

# MEDIA EDUCATION FOUNDATION STUDY GUIDE



## SPIN THE BOTTLE

---

SEX, LIES & ALCOHOL

FEATURING **JACKSON KATZ** & **JEAN KILBOURNE**

STUDY GUIDE WRITTEN BY: DANIELLE DEVEREAUX

CONSULTANTS:

JEAN KILBOURNE | CREATOR, *KILLING US SOFTLY* SERIES

SALLY J. LASKEY | NATIONAL SEXUAL VIOLENCE RESOURCE CENTER

KENDRA OLSON | MARKETING DIRECTOR, MEDIA EDUCATION FOUNDATION

RONIT RIDBERG | PRODUCER, *SPIN THE BOTTLE: SEX, LIES & ALCOHOL*

# CONTENTS

## SPIN THE BOTTLE

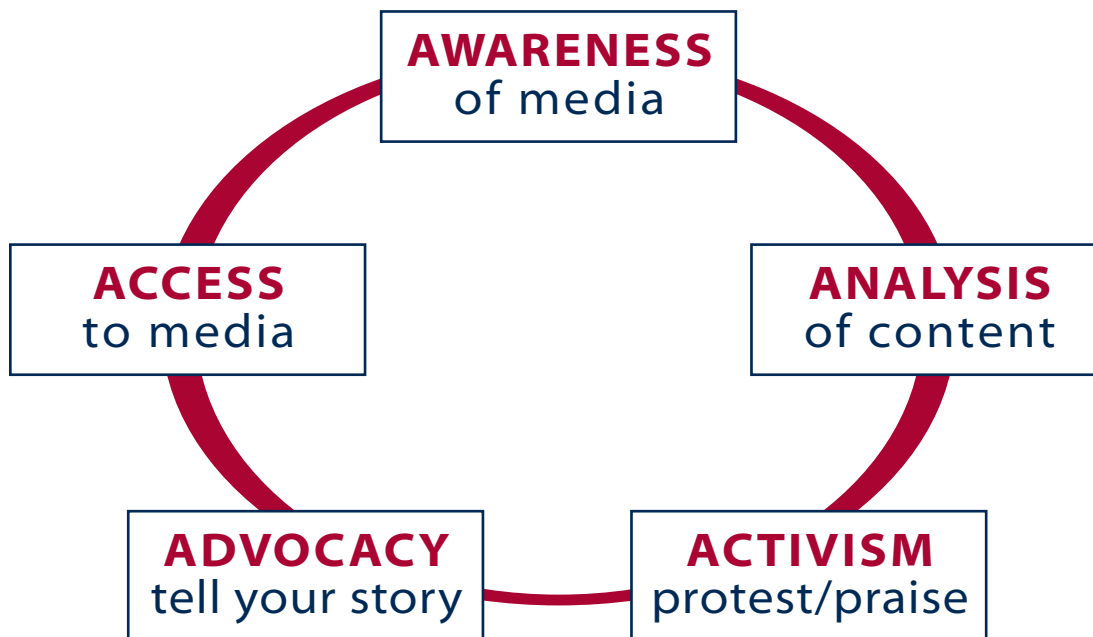
SEX, LIES & ALCOHOL

<b>USING THE VIDEO IN THE CLASSROOM</b> .....	pg. 03
<b>THE MEDIA LITERACY CIRCLE OF EMPOWERMENT</b> .....	04
<b>OVERVIEW</b> .....	05
<b>NOTE TO EDUCATORS</b> .....	07
<b>PRE-VIEWING QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION &amp; WRITING</b> .....	08
<b>GET THIS PARTY STARTED: GLAMORIZING ALCOHOL</b>	
Key Points.....	09
Questions for Discussion & Writing.....	10
Assignments & Activism Activities .....	11
<b>UNDER THE INFLUENCE: MEN &amp; ALCOHOL</b>	
Key Points.....	15
Questions for Discussion & Writing.....	15
Assignments & Activism Activities .....	17
<b>MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE: WOMEN &amp; DRINKING</b>	
Key Points.....	21
Questions for Discussion & Writing.....	22
Assignments & Activism Activities .....	24
<b>COURAGE IN A CAN: ALCOHOL &amp; SEX</b>	
Key Points.....	27
Questions for Discussion & Writing.....	27
Assignments & Activism Activities .....	29
<b>BODY SHOTS: ALCOHOL, SEX &amp; VIOLENCE</b>	
Key Points.....	30
Questions for Discussion & Writing.....	31
Assignments & Activism Activities .....	33
<b>LAST CALL: CHANGING THE CULTURE</b>	
Key Points.....	36
Questions for Discussion & Writing.....	37
Assignments & Activism Activities .....	37
<b>DVD EXTRA: PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY</b> .....	41
Questions & Assignments for Discussion & Writing.....	42
<b>DVD EXTRA: COLLECTED COMMERCIALS</b>	
Questions & Assignments for Discussion & Writing.....	48
<b>INSTRUCTOR DIRECTED ACTIVITIES</b> .....	57
<b>OTHER RESOURCES</b> .....	65
<b>WEB RESOURCES</b> .....	69

# USING THIS VIDEO IN THE CLASSROOM

- » View the video prior to showing it to your students.
- » Review the study guide and choose which exercises you will use with your students.
- » Use the previewing activities to help your students prepare for the ideas presented by the video.
- » Encourage *active listening*. Because the content of this video is likely to elicit emotional responses from the students, it is important that the students engage with each other in ways that ensure everybody has the opportunity both to speak and to be listened to. It is advised that you set guidelines or norms to ways to “actively listen” in advance of classroom discussions. Check out MEF’s handout, *Techniques for Active Listening*. ([www.mediaed.org/handouts/pdf/ActiveListening.pdf](http://www.mediaed.org/handouts/pdf/ActiveListening.pdf))
- » Have the students keep a journal. It will be an effective place for them to explore their own attitudes and opinions and to record their observations about the media.
- » Review and discuss the handout *How to be a Critical Media Viewer*. ([www.mediaed.org/handouts/pdf/CriticalViewing.pdf](http://www.mediaed.org/handouts/pdf/CriticalViewing.pdf))
- » Incorporate activism and advocacy into your media literacy study. They are an important part of empowering students.

# THE MEDIA LITERACY CIRCLE OF EMPOWERMENT



## THE MEDIA LITERACY CIRCLE OF EMPOWERMENT EXPLAINED

### AWARENESS

Students learn about the pervasiveness of the media in their lives.

### ANALYSIS

Students discuss the forms and contents of the media's various messages as well as the intent of most media to persuade an audience.

### ACTIVISM

Students develop their own opinions about the negative and positive effects of the media and decide to do something about it – this can be in the form of praise for healthy media, protest of unhealthy media, or development of campaigns to educate others with regard to the media, to change media messages, etc.

### ADVOCACY

Students learn how to work with media and use their own media to develop and publicize messages that are healthy, constructive, and all too often ignored by our society.

### ACCESS

Students gain access to the media – radio, newspaper, internet, television, etc. – to spread their own message. This in turn leads to further awareness of the media and how it works, which leads to a deeper analysis and so forth.

# OVERVIEW

## **SPIN THE BOTTLE: SEX, LIES & ALCOHOL**

*Spin the Bottle: Sex, Lies & Alcohol* examines the idea that college culture is a drinking culture and asks: where does this widely accepted belief come from and what are the consequences?

To answer these questions, award-winning media critics **Jackson Katz** and **Jean Kilbourne** look at how popular culture, by glamorizing and romanticizing alcohol, supports the notion that high-risk drinking is simply part of the college experience. In the world of popular culture, particularly in the world of media products aimed at young people, high-risk drinking has no negative consequences: in advertising, movies, television programs, and popular music, drinking is linked almost exclusively to good times, fun, spontaneity, and great sex. While most of us know there are negative consequences connected to alcohol use, cultural representations suggest that this isn't so, and make it difficult to take the problems associated with high-risk drinking seriously.

Interviews with health professionals—**Ojae Beale**, Program Director, Rape Crisis Services at UMass-Amherst; **Alan Calhoun**, Director, Medical Care at UMass-Amherst; and **Sally Linowski**, Associate Director, Health Education at UMass-Amherst—illustrate the negative affect alcohol is having on the lives of college students: from poor academic performance and addiction to sexual assault, rape, and even death. Though our cultural representations of alcohol may suggest otherwise, the negative consequences of alcohol do indeed exist. Additionally, they affect men and women differently. In its analysis, *Spin the Bottle* looks at how gender, and our definitions of masculinity and femininity, shapes our expectations around and experiences with alcohol, particularly with respect to sex, sexuality, sexual freedom, and sexual assault.

