



Addition 1: Substance Use and Sexual Violence Talking Points **A Guiding Document for Media Response and Community Conversations**

Created by the Prevention & Education Subcommittee
of the Oregon Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force

Statements that assume a causal relationship between sexual violence and substance use

Statement: If they hadn't been drinking, this never would have happened.

Reframe: Lots of people have safe, healthy, consensual sex that sometimes happens under the influence of alcohol or drugs. What matters is the practice of consent. Being drunk or intoxicated impairs one's ability to perceive consent. Knowing that we are less able to understand whether or not someone has consented when we are intoxicated should affect our decisions about whether or not we pursue sex.

Reframe: When we focus on promoting healthy sexual behaviors, we're able to have conversations about the different ways people create and use power to commit different acts of violence.

Reframe: Sexual violence occurs because someone feels entitled to have sex, they use that entitlement, or belief that they deserve power, to ignore whether or not another person is willing or able to consent.

Statement: We should be focusing on reducing alcohol use by young people.

Reframe: Having honest, accurate, authentic, and ongoing communication with all people about substance use helps create an environment where people can consume substances safely, as well as engage in sexual activity safely.

Reframe: Creating healthier norms that lead to healthier drinking behavior and healthier sexuality would solve both issues. This means supporting people in understanding what healthy and safe drinking looks like while also creating a culture that values consent. Together these efforts work to create a healthier, safer, more equitable community for all people.

Statement: We need to eliminate access to alcohol and bars.

Reframe: By educating bar staff and other bystanders, we're able to create safer environments and shift overall community norms that reinforce substance use facilitated sexual violence.

Reframe: People regularly consume alcohol without committing acts of violence. Therefore if we focus on the norms that reinforce substance use facilitated sexual assault, we are able to focus on the factors that really lead to sexual assault.

Statement: The person won't sexually assault someone again if they go through a substance abuse recovery program.

Reframe: Sexual violence happens because someone feels entitled to sex and disregards a person's willingness or ability to consent. By having conversations with people running substance abuse recovery programs, we can shift referral processes to include organizations

that respond to sexual violence. This will impact and support the efforts of the larger community, and allow us to focus on the root causes of violence.

Statements that blame the victim and reinforce perpetration

Statement: She just regretted having sex the next day so she's 'crying rape'.

Reframe: It is our responsibility to believe someone when they disclose that they experienced violence and to help them access support. This supports efforts to end violence for all people in our communities.

Reframe: One of the best ways to change norms in our cultures, is to model good consent practices. This helps create cultures and environments where people can be safe talking about sex, sexuality, and consent.

Statement: She shouldn't have gotten so drunk. She brought this on herself. Girls need to protect themselves.

Reframe: We all play a role in developing and supporting safe communities and environments for all people.

Reframe: Women, and all people, deserve the right to healthy, safe, consensual sex. When we create opportunities for conversations about consent, we promote a healthier and safer culture around sex for everyone.

Reframe: When we focus on how people use substances to facilitate sexual violence, we are focusing on one of the things that we can change to end sexual violence.

Statements that excuse the perpetrator

Statement: This was just a misunderstanding. They were really drunk and things just got out of hand. Why ruin someone's bright future over a mistake?

Reframe: Being drunk or intoxicated impairs one's ability to perceive consent. Knowing that we are less able to understand whether or not consent is present when we are intoxicated, should affect our decisions about whether or not we pursue sex.

Reframe: People are held responsible for their behavior when they're drunk. Drinking and driving is an example of this. Driving recklessly is more egregious if you were drunk. We don't excuse other behavior when someone is drunk, rather we often punish them more extensively when intoxicated. This must be true for committing acts of sexual violence as well.

Statement: If they hadn't been intoxicated, they wouldn't have done this. They were not in their normal mind.

Reframe: The majority of the people that drink don't sexually assault people.

Statement: Boys will be Boys. They're not going to change.

Reframe: We have the opportunity to change how we talk about boys and who they get to be. Toxic masculinity is a problem that can be solved, and is being addressed in many ways in our culture, currently.

Reframe: We have the ability to create healthier and safer communities. People are actively working to do so every day! Look at reduced smoking, laws requiring people to wear seatbelts, and people winning the right to vote. This is another thing that we can change.

Reframe: By helping our communities support and create healthy masculinity and understandings of consent, we are helping challenge society's view of men and boys, as well as what masculinity means.