

Read group quote taken from a sexual assault report:
 "...due to the victims voluntary intoxication and intoxicated state
 her account cannot be believed..."

Ask the group the following discussion to elicit discussion:
 • What message is being sent by using this language and to whom?
 • Who counts on law enforcement officers believing that voluntary intoxication means a victim is not credible?
 • Is the officer's judgment about credibility sufficient investigation to submit the case for prosecution or to clear it as unfounded?
 • If you wanted to commit a crime against a person and get away with it who would you pick as the victim?

Goal:
 To provide officers with information about the occurrence of alcohol facilitated sexual assault and highlight promising practices for response and investigation.

Topic: Alcohol Facilitated Sexual Assault

National Law Enforcement First-Line Supervisor Training on Violence Against Women

National Law Enforcement First-Line Supervisor Training on Violence Against Women

Facts:

- Perpetrators often only use as much force as needed —in many cases a *perpetrator can commit the crime by using lesser means such as alcohol or drugs.*
- *Alcohol enables perpetrators* to more easily commit a sexual offense and frame a victim as a less reliable witness.
- Situations where the victim is legally viewed as *unable to consent due to incapacitation* is still considered criminal sexual activity in the absence of force or threat.
- Victims of this crime often report *gaps in time and memory* and uncertainty about the chronology of what happened and details.

Suggested procedures to follow:

- Immediately determine the time frame of the incident when he /she suspects a drug facilitated sexual assault occurred.
- Ask the victim to articulate how he/she felt or what he/she had been doing prior to losing consciousness.
- Communicate to the victim that substance abuse does not justify the sexual assault.
- It is crucial to interview any witnesses who might have seen the victim or spoken with the victim, before, during or after the assault. Witnesses can often establish time frames, comment on unusual behavior, provide critical facts, and identify potential sources of information.
- In the report, articulate why the victim's incapacitation as a result of voluntary alcohol/drug use is an issue of increased vulnerability rather than culpability.