Throughout the video, students from four colleges discuss the drinking culture on their campuses and reflect on their own experiences with alcohol—these are perhaps the video's most poignant voices. They discuss how cultural messages about alcohol, gender, sexuality, and what it means to be a college or university student, affect their lives. These young people express a desire to bring about change and suggest that students themselves are ready to challenge the notion that high-risk drinking is a necessary part of the college experience.

*Spin the Bottle: Sex, Lies & Alcohol* facilitates a dialogue that engages the perspectives of media critics, health professionals, anti-violence advocates, educators, and students. Audience members are invited to participate in the dialogue—this study guide is a tool created to assist in this endeavor.

*Spin the Bottle: Sex, Lies & Alcohol* is divided into six sections, as is this study guide:

- » *Get This Party Started: Glamorizing Alcohol*
- » *Under the Influence: Men & Alcohol*
- » *Message in a Bottle: Women & Drinking*
- » *Courage in a Can: Alcohol & Sex*
- » *Body Shots: Alcohol, Sex & Violence*
- » *Last Call: Changing the Culture*

*Spin the Bottle: Sex, Lies & Alcohol* DVD Extras are referenced throughout this study guide. The extras include ten sections:

- » *The Pressure to Drink* (referenced in *Get this Party Started: Glamorizing Alcohol*)
- » *Drinking Normalized* (referenced in *Get this Party Started: Glamorizing Alcohol*, and *Under the Influence: Men & Alcohol*)

# OVERVIEW

- » *Addressing the Environment* (referenced in *Get this Party Started: Glamorizing Alcohol*, and *Last Call: Changing the Culture*)
- » *Co-opting Celebration* (referenced in *Get This Party Started: Glamorizing Alcohol*)
- » *Men, Alcohol & Sports* (referenced in *Under the Influence: Men & Alcohol*)
- » *Men & Light Beer* (referenced in *Under the Influence: Men & Alcohol*)
- » *Male Bonding* (referenced in *Under the Influence: Men & Alcohol*)
- » *More on Women & Drinking* (referenced in *Message in a Bottle: Women & Drinking*)
- » *Women & Sexual Assault* (referenced in *Message in a Bottle: Women & Drinking*, and *Body Shots: Alcohol, Sex & Violence*)
- » *Personal Responsibility* (referenced in *Body Shots: Alcohol, Sex & Violence*, and *Last Call: Changing the Culture*)

The issues covered in each of these ten DVD Extra sections are discussed throughout this study guide. The guide also includes a separate section of *Questions & Assignments for Discussion & Writing* specifically for the DVD Extra: *Personal Responsibility*.

The *Spin the Bottle* DVD Extra also includes five sections of *Collected Commercials*, referenced throughout this study guide:

- » *Objectifying & Mocking Women* (referenced in *Under the Influence: Men & Alcohol*, *Message in a Bottle: Women & Drinking*, and *Courage in a Can: Alcohol & Sex*)
- » *Sex & Male Fantasy* (referenced in *Under the Influence: Men & Alcohol*)
- » *Ads Targeting Women* (referenced in *Message in a Bottle: Women & Drinking*)
- » *Playing on Male Anxiety* (referenced in *Under the Influence: Men & Alcohol*)
- » *A Different Approach*

*Pre-viewing Activities*, *Questions for Discussion & Writing*, and suggestions for further study specific to these *Collected Commercials* are included in this study guide.

## NOTE TO EDUCATORS

Student voices play an important role in *Spin the Bottle: Sex, Lies & Alcohol*. This study guide is meant to help you encourage other students to voice their own thoughts and feelings about sex, sexual assault, alcohol, and media. To that end, it is important to create a safe space in which students feel comfortable expressing their thoughts and feelings openly. Support discussion that focuses on respect and trust. No disrespectful or disparaging remarks should be tolerated. Students may share their personal stories in confidence, and the class should be expected to maintain this confidence. Some students may be under the legal drinking age; unfortunately, this doesn't mean they don't drink. If it is possible for you to do so, you are encouraged—in the interest of facilitating open, honest discussion—to assure students that they will not be penalized for disclosing underage drinking. Consider asking students for their thoughts on what a 'safe classroom' looks and feels like—creating a safe space can then be a collaborative process.

Sexual assault is one of the most sensitive and important issues discussed in *Spin the Bottle*. Unfortunately, there is a high probability that some students in your group are survivors of sexual assault. We encourage you to connect with your campus or community rape crisis center before you screen this video. If possible, have a trained rape crisis worker available at the video presentation. Collect, and make available to your class, information about sexual assault and the services available to survivors. Alcohol addiction is another sensitive issue discussed in this video. We encourage you to find out what services are available in your area to students who have concerns about their use of alcohol, and to make this information available to the class. You may also want to have someone who works in this field present to the class, and if the presenter is open to it, encourage students to ask questions.

In the course of watching this video and using this study guide, students may disclose their own personal experiences with sexual assault and alcohol. If this happens, listen. Talking can be an empowering, validating experience. It can also have a positive effect on a group's learning experience, and students may find that putting a face to the 'sexual assault victim' or the 'alcoholic' helps them better grasp and understand the issues. However, some disclosures may require further attention. To that end, we suggest that you partner with various resource people in your community and on your campus, including anti-sexual violence advocates and educators, to discuss how you can best handle these disclosures, and guide students toward confidential counseling services, or any other resources they may need.

As a final note, with the exception of the *Instructor Directed Activities*, the questions, assignments, and activities in this guide address students directly, so that you can easily photocopy question sheets for the class if you so choose. Or, you may wish to simply extract certain questions to help start and build discussion. While the questions, assignments, and activities herein aim to be comprehensive and to facilitate discussion and critical thinking on a wide range of issues pertaining to sex, alcohol, and the media, this guide is not exhaustive—there may be questions, assignments, and activities you wish to add. We encourage you to use this guide in the ways that best suit your pedagogical needs.

# PRE-VIEWING QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the following statement: Excessive drinking is part of the college experience. Is this a message you have encountered? Where? Is it an accurate statement? Define excessive drinking.
2. How often do your peers drink? Do you notice any differences in the ways your male and female friends make decisions around drinking? How often do you drink alcohol? How much? What influences the decisions you make around drinking alcohol, i.e. what you drink, how much you drink?
3. What are gender stereotypes? How do you think gender stereotypes affect our expectations of and experiences with alcohol?
4. In a group of 3-4, list and write one-sentence descriptions of all the alcohol ads you can recall seeing/hearing in the past month. How many ads do you remember as a group? Do you notice any gender stereotyping in these ads?
5. In a group of 3-4, list and write short descriptions of as many movies or television shows each person in the group has seen in the past month that feature young people (*high school or college age*) drinking. In these movies/television shows, was alcohol consumed moderately or heavily? What were the consequences?
6. In a group of 3-4, list all the places within a five-mile radius of your campus where a person can go to drink or buy alcohol. Are there more or fewer places than you thought there would be?
7. In a group of 3-4, list and briefly describe all the images/icons associated with alcohol that you have seen on your campus, i.e. beer logos. How many can you remember as a group?
8. What are some negative consequences associated with high-risk drinking?
9. What does the cultural environment have to do with the choices an individual makes?
10. Before you watch *Spin the Bottle*, watch at least one current movie or two hours of television programming that features high school or college age people/characters. Does anyone refer to alcohol in the movie/TV shows? How often? Do the characters drink alcohol? How much? Are there any negative consequences?

