young people should be able to choose how they want to be remembered in their yearbooks.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

APRIL IS SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH! CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

- April 4: Wall of Witness Opening Reception from 4-7pm, Contemporary Arts Forum, 653 Paseo Nuevo.
- April 5-9: Wall of Witness. La Casa de la Raza, 601 E. Montecito Street.
- April 9: Believe Me Dance-Off. Alano Club, 235 E. Cota. 8pm. \$10.
- April 10-16: Wall of Witness. The Coffee Grinder, 910 Linden Ave., Carpinteria.
- April 14: UCSB Take Back the Night March and Rally, Anisq' Oyo Park. 5:30pm.
- April 17-23: Wall of Witness. SB City College Library.
- April 23: Benefit Dance, La Casa de la Raza, 601 E. Montecito Street. 7pm-1am. \$25.
- April 27: Denim Day Rally. SB City College, 721 Cliff Dr.

WALL OF WITNESS

Can I get a Witness?

Art is a tool of healing, empowerment, and change!

SBRCC and our supporters are building a Wall of Witness to demonstrate our commitment to supporting survivors and ending sexual violence. The Wall of Witness is a collage and mural bringing together artwork, poetry, and testimonials that explore the theme of "Believe Me: *Celebrating the Courage and Resilience of Sexual Assault Survivors.*" Community members contributed unique creations expressing their reflections on overcoming sexual violence and the desire to build a safe, inclusive, and just society. The centerpiece of the Wall of Witness is a *Believe Me* mural created by local artist Brandon Sonntag.

Bear witness to the strength and creativity in our community at the Wall of Witness **Opening Reception on Monday, April 4, 2005 from 4:00-7:00p.m. at the Contemporary Arts Forum (CAF)**. Bonnie Campbell of KRUZ 97.5FM will emcee the program, which begins at 5:30p.m. Enjoy refreshments provided by Savior Faire Catering, the Coffee Cat, and Santa Barbara Winery. CAF is located at 653 Paseo Nuevo, 2nd level, on the corner of Chapala and De La Guerra Streets.

Throughout April, the Wall of Witness will be showcased at La Casa de la Raza, the Carpinteria Coffee Grinder, Santa Barbara City College, and Dos Pueblos High School.

DENIM DAY 2005: PROTEST HARMFUL ATTITUDES ABOUT SEXUAL ASSAULT

Denim Day began in 1999 as part of an international protest following an Italian Supreme Court decision to overturn a rape conviction because the survivor wore jeans. The justices ruled that since jeans are not easily removed without cooperation, and “impossible” to remove if someone is resisting, the survivor must have been complicit in her assault. This decision did not recognize that coercion, threats and force are a part of the act of rape. As a result, advocates around the world wear jeans on Denim Day to protest this ruling, and the many lingering myths surrounding sexual assault.

Denim Day may have been incited by a case overseas, but myths that blame survivors exist right here at home. Instead of accusing survivors of having invited a sexual assault because of what they wear, how much alcohol they drink, or other behaviors, recognize that survivors are never to blame. It’s time to shift the focus to holding perpetrators accountable for sexual violence.

On Wednesday, April 27th, we invite you to wear denim to lend your support. *Please encourage your friends, family members and co-workers to wear denim as part of this important day of activism. SBRCC will provide you with Denim Day buttons with the simple message: “Why denim?” to help you raise awareness on April 27th. To find out how you, your school, organization, or business can get involved in Denim Day 2005, please contact Alena at alena@sbrcc.net or 963-6832, x. 29.*

JOIN US FOR THE NEXT ADVOCATE MEETING: APRIL 12TH, 6PM – 8PM

This month, we will be joined by Legal Aid to learn more about restraining orders and about the other legal support services that they provide. See you on April 12th!

TIME FOR ANOTHER CRISIS INTERVENTION TRAINING...

The dates for the next Crisis Intervention Training in English are *April 18th through June 8th* and will take place every Monday and Wednesday evening from 6:00pm-10:00pm. Interested parties should contact Heather at 963-6832 x. 28 or heather@sbrcc.net to receive an application. Help spread the word!



HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO:



- Mary Ann F. on April 13th
- Kay S. on April 19th
- Meredith A. on April 25th