



January 16, 2024

The staff of Fernie Women's Resource Centre are furious that there are people in our community committing acts of violence against women by drink tampering. While these acts are in the front of many of us, we here at the Women's Centre have bore witness to countless stories of physical, sexual, mental, emotional, psychological, spiritual, financial, and other forms of gender based violence throughout our history.

According Statistics Canada, 1 in 3 women will be sexually assaulted in her lifetime, usually by some one they know. However, we know that sexual assault happens to people across the gender spectrum. The people most at risk are also the most marginalized in our community: Indigenous women, girls and 2 Spirit people, 2SLGBTQIA+ folks, black and other racialized people, people with disabilities, new commers, people who use drugs, and unhoused/precariously housed people

But what's going on now? We call it Drug- Facilitated Sexual Assault (DFSA). According to our friends at Good Night Out Vancouver:

- Any substance that alters ones level of consciousness and / or physical ability to resist or fight back can be used to commit Drug-Facilitated Sexual Assault (DFSA). Causing someone to ingest something without their awareness is called 'drink-spiking', 'spiking,' or non-consensual dosing.
- Substances used include: alcohol, ghb, ketamine, opiates, edible / liquid cannabis products, over the counter medication such as Gravol, Benadryl, sleep aids, as well as any prescription medication with a sedative effect. *Alcohol is the most commonly used drug in DFSA and attempted DFSA.*
- Dosing people with substances without their awareness and permission is a consent violation, even without any attempt at sexual contact. Just because someone consents to ingest one type of substance does not mean they consented to anything else.

So What can you do?

Its important to note that the person who commits violence against someone else is responsible the violence that they commit. Nothing that a victim/survivor did or didn't do makes them responsible for what happened. Ever.

Sexual assault is about power, people acting to gain power and control against someone else. But we can take our power back!



FERNIE  
WOMEN'S RESOURCE  
CENTRE

When heading out:

We are glad to see that the establishments in town have made statements on how they will be addressing DFSA in their bars. Make a note of these statements and what they have said they will do to help if you need it.

Look after your friends, don't accept drinks from anyone but staff, don't leave your drinks unattended. If you suspect someone has had their drinks tampered with, take them somewhere safe. If they are in a medical emergency, call 9-1-1.

But, telling a health care provider about potential DFSA, or seeking any other supports is that person's choice. There are many reasons someone would choose not to disclose what happened and we must respect people's autonomy especially after an event that removed their autonomy from them in the first place.

If you think you have been sexually assaulted or had someone attempt DFSA, you have options if you would like to report what happened to you.

You are not alone, we see you, and we believe you. We are here to support you, answer your questions or support you through the process of reporting. Our Sexual Assault Services coordinator is available to anyone of any gender Monday-Friday to call 250-423-4786, to email [info@ferniewomenscentre.com](mailto:info@ferniewomenscentre.com) or text 250-430-1132. At this point our DMs are not monitored.

If you need emergency support after hours Elk Valley Transition Unit is available to help you: 250-946-6004

In the coming days we are going to be releasing an anonymous survey to better inform our Sexual Assault Services. We would like to know how we can better support you and what our community needs. Please let us know how we can help you better.

As a community we cannot tolerate violence of any kind. It is never okay to tamper with someone's drink, it's never okay to commit sexual assault. We hope that you can join us in our efforts to make this a safer, healthier, happier community for everyone.

In solidarity,  
The Fernie Women's Resource Centre