# GET THIS PARTY STARTED

## KEY POINTS

- » Many of the problems we see associated with high-risk drinking are not necessarily about alcohol, but about the way we use it: the excessive use of alcohol is glamorized, romanticized, and not taken seriously in our culture.
- » Most of us know there are negative consequences to alcohol use, but in the cultural representations we see of alcohol, everyone is happy, having a great time, and there are no negative consequences. In this environment, the fact that alcohol is a drug, and can have many harmful effects, is obscured.
- » In North America, alcohol is heavily promoted, marketed, and romanticized. If other drugs (*i.e. cocaine, crack, or heroine*) were promoted and marketed in similar ways, people would be outraged.
- » Culture is the place and space where a society tells stories about itself, about what is right and wrong, good and bad, acceptable and unacceptable. These stories shape our values and ideas, and they shape the way we behave. The media has become our culture's main storyteller: the stories the media tells about alcohol are important.
- » Many movies targeting teens feature college and even high school students drinking heavily. These films tend to be formulaic—drinking is a rite of passage, there are wild parties where everyone is having a great time. Often, an unpopular character goes to one of these parties, gets drunk, has fun, becomes popular, and sometimes loses his or her virginity as a result of getting drunk—this is always seen as a good thing. These types of stories offer a kind of blueprint on how college students are supposed to behave.
- » While Spring Break is not new, *MTV Spring Break* has changed the expectations students have of what their Spring Break should be like. Today, when a student goes to Spring Break they're not just having their own, individual, authentic experience, they are acting out or recreating what they've already seen in the media, particularly on MTV, about what Spring Break should look like.
- » Many young people feel their drinking behavior is just casual, social drinking. However, they're developing habits, which in many cases become life-long alcohol dependencies and addictions. At least 1 in 3 students have an alcohol dependency problem. The earlier a person starts drinking, the more likely they are to become dependent. If a person starts drinking before the age of 15, they're 4 times more likely to develop an alcohol-related problem (*see The Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth fact sheet The Toll of Underage Drinking, <http://camy.org>*).
- » The majority of college students are not high-risk drinkers. Yet even students who never drink, suffer the negative consequences of high-risk drinking. From having to put up with dirty and damaged residences, to having to look after drunk friends who may hurt themselves, to coming face to face with the violent behavior often associated with drinking (*i.e. sexual assault*)—all students have to deal with the negative consequences of high-risk alcohol consumption.
- » On any given night, especially weekends, college students fill hospital emergency rooms across the US with alcohol-related issues, *i.e.* severe intoxication or trauma (*accidental or linked to violence*).
- » Drinking can and does kill college students. 1,400 college students between the ages of 18 and 24 die each year from alcohol-related unintentional injuries, including motor vehicle crashes. (*A Snapshot of Annual High-Risk College Drinking Consequences, [www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov](http://www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov)*).
- » Drinking can have many negative personal effects, for example: insomnia; difficulty recovering from illnesses; greater risk of contracting communicable diseases such as, bronchitis, mono, flu, and pneumonia. Academic problems associated with drinking might include: missing classes because of hangovers or being drunk; falling behind academically; and difficulty studying because of tiredness, drunkenness, or because people in the environment are drinking and being disruptive.

# GET THIS PARTY STARTED

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION & WRITING

---

1. Why is it important to look at the stories our culture tells about alcohol?
2. One of the movie clips shown in *Spin the Bottle* features a young female character saying, “I’m getting trashed man, isn’t that what you’re supposed to do at a party?” Is this an attitude you’ve come across before? Where? Is it true? Why? What if you don’t? What are you ‘supposed’ to do at a party? See also *Spin the Bottle DVD Extras: The Pressure to Drink and Drinking Normalized*.
3. In a group of 3-4, list and describe all of the messages you’ve heard about alcohol from the mainstream media—Hollywood movies, television, music, and advertising. Divide these messages into three categories: 1) messages that say alcohol consumption is great; 2) messages that say alcohol consumption is bad; and 3) messages that say drinking can be fun, but it can also have negative consequences. Which list is the longest? Which messages are strongest? What factors might contribute to this situation?
4. Have you, or anyone you know, suffered personally and/or academically as a result of alcohol consumption? In what ways?
5. **Jackson Katz** notes that in our culture we condone the mass marketing, promotion, and glamorization of alcohol, yet if other drugs (*i.e. cocaine and heroin*) were marketed, promoted, and glamorized in similar ways, people would be outraged. Why do we condone the way alcohol is marketed, promoted, and glamorized in our culture?
6. **Jean Kilbourne** poses the question, “Where do students get the idea that alcohol is a necessary part of the college experience?” If Kilbourne were asking you this question, how would you reply?
7. **Jackson Katz** says, “It’s not necessarily the alcohol itself that we need to look at, but rather the cultural meanings that we ascribe to it.” What does this mean?
8. In a group of 3-4, discuss some of the negative consequences of alcohol you’ve experienced/witnessed, whether you were personally drinking or not.
9. Many students feel if they don’t go out and drink they’re missing out on something. Nobody wants to feel unpopular. What is popularity? How, and why, have popularity and drinking alcohol become linked? Is being and feeling popular simply a matter of going out and drinking? If you don’t go out and drink, does that mean you have to stay home and do nothing? See also *Spin the Bottle DVD Extra: The Pressure to Drink*.
10. Many movies targeting teens feature college students, and even high school students, drinking heavily, having keg parties, and other alcohol-related activities. These films tend to be formulaic—drinking is a rite of passage, there are wild parties where everyone is having a great time. Often, an unpopular character goes to one of these parties, gets drunk, has fun, becomes popular, and sometimes loses his or her virginity as a result of getting drunk: this is always seen as a good thing.

Working in a group of 3-4, list and describe the movies or television programs you’ve seen that follow this formula. Can you think of anything else these movies/television programs have in common? What might be some of the consequences of seeing these types of movies/television programs over and over?

# GET THIS PARTY STARTED

11. If an anthropologist from another planet were trying to learn about what it's like to be a college student in North America, and the only information she had was what she'd gleaned from the mass media, what would she think a college student was like? What might be missing from her picture of the North American college student?

12. The following are quotes from some of the students interviewed:

*"College is sort of advertised as the place that you go to drink."*

*"When you drink, you are drinking to get drunk."*

*"I don't have Friday classes because I know I'm going to drink on Thursday."*

*"I'd say now that I am addicted to alcohol—I drink all the time."*

*"I think a lot of people are tired of it by this time—they just don't know what else to do."*

In a group of 3-4, discuss these quotes. Are the experiences/attitudes expressed by the students interviewed similar to your experiences/attitudes? If the producers had interviewed students on your campus, would they hear similar things? What other opinions have you heard?

## ASSIGNMENTS & ACTIVISM ACTIVITIES

---

1. Even people who are not students sometimes find it difficult to take college drinking seriously. Parents, administrators, and members of the public often think—well that's just what college kids do. Adults may look back at their own college experience and remember it as a time when they, too, consumed alcohol excessively.

So has college always been a drinking culture? To begin investigating this question, interview a person over 60 who went to college or university in his/her youth. It may be particularly interesting to interview an individual who is an alumnus of your college/university, or you might consider interviewing a relative. If possible, record your interview on audio or videocassette (*if recording your interview is not possible, taking notes also works well*). Ask your interviewee about their experiences with alcohol in college/university. Discuss your own experiences with alcohol so you both can compare and contrast. Do you and your interviewee think alcohol is consumed differently on campuses today (*i.e. more or less, with different consequences, different attitudes*)? Reflecting on the interview you've conducted, what do you think could be contributing to our attitude that the college culture is a drinking culture? Cautionary statement: although interviewing a person from another generation will give you some historical perspective on alcohol consumption, remember that this is one person's experience, which cannot completely represent an entire generation. Compare the information from your interview with your classmates' interviews.

2. Conduct a screening of *Spin the Bottle: Sex, Lies, & Alcohol* in your community, club, or dorm. If you interviewed someone as discussed above in activity **No.1**, invite them to come along, or have the entire class invite their interviewees to a special screening of the video. Have a facilitator lead the group in a discussion about college as a drinking culture.

3. One of the students interviewed in *Spin the Bottle* recalls a discussion he had with his mother: "I was like, 'Mom, I'm a college kid, that's what I do.' And she said, 'Justin, what's going to happen when you leave college? You think you can just snap out of it? That's how alcoholism starts.' And I was like, 'All right mom, just leave me alone.' And I sat in my bed and I thought, she's kinda right."

# GET THIS PARTY STARTED

The alcohol industry has a vested interest in promoting Justin's attitude—the college market is over \$5 billion a year (see *Alcohol Policy Solutions FAQs*, [www.alcoholpolicysolutions.net](http://www.alcoholpolicysolutions.net))—and it is to the industry's advantage if Justin and other students like him do not “just snap out of it” because the alcohol industry profits from addiction—10% of the drinking population consumes over 60% of all the alcohol sold (see *Greenfield & Rogers: Who drinks most of the alcohol in the US? The Policy Implications; Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, January 1999, pp 78-89, and *Deadly Persuasion: The Advertising of Alcohol & Tobacco*, [www.mediaed.org](http://www.mediaed.org).)

a. Do some investigative work to find out if the alcohol industry is promoting Justin's attitude on your campus. It may be helpful to first read the report *Last Call*, available online at [www.edc.org/hec/pubs/lastcall.pdf](http://www.edc.org/hec/pubs/lastcall.pdf), for ideas about what to look for as you do your investigation.

Look at some of the ways the alcohol industry is present on and around your campus. For instance, pay attention to the ads you see for alcohol and/or local bars (*i.e. in campus publications and on posters*). Analyze these ads—do they normalize or link heavy drinking to having an ‘authentic’ college experience? Do nearby bars have special promotions, *i.e.* ‘ladies drink free’ or ‘a penny for a pint’ night? Analyze these promotions—do they normalize or link heavy drinking to having an ‘authentic’ college experience? Does the alcohol industry and/or local bars, sponsor any campus or close-to-campus events, *i.e.* parties or concerts? Are the alcohol industry and/or local bars, involved in campus sports or graduation celebrations? Analyze their involvement—does their involvement connect these events to heavy drinking, in other words, do they make it seem like alcohol is a necessary part of these events? See also *Spin the Bottle DVD Extra: Co-opting Celebration*.

b. Write a report detailing the results of your investigation; include your analyses. Does your investigation suggest that the alcohol industry, and/or bars and stores that act as outlets for the alcohol industry, are promoting Justin's attitude on your campus? What can students, the administration, and the community at large do to address this situation? Again, the report *Last Call*, available online at [www.edc.org/hec/pubs/lastcall.pdf](http://www.edc.org/hec/pubs/lastcall.pdf), may be helpful here, as it includes some ideas for action.

c. Write a journal entry expressing your opinions/feelings about what you found in your investigation and analyses.

4. The majority of college students are not high-risk drinkers, but that doesn't mean they don't suffer the negative consequences associated with alcohol. Students interviewed in *Spin the Bottle* recall some of the negative consequences they've observed/experienced, regardless of whether or not they were drinking themselves: “That affects everyone on the weekends. I'm trying to have fun, have a good time, and I go out in the hallway and there's puke everywhere.”

Can you recall any instances when alcohol had negative consequences for you, even if you were not personally drinking or drinking heavily? When you were drinking?

For one 4-day period (*Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday*) keep a log or journal, noting how alcohol affects you, your surroundings, and the people around you. Note when you consume it and when others around you consume it. After everyone in the class has completed their 4-day log, discuss your results.

5. In this section of the video, we note that many movies targeting teens feature college students, and even high school students, drinking heavily, having keg parties, and other alcohol-related activities. These films tend to be formulaic—they have key scenes like drinking as a rite of passage, wild parties, often an unpopular character goes to a party, gets drunk, becomes popular, and may also lose his or her virginity as a result of getting drunk; this is always seen as a good thing.

# GET THIS PARTY STARTED

Write an outline of an original script for a movie meant for an audience age 15-22. Create characters and plot lines that don't follow the same old formulaic pattern. If alcohol is going to play a role in your movie, give it a new role, one that you haven't seen in these types of Hollywood films. If possible film or stage a short scene from your movie.

Alternatively, create an outline for a movie or a series of scenes that spoof the Hollywood formula. Watch a few of these types of movies, *i.e. Varsity Blues, Road Trip, American Pie 2, Drive Me Crazy*. Pick out something ridiculous, unbelievable, or untruthful about the movie—*i.e. everyone gets drunk but no one has a hangover the next morning, the unpopular kid miraculously becomes popular thanks to a few drinks, or drunken sex is always great and safe*—and spoof it. Often spoofs are funny, but they don't have to be. While it may be appropriate for some of your spoof scenes to be funny, it is also appropriate for some of them to be serious, because often the negative consequences of alcohol are serious, sad, and even scary. If possible, film or stage one of your spoof scenes. For some examples of spoofing visit the *Adbusters* website at [www.adbusters.org](http://www.adbusters.org).

Hold a public screening/staging of the classes' creations. After the screening/staging, invite the audience to participate in a discussion about the topics covered in the work they've just seen.

## 6. Spring Break

a. Interview a person over 50 who went to college when s/he was around the same age as you are now; ask this person to describe what his/her Spring Break looked like. Write a description of your Spring Break experiences. Next write a description of *MTV Spring Break*. Compare and contrast these three descriptions of Spring Break. How are they similar? How are they different? Do you think *MTV Spring Break* has had any influence on your experiences/expectations of Spring Break? Why or why not?

b. Research *MTV Spring Break*. When did it start? Why? Who sponsors it? Who profits? How is the alcohol industry involved in *MTV Spring Break*—*i.e. do they provide participants with free or discounted alcohol?* How does *MTV Spring Break* advertise itself to students and MTV viewers, in other words, what does it tell its viewers *MTV Spring Break* is all about? How does it advertise itself to its sponsors, in other words, what does it tell its sponsors *MTV Spring Break* is all about? Given the information you've uncovered in your research, what is the primary goal of *MTV Spring Break*?

7a. View the film *Varsity Blues*. Write a critique of the movie from the perspective of one of the following:

- » The director of an alcohol education program.
- » A college student who has lost a close friend to alcohol.

7b. View the film *Crazy Beautiful*. Write a critique comparing the portrayal of alcohol in this film to the portrayal of alcohol in *Varsity Blues* and similar Hollywood movies.

8. While excessive drinking is definitely a problem on college and university campuses, research has shown that many students overestimate how much and how often their fellow college students drink (*see also the Spin the Bottle DVD Extra: Addressing the Environment*). The misperception that everyone else is drinking a lot, all the time, leads many students to believe that if they are not drinking, they must be missing out, so they drink because that's what they think everyone else is doing; in reality, most students don't drink all the time nor do they drink excessive amounts.

## GET THIS PARTY STARTED

a. Are students on your campus drinking as much and as often as you might think? Conduct a survey to determine how much and how often students on your campus are drinking alcohol, and if they overestimate how much and how often other students are drinking. Survey at least 50 students. Ensure that the students remain anonymous, that is students should NOT sign their name to the survey. The report *A Social Norms Approach to Preventing Binge Drinking at Colleges and Universities*, available online at [www2.edc.org/hec/pubs/](http://www2.edc.org/hec/pubs/) provides some sample surveys. See also the Higher Education Center for Alcohol & Other Drug Prevention web page *FAQ About Social Norms and Social Marketing* at [www.edc.org/hec/ta/faq/social.html](http://www.edc.org/hec/ta/faq/social.html).

*Note:* your college or university may have already undertaken or participated in a similar survey. If they have, what were the results? Compare and contrast their survey results to yours. Compare your results to similar surveys that have been done on other campuses.

b. Where do we go from here? In a group of 3-4, brainstorm a list of ways you could use the information you've gathered to change the college drinking culture. It might help to look at how other campuses have used similar information, see the Higher Education Center for Alcohol & Other Drug Prevention web page *What Campuses Are Doing*, [www.edc.org/hec/socialnorms/campuses/](http://www.edc.org/hec/socialnorms/campuses/); for further ideas see *FAQ About Social Norms and Social Marketing* at [www.edc.org/hec/ta/faq/social.html](http://www.edc.org/hec/ta/faq/social.html). Choose an action on your list and implement it!

# UNDER THE INFLUENCE

## KEY POINTS

---

- » Young men often feel a lot of pressure to drink heavily—in our culture, heavy drinking and being able to ‘hold your liquor’ is associated with being a so-called ‘real’ man. The pressure comes from many sources, including media and, often, other young men.
- » One of the ways we quantify manhood—one of the ways we measure masculinity—is by asking how much alcohol a man can drink. In some situations, young men drink more than they can physiologically handle, just to prove that they are ‘man enough.’
- » Young men often brag about how much they drink. These drinking stories help to create and maintain the links between masculinity and drinking.
- » Not only is the quantity of alcohol a man can consume important, the type of alcohol consumed is also used as a measure of masculinity.
- » The ‘manliness’ of a given product is constructed. As a liquid that you drink, beer is no more masculine than a wine cooler; the so-called ‘manliness’ of a product comes from the meaning we ascribe to it.
- » The link between masculinity and drinking is so powerful that often when a man turns down a drink, his masculinity is questioned.
- » The link between manhood and alcohol is played out in extreme ways in hazing rituals, in places where there is intense pressure on young men to prove that they ‘measure up’ and are ‘man enough’ to belong to an exclusive group, *i.e.* the military, sports teams, and fraternities. The pressure can be so extreme that some young men drink dangerous, even lethal amounts, of alcohol in an effort to join the club.
- » Our cultural definition of manhood is linked to aggression, physicality, and not backing down. Add heavy drinking, and we have a dangerous mix. Our society suffers from alcohol-related violence perpetrated by men and boys under the influence of alcohol—vandalism, acts of aggression, fights, abuse, and assaults, including sexual assault and rape.
- » It is important to look critically at how gender figures into the uses and abuses of alcohol.
- » For further study see also the *Spin the Bottle DVD Extras: Drinking Normalized; Men, Alcohol & Sports; Men & Light Beer; and Male Bonding.*

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION & WRITING

---

1. How does our culture define masculinity? What happens when a young man does not stick to this definition, when someone steps ‘outside the lines’—*i.e.* a man acts in a stereotypically ‘feminine’ way? What role does alcohol play in getting men to stay inside the lines?
2. What is it like to be a young man in a heavy drinking culture? What are some of the problems young men face that are related to drinking?
3. In what ways does the drinking behavior of young men affect young women? Other young men? Society in general?
4. In groups of 3-4, list and briefly describe some of the messages you have heard or seen that link heavy drinking to masculinity. How does this message affect your expectations of yourself and others?
5. Young men often feel enormous pressure to drink more than they can physiologically handle. What factors in our culture support and contribute to this situation? What role does the alcohol industry play? Have you ever seen or experienced this situation? What might some of the consequences of this situation be? Discuss.

## UNDER THE INFLUENCE

6. In a group of 3-4, make two lists: 1) a list of drinks that the culture defines as 'girly'; and 2) a list of drinks that the culture defines as 'manly'. How do we know which drinks are masculine and which are feminine? What and who determines the gender of a drink? How and why does this happen? How might this practice work to reinforce gender stereotypes as experienced by men and women? If you wanted to switch a drink from 'girly' to 'manly' or vice versa, what would have to change? (See also the *Spin the Bottle DVD Extra: Men & Light Beer*). Is there such a thing as an androgynous or non-gendered drink? Why is it androgynous?

7. The following are quotes from some of the students interviewed:

*"When you're a guy, people just do expect you to drink a certain amount. And the more you drink that means the more of a man you are for some reason."*

*"If you're the first one out, you're considered like the girl, the wuss of the crew. And you don't want to be that. So you try to increase your tolerance by drinking more."*

*"And then there's always like the pace-keepers who make sure everyone's drinking a certain amount within a certain time."*

*"And just to see my friend, he always gets teased about it, walking around with his Blue Hawaiians, with the little umbrella stuck in the top. It's like, 'What are you doing? Get away!'"*

*"It's the pressure of just being—I guess it goes with everything—just being a man, just being tough. You know, trying to act like you're hard and doing what you gotta do."*

In a group of 3-4, discuss these quotes. Are the experiences/attitudes expressed by the students interviewed similar to your experiences/attitudes or the experiences/attitudes of people you know? If the producers had interviewed students on your campus, would they hear similar things? What other opinions have you heard?

8. One of the students interviewed says, "It's more a bragging kind of deal, the next morning. That's what gets men to drink more, if you brag about it. Which is stupid. I don't know why we do it." How are drinking stories linked to the role of competition in male culture? Discuss the function of drinking stories in male culture. Do women tell drinking stories? Do these drinking stories serve the same function as men's drinking stories? (See also the *Spin the Bottle DVD Extra: Drinking Normalized*.)

9. In a group of 3-4, list and briefly describe all the alcohol ads you can think of that show or refer to men's relationships with other men. (See also *DVD Extra Collected Commercials sections: Objectifying & Mocking Women, Sex & Male Fantasy, and Playing on Male Anxiety*; some sample print ads are available in the *Spin the Bottle Study Guide Handout*, available online at [www.mediaed.org/handouts](http://www.mediaed.org/handouts)). How do the men in these ads look? What are they doing? How are they using alcohol? What do these ads say about men's friendships with other men? What role does homophobia play in the way these ads are constructed? How might these ads work to keep men within the boundaries of our culture's definition of masculinity? What impact might the messages in these ads have on heterosexual boys and men? On homosexual or bisexual boys and men? (See also the *Spin the Bottle DVD Extra: Male Bonding*.)

10. When surveyed, many students have said that alcohol facilitates male bonding (for further info see the article *Alcohol on Campus* at <http://articles.student.com/article/alcoholsurvey>). If this is true, why do men rely on alcohol to bond? How might our cultural definition of masculinity support this situation? How might homophobia support this situation? What are some ways young men can bond with one another that do not focus on drinking, or destructive behavior? How might changing our cultural definition of masculinity change, and improve, young

# UNDER THE INFLUENCE

men's relationships with one another? (See also the *Spin the Bottle DVD Extra: Male Bonding*.)

11. Discuss the links between aggression, alcohol, and masculinity.
12. Why is it important to look at the problems associated with high-risk drinking through a gendered lens?

## ASSIGNMENTS & ACTIVISM ACTIVITIES

---

1. Our gender identities come with a lot of rules.

- a. In a group of 3-4, make a list of 'rules' that exist in the culture for men with respect to gender. How do we learn these 'rules'?
- b. Read the article *Beyond the Gender Myths* by Margot Hornblower (available online at [www.time.com](http://www.time.com)) and read/listen to the song *When I Was a Boy* by Dar Williams (lyrics available online, see for instance [www.limitless.org/~del/dar/honestyroom/wheniwasaboy.html](http://www.limitless.org/~del/dar/honestyroom/wheniwasaboy.html)). Reflect on how gender stereotypes, and the rules you've listed above in **1a**, hurt boys and men. How do they serve or help boys and men?
- c. Find at least three articles that discuss masculinity from at least three of the following disciplines: Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology, Feminism/Women's Studies, Men's Studies, Biology, Cultural Studies, or Communications. Write a report reviewing these articles—what do these different disciplines say about masculinity, gender differences/similarities, and gender identity? How might these disciplines address/talk about men and alcohol?

2. In *Sex & Gender: An Introduction*, Hilary M. Lips writes:

*"Stereotypically, we expect different behaviors, personal qualities, and physical appearance from women and men. When we categorize people by sex (their biological femaleness or maleness), we tend to assume that we have also categorized them according to the set of cultural expectations for femininity and masculinity, although on many dimensions there is no necessary relationship between biological sex and cultural expectations for women and men...human beings have often failed, and still do, to recognize the extent to which gender stereotypes are products of the social context in which they exist, how resistant they are to disconfirmation, and how easily they can act as self-fulfilling prophecies. We react negatively to individuals who violate the stereotypes, as if they were acting in an 'unnatural' way, when, in fact, they are simply violating [or resisting] cultural norms (37)."*

- a. In a group of 3-4, discuss what the men in your life are like. In what ways do these men resist our culture's limited definition of masculinity? In what ways do they follow the culture's definition? What qualities do they possess that our cultural definition of masculinity doesn't necessarily include, *i.e.* kindness, compassion, and generosity?

*Note:* The purpose of this exercise is to make honest observations about the men in your life and the way that they behave. It is not to harshly criticize or ridicule these men. Instructors should set an expectation for respectful dialogue.

- b. If your group were in charge of creating and sending out new messages about what it means to be a man, what would those messages look like? Make a list detailing these new messages.
- c. Choose one of your new messages and send it out! First, decide how you will get your message out into the world: in other words, choose the medium for your message. Possible ideas: put your message into

# UNDER THE INFLUENCE

an ad (or a non-ad since you're not actually selling a product but putting forth an idea) or spoof-ad (see [www.adbusters.org](http://www.adbusters.org) for info and ideas about how to create spoof-ads). Post the ads around campus. Create a Public Service Announcement (PSA) for your campus or community radio station. Write and perform a song or poem with a new message about masculinity; have your performance recorded and played on your college or community radio station. There are many ways to get your new message about masculinity out there. Remember you want your message to grab people's attention and be heard, so be creative!

3. The link between masculinity and alcohol is often played out in extreme ways in hazing rituals. In these situations, there is intense pressure on young men to prove that they 'measure up,' and are 'man enough' to belong to an exclusive group *i.e.* a fraternity or sports team. The pressure can be so extreme that young men will drink dangerous, sometimes lethal, amounts in an effort to join the club.

a. Read the article *Hazing and the Making of Men* by Elizabeth J. Allan, available online at [www.stophazing.org](http://www.stophazing.org). Find at least two other articles/chapters/reports that discuss hazing. Drawing on the material you've read, and your own experience, write a paper that addresses the following: what role does our cultural definition of masculinity play in male hazing rituals? What role does power play in these rituals? What role does alcohol play in these rituals? Many people think that feminism is only concerned with how our gender definitions affect women; however, many feminists have argued that rigid gender definitions are harmful to both men and women. How might feminist scholars talk about men, alcohol, and hazing? Proponents of hazing rituals often suggest that they are a way for men to bond (see also *the Spin the Bottle DVD Extra: Male Bonding*). In this situation hurting, humiliating, and disrespecting someone is reinterpreted as positive—what is going on in our culture that supports this reinterpretation? What are some non-destructive and non-alcohol-related ways men can bond?

b. Women also engage in hazing rituals. Search the mainstream media for reports of hazing rituals. Ensure that some of the reports talk about young men and hazing, and some talk about young women and hazing. Next read the article *Bad Girls, Bad Girls, Whatcha Gonna Do?* by Lyn Mikel Brown, available online at [www.stophazing.org](http://www.stophazing.org). Make a list of Brown's main points. Using these points, analyze the articles you've collected. Can you find evidence to support Brown's claims? Brown suggests that while male hazing rituals are often interpreted as forms of bonding, or boys being boys, female hazing rituals are often interpreted as girls being mean or petty—what is going on in our culture that supports these very different interpretations? What role does our cultural definition of femininity play in the way girls and young women engage in hazing rituals?

c. Hazing hurts men and women. We need to have rules and policies around hazing rituals, but as the articles you read for **3a** and **3b** suggest, we also need to look at our gender definitions, and the limits these definitions place on the roles available to both men and women. What role does alcohol and the alcohol industry play in maintaining our gender definitions? Why might it be in the industry's interest to maintain them? How can we make these gender definitions more flexible?

4. Hazing is often associated with Greek life on college campuses. Some students who have participated in hazing rituals argue that hazing brings them closer to their fraternity brothers or sorority sisters, because those who suffer together stay together.

a. In a group of 3-4, discuss what aspects of the Greek fraternity and sorority culture work to support this belief. How might the culture at large also support this situation?

b. Read the article *Greek Letters Don't Justify Cult-Like Hazing of Pledges* by Hank Nuwer, available online

## UNDER THE INFLUENCE

at [www.stophazing.org](http://www.stophazing.org). Find and read at least one other article/chapter/report on cults. In what ways can fraternity and sorority culture be cultish? How might this contribute to and support the belief that those who suffer together stay together? In a 3-5 page paper, discuss fraternity and sorority culture as cult.

c. Read the article *Greek Tragedy* by Paul Ruffins, available online at [www.washingtoncitypaper.com/archives/cover/1999/print\\_cover0618.html](http://www.washingtoncitypaper.com/archives/cover/1999/print_cover0618.html). Find and read at least one other article/chapter/report that discusses hazing and takes the hazing pledge, or the family's point of view, into account. Analyze these articles in a paper. Do you see any evidence to suggest the people involved believed that 'those who suffer together stay together'? What were some of the consequences? What aspects of Greek culture, and our culture at large, may have contributed to and supported the belief systems that the pledge and the sorority/fraternity were operating from? What is the role of both gender and race in the situations you've analyzed? Bonding and friendship are important—how can fraternities and sororities encourage bonding and friendship without having to make people suffer?

d. Different colleges have different approaches to Greek life and alcohol policies. What is your campus's policy toward Greek life and hazing? How has this changed or stayed the same in the last 50 years? How has Greek life and hazing changed or stayed the same in those years? Will/do these policies effect positive change? Investigate the policies and practices of the fraternities and sororities on your campus. In what ways are students involved with these groups working to bring about positive change with respect to high-risk drinking and hazing on your campus? Compile the information you've collected and analyzed in a report; suggest a best-practice approach for your own campus to incorporate.

5. Investigate your campus history of hazing rituals. Remember hazing is not limited to fraternities and sororities; it is also often associated with athletics, the military, and other membership groups.

a. Have there been any publicly acknowledged incidents of injury or death resulting from hazing activities on your campus? Investigate this incident (*if there have been no such incidents on your campus, find one that has occurred at a university or college close by*). What were the circumstances? What went wrong? What were the consequences? How did the perpetrators explain what they had done and why? How was the victim(s)'s life changed? What could have been done to prevent this incident? How did the administration respond? Did your college take any steps to address hazing as a result of this incident? Has the situation changed? How?

b. Write a report detailing the results of your investigation. As part of your report, look at your campus policies around hazing; if possible interview a member of the administration. Will these policies work to prevent an incident like the one you've investigated above from reoccurring? How do you see, or not see, these policies lived out on your campus? Suggest some steps the administration can take to prevent such an incident from reoccurring. Send your report to the administration. For ideas and more information on hazing, check out the website [www.stophazing.org](http://www.stophazing.org).

c. Having tackled the question of what the administration should be doing to address hazing, in a group of 3-4, brainstorm a list of ways students can help. Choose one of the items on your list and implement it.

6a. View at least two current movies that feature college or high school-age characters. Analyze each movie. Make a list of all the young, male characters. Do they drink alcohol? Moderately or excessively? What are the consequences? Do they have any common features? If any of the men stand out as different, what makes them different? Which characters are portrayed as popular? Why are they popular? Which characters are portrayed as unpopular? Why are they unpopular? Do you see any links being made between alcohol and popularity?

## UNDER THE INFLUENCE

How do these male characters interact with female characters? With other male characters? What stories do these movies tell about what it means to be a man? What stories do these movies tell about men and alcohol? Why do these stories matter? Present your analyses to the class.

6b. View the movie *Animal House* (1978). Compare and contrast this film to the two you've watched for **6a**. How have representations of men and drinking changed? How have they stayed the same? What might this say about how our cultural attitudes around men and drinking have changed or stayed the same?

7. One of the ways the alcohol industry has specifically targeted men is by colonizing sport, traditionally seen as a male realm (*of course many women also play and watch sports; for further info on women and sport see *Playing Unfair: The Media Image of the Female Athlete*, [www.mediaed.org](http://www.mediaed.org)*). Alcohol and athletics have become linked, despite the fact that consuming alcohol actually impairs athletic performance. See also *Spin the Bottle DVD Extra: Men, Alcohol & Sports*. For further reading on this topic, see the article *Boos for the NCAA's Stance on Booze Advertising* at [www.med.sc.edu:1081/collegebooze.htm](http://www.med.sc.edu:1081/collegebooze.htm).

a. View and if possible record your favorite sporting event (*an event covered in the mainstream media*). Keep a log noting every time you see an alcohol ad or logo, or hear a reference to alcohol, *i.e.* "This event is brought to you by..." Remember to note where (*i.e. a logo behind the pitcher*); what (*i.e. an ad for Budweiser*); and who (*i.e. a former all-star athlete or anchorperson making a pitch for a certain brand*). Review your log—how many times did alcohol make an appearance during your favorite sporting event?

b. Re-watch the sporting event you recorded for **7a** and note the following: how long was the event you watched? How much of that time was given to commercials? How many commercials played? How many of those were for alcohol? Who is the target audience for these alcohol ads; in other words, who would find them appealing or funny? How might these ads be specifically targeting men and boys? Has the alcohol industry colonized your favorite sporting event? Present your log and analyses to the class.

8. Visit the website [www.superbowl-ads.com](http://www.superbowl-ads.com). Choose a Super Bowl year to review. What company/organization ran the most ads during the Super Bowl? Of the ads that aired during the Super Bowl, what percentage was for alcohol/beer? Referring to the handout *Deconstructing an Alcohol Advertisement* (*available at [www.mediaed.org/handouts/](http://www.mediaed.org/handouts/)*), analyze at least five of the alcohol ads that aired during the super bowl. How might these ads be specifically targeting men and boys? Present your analyses to the class.

# MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

## KEY POINTS

---

- » Our culture insists that young women should be attractive, desirable to men, sexy and experienced, uninhibited, and sexually available; at the same time they should be virginal, 'good girls,' passive, and feminine. It is impossible to be both. Alcohol is offered as a way for young women to resolve this contradiction.
- » The alcohol industry is aware of the pressures young women feel around the 'good girl/bad girl' dichotomy, and they use this knowledge in their marketing.
- » Because our culture values women primarily for their bodies and their appearance, there is enormous pressure on young women to demonstrate their freedom and their independence by expressing their sexuality in a male-oriented way—where sex and sexuality is about men's pleasure, not women's pleasure, nor men and women's pleasure.
- » Alcohol offers women a way to break through their inhibitions and to escape the pressures they feel to be both sexy and 'good.' At the same time, it can act as 'the perfect excuse'—something that is culturally viewed as unacceptable for women to do sober (*i.e. having sex with someone without having or wanting to have a relationship with that person*), becomes excusable when drunk.
- » College women's alcohol use has changed in the last few years and is increasing. Binge drinking rates among college women is approaching that of their male counterparts (*2001 Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Survey*).
- » Young women often compete with young men around drinking. For some women, being able to drink as much as, or more than, men is a source of pride and a way to improve their status and gain recognition.
- » Activities often initiated by men—drinking games, chugging, doing funnels, keg-stands—have become part of the college party scene. Both men and women are expected to be part of this scene.
- » The alcohol industry wants women to drink more because this opens up a bigger market. One way they target women is by propagating a message that tells women if they drink like men, they'll share some of men's power, impress men, and be like one of the guys.
- » Even though women are targeted heavily by the alcohol industry and encouraged to drink more, a double standard still applies. While men who drink heavily are considered more masculine, women who drink heavily are considered less feminine. The alcohol industry is aware of this double standard. This is one of the reasons why they use stereotypically beautiful, feminine, sexy women in their ads.
- » In an attempt to achieve the beauty ideal, many women offset the calories of alcohol by not eating. This unhealthy behavior contributes to eating disorders and puts a woman at risk of getting drunk more quickly, which in turn puts her at greater risk of being sexually assaulted.
- » Our drinking culture does not affect men and women in the same ways. Campuses may address excessive drinking in terms of looking at vandalism, violence, fights and assaults, but the alcohol-related problems women face are often not visible, and may include depression, eating disorders, loneliness, sadness, and even suicide.
- » For further study see also the *Spin the Bottle DVD Extras: More on Women & Drinking* and *Women & Sexual Assault*.

# MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION & WRITING

1. How does our culture define femininity? What happens when a young woman does not stick to this definition, when someone ‘steps outside the lines’—*i.e.* a woman is not traditionally/stereotypically beautiful? What role do alcohol and the alcohol industry play in getting young women to stay inside the lines?

2. What is it like to be a woman in a heavy drinking culture? What are some of the problems women face related to drinking?

3. In groups of 3-4, list and briefly describe some of the messages you have heard or seen, particularly from the alcohol industry, with respect to women and drinking. How do these messages affect your expectations of yourself and others?

4. The following are quotes from some of the students interviewed:

*“It gives you the feeling that you’re going to be like the women in the ads, like you’re going to be really sexual and beautiful.”*

*“You’re able to do things that you’re not able to do, you can make excuses for yourself when in normal situations, you wouldn’t be able to do that.”*

*“I know girls that can drink any man under the table and I know girls that will come up to you, if you’re not drinking a beer, or if you haven’t had six shots, and will force you to sit down with them and take six shots.”*

*“It fills an image, you’d rather see a girl, drinking out of a straw, in like her nice clothes, make-up, than like chugging this beer. It’s kind of unattractive I guess.”*

*“They’ll [women] go all day with not eating anything but a salad and a diet coke and then they think it’s okay to go have ten drinks at the bar.”*

In a group of 3-4, discuss these quotes. Are the experiences/attitudes expressed by the students interviewed similar to your experiences/attitudes or the experiences/attitudes of people you know? If the producers had interviewed students on your campus, would they hear similar things? What other opinions have you heard?

5. In a group of 3-4, list and briefly describe all the alcohol ads you can remember seeing that have women in them—describe these women. How do the women interact with men in the ads? How do they interact with other women? Who is the target audience for these ads, in other words who might find these ads appealing? How might these representations of women affect viewers’ expectations of themselves and others? Discuss. See also *DVD Extra Collected Commercials: Objectifying & Mocking Women* and *Ads Targeting Women*.

6. In the video **Jean Kilbourne** says, “In a culture that primarily values women for their bodies and their appearance, there’s enormous pressure on young women to demonstrate their freedom and their independence by acting out sexually, and particularly by acting out sexually in a very male-oriented kind of way.” What does it mean for women to “act out sexually in a male-oriented way”? What role might alcohol play in this situation? What is the alcohol industry’s vision of women’s sexuality and sexual freedom? How else might we envision sex, sexuality, and sexual freedom?

7. In *No Logo*, **Naomi Klein** says that advertisers have become very good at co-opting dissent and exploiting political and social movements to sell products. In what ways has the alcohol industry co-opted and exploited feminism in order to sell its products to young women? How has the alcohol industry altered and changed definitions of female power and freedom? Do the alcohol industry, and the advertising industry in general, threaten female

## MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

power and freedom as defined within the context of feminism? (See also *Assignment & Activism Activity 2* in the next section). For some discussion about what feminism is, see *What is feminism?* at [www.thinkingwomen.org/html/discussion/sexisminmedia.html](http://www.thinkingwomen.org/html/discussion/sexisminmedia.html) and [campus.murraystate.edu/services/women.center/feminism.htm](http://campus.murraystate.edu/services/women.center/feminism.htm).

8. Some young women compete with young men around drinking and take great pride in being able to drink as much as, or even more than, men. Some people might argue that this is a good thing—it proves that men and women are equal. Others might argue that the situation is more complex than meets the eye. How might the perspectives of first, second, and third-wave feminism address this situation? Before you begin your discussion, read *Women on a Binge* by Jodi Morse, available online at [www.time.com/time/2002/wdrinking/story.html](http://www.time.com/time/2002/wdrinking/story.html), and *Viewpoint: Libation as Liberation?* by Barbara Ehrenreich, available online at [www.time.com/time/2002/wdrinking/viewpoint.html](http://www.time.com/time/2002/wdrinking/viewpoint.html).

9. **Jean Kilbourne** notes that while men who drink heavily are considered more masculine, women who drink heavily are considered less feminine. Discuss some of the ways these stereotypes are played out in our culture, particularly in college culture. How are these stereotypes linked to our broader definitions of masculinity and femininity?

10. What are eating disorders? According to the video, how might high-risk drinking be linked to eating disorders? Read the press release *Individuals with Eating Disorders up to Five Times Likelier to Abuse Alcohol & Illicit Drugs*, available online at [www.casacolumbia.org/absolutenm/templates/PressReleases.asp?articleid=350&zoneid=46](http://www.casacolumbia.org/absolutenm/templates/PressReleases.asp?articleid=350&zoneid=46). How might the media, particularly the media images we see of women, be linked to both eating disorders and high-risk drinking?

11. In a group of 3-4, discuss the 'good-girl/bad-girl' dichotomy that exists around drinking and women. Have women in the group experienced this pressure? In what ways have men in the group experienced/responded to this dichotomy?

12. **Jean Kilbourne** describes alcohol as the "perfect excuse." Women can use alcohol to excuse behavior that would be culturally unacceptable under ordinary circumstances. What types of behavior might young women feel compelled to excuse by using alcohol? What is going on in our culture that makes women feel they need to rely on alcohol in order to do these things? Do young men need to excuse their behavior if they act in similar ways?

13. **Jean Kilbourne** notes that the Bacardi campaign—*Banker by day, Bacardi by night; Librarian by day, Bacardi by night*—is a perfect example of how the alcohol industry has tapped into the 'good-girl/bad-girl' dichotomy (see the *Spin the Bottle Study Guide Handout* available online at [www.mediaed.org/handouts](http://www.mediaed.org/handouts) for examples of this ad campaign). Explain what is meant by this 'good-girl/bad-girl' dichotomy. In a group of 3-4, list, describe, and discuss as many examples of the 'good-girl/bad-girl' dichotomy, as it relates to alcohol, that you have seen/heard, *i.e.* in advertisements, movies, television programs, and campus gossip.

14. Our culture puts enormous pressure on young women to be attractive, sexy, and available to men. At the same time, women are expected to be 'good girls' and the sexual behavior of women is often policed—women who are deemed too sexy, or too available to men are quickly termed "sluts". What is going on in our culture that supports the policing of women's sexuality? What role might gender definitions and expectations play in this situation? What role might alcohol play in this situation? For further reading see *Flirting with Danger* by Lynn Phillips and *The Male in the Head* by Janet Holland.

# MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

## ASSIGNMENTS & ACTIVISM ACTIVITIES

1. Our gender identities come with a lot of ‘rules’ put forth by the culture.

- a. In a group of 3-4, make a list of rules that exist for women with respect to gender. How do we learn these ‘rules’?
- b. Read the article *Beyond the Gender Myths* by Margot Hornblower (available online at [www.time.com](http://www.time.com)) and read/listen to the song *When I Was a Boy* by Dar Williams (lyrics available online, see for instance [www.limitless.org/~del/dar/honestyroom/wheniwasaboy.html](http://www.limitless.org/~del/dar/honestyroom/wheniwasaboy.html)). Reflect on how gender stereotypes and the rules you’ve listed above in 1a hurt girls/women. How do they serve or help girls and women?
- c. Find at least three articles that discuss femininity from at least three of the following disciplines: Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology, Feminism/Women’s Studies, Men’s Studies, Biology, Cultural Studies, Communications. Write a report reviewing these articles—what do these different disciplines say about femininity, gender differences/similarities, and gender identity? How might these disciplines address/talk about women and alcohol?

2. In the article *Alcohol in the Vulnerable Lives of College Women*, Devon Jersild writes:

*“Social, cultural, and psychological contexts are crucial in the development of alcohol problems. Consider the accompanying problems of women dependent on alcohol: often eating disorders, a history of sexual abuse; more often than men, a depression that preceded their drinking. The pain in their lives has everything to do with what it means to be female in our culture...It seems to me enormously ironic that, for today’s young women, alcohol has come to symbolize power and choice and independence—the very qualities that, in excess, it most undermines. I emphasize that phrase ‘in excess’—because, when we talk about women’s vulnerability to alcohol problems, it is important to remember the positive aspects of changing gender norms around alcohol. Of course women should have the freedom men have to drink! Of course we must abhor the special stigma against women with drinking problems! Ultimately, what we want for young women is not just their safety and their health, but the opportunity to grow emotionally and intellectually, and to take creative risks and responsibilities. If they can coolly and objectively assess the role of alcohol in their lives, and take responsibility for whether, when, and how much they drink, they will be several steps ahead of many adults.”* (If possible read the entire article, available online at <http://chronicle.com>)

Write a paper that explores the complexities surrounding women and alcohol, and women’s high-risk drinking. Investigate the history of women and drinking—how have things changed, how have they stayed the same? How have feminism and the sexual revolution affected women’s freedom around alcohol? Discuss how our cultural environment affects a woman’s ability to “coolly and objectively assess the role of alcohol” in her life. Be sure to include the alcohol industry’s role. It is strongly recommended that your paper take a multi-disciplinary, feminist approach.

3. Referring to the bodies of women in alcohol ads, one of the young women interviewed says, “If you drink on a regular basis your body isn’t going to look like that.”

- a. Most young women know this—what are some of the possible consequences?
- b. What links have researchers found between eating disorders and the media? Find at least three articles or papers that discuss the links between eating disorders and the media.
- c. Considering the links that have been found between eating disorders and the media, analyze some recent media representations of alcohol, *i.e.* ads, movies that include high-risk drinking, and *MTV Spring*

# MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

*Break.* How might these media representations contribute to the development of eating disorders in some young women? In what ways might the link between eating disorders and the media, and the way alcohol is represented in the media, be detrimental to some young women's health? Discuss the articles you've read and the questions you've discussed in 3a, b, and c in a paper or presentation.

4. In this section of the video we've looked at how our culture sets up some impossible contradictions for women. Women should be sexy, uninhibited, and available to men, but at the same time they should be 'good girls,' passive, and feminine. The alcohol industry, through their advertising, also implies that 'if women drink like men, they'll be more like men and share some of men's power.' However, the message is simultaneously sent that 'they shouldn't be too much like men; even women who drink should be attractive and available to men, sexy, and slim.'

a. Find a selection of messages that propagate these contradictions—in ads, on television, in movies, etc. Analyze these messages—what purpose do they serve? What are some of the consequences of these contradictory messages? How might they affect the lives of girls/women?

b. Let society and the alcohol industry know that these impossible contradictions are unfair and unhealthy. First decide on the medium for your message. Some possibilities include: spoofing the contradictions (*see [www.adbusters.org](http://www.adbusters.org) for some info and ideas about spoofing*); starting a letter writing campaign targeting the alcohol industry and the media; composing a poem, song, or play that you can perform; or creating art work that you can display to let people know what you think of these impossible contradictions. Remember, you want to grab people's attention and be heard, so be creative!

5. See here also the *Spin the Bottle DVD Extra: More on Women & Drinking*.

a. In a group of 3-4, discuss the following: what do you know about the affect of alcohol on an individual's health? Where have you acquired this knowledge? Does this information talk about how alcohol affects men and women's health differently?

b. Research the body of work referred to as Women's Health. Women's Health researchers note that historically much of our health information and research (*with the exception perhaps of reproductive health information and research*) has overlooked gender. Men's symptoms for illness are usually regarded as the norm and are applied universally. This means we may not recognize women's symptoms when they manifest differently from men's, and our health promotion and prevention messages often only address men's health issues. In a paper or presentation discuss the following: according to the area of Women's Health, what affect does this situation have on the information we know about women and alcohol? What affect does it have on the prevention and education messages we get about alcohol and health? In what ways does alcohol affect women's health? What can we do to address concerns around women's health and alcohol?

6a. View at least two current movies that feature college or high school-age characters. Make a list of all the female characters. Do they drink alcohol? Moderately or excessively? What are the consequences? Do these characters have any common features? If any of the women stand out as different, what makes them different? Which characters are popular? Why are they popular? Which characters are unpopular? Why are they unpopular? Do you see any links being made between alcohol and popularity? How do these female characters interact with male characters? With other female characters? What stories do these movies tell about what it means to be a woman? What stories do these movies tell about women and alcohol? Why do these stories matter?

6b. View the following movies: *Days of Wine and Roses* (1962) and *A Woman Under the Influence* (1974). Compare and contrast these two films to the two you've watched for 6a. How have movie representations of women and

## MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

drinking changed? How have they stayed the same? What might this say about how our cultural attitudes around women and drinking have changed or stayed the same? (*An interesting review of A Woman Under the Influence, written by Roger Ebert, is available online at [www.suntimes.com/ebert/greatmovies/woman.html](http://www.suntimes.com/ebert/greatmovies/woman.html)*).

7. One of the ways that the alcohol industry specifically targets girls and women is by equating drinking with independence, freedom, and equality—their message is something like this, “Isn’t it great, you can drink just like a man!”

a. Read the article *Viewpoint: Libation as Liberation?* by Barbara Ehrenreich, available online at [www.time.com/time/2002/wdrinking/viewpoint.html](http://www.time.com/time/2002/wdrinking/viewpoint.html). How would Ehrenreich define women’s freedom, independence, and equality? Review the work of at least two other feminist writers. How would they define these terms? How might Ehrenreich and these other writers respond to the alcohol industry’s definitions of women’s freedom, independence, and equality? How do you define freedom, independence, and equality in your own life?

b. Find at least 10 images (*ads or clips from TV programs or movies*) that equate drinking with women’s freedom, independence, and equality. Take these images and use them to BADvertise. The artists at The BADvertising Institute ([www.badvertising.org](http://www.badvertising.org)) use art as a creative form of resistance. They take real cigarette ads and doctor them to be more truthful in their depictions of smoking. Your job here is to take the images you’ve compiled and use them to create more truthful depictions of women’s freedom, independence, and equality. For some suggestions on how to BADvertize visit [www.badvertising.org/how.html](http://www.badvertising.org/how.html). The online lesson plan at <http://lessons.ctaponline.org/~bchavanu/> also provides some useful tips and links.

Share your BADvertisements with the class.

Host a BADvertisement gallery showing of the classes’ new ads. Invite other classes and the public to view your work.

# COURAGE IN A CAN

## KEY POINTS

---

- » Our society is both sex-phobic (*for example, many individuals and groups protest sex education, condom distribution, and HIV testing in schools*) and sex-centric (*for example, sex is used to sell products, and commercial media tells us we're supposed to have and want sex all the time*).
- » Young people often use alcohol in an attempt to fulfill the expectations placed on them to be sexy and sexual, and as a solution to the tension, nervousness, and awkwardness people often feel around dating and sex—a kind of 'courage in a can.'
- » One of the ways alcohol advertisers take advantage of sexual anxiety and tension is to associate alcohol with sexual connection.
- » Stereotypical beer ads often feature a highly sexualized woman who is in a sense a reward for the purchase of that product. Purchasing or consuming a particular brand of alcohol leads to 'getting the beautiful woman'. Though women in beer ads are always stereotypically sexy and beautiful, the men in the ads are often very ordinary looking.
- » Ads linking alcohol and sex talk about "the beginning," the romantic encounter, and seduction. The message is clear—alcohol will give us great, uninhibited sex, and it will be wonderful. Unfortunately, sex, and certainly drunken sex, is not always wonderful. Alcohol is linked with sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancy, sexual assault, and sexual dysfunction for women and men.
- » Drunken sex is glamorized and normalized throughout our culture. People laugh and joke about it.
- » We often don't hear about the bad things that happen when alcohol and sex are combined. When we do, it is often discussed as a result of an individual losing control, or "being stupid". In this discussion, we don't see how the culture itself influences and shapes a person's behavior, how the culture itself can actually have consequences.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION & WRITING

---

1. We are both a sex-centric and sex-phobic society. What does this mean? What kinds of problems and health risks might this situation foster? How does the alcohol industry capitalize on this situation? How does it exploit it?
2. When it comes to dating and social interaction, why do so many people find their 'courage in a can'? What are some possible consequences of depending on alcohol to connect sexually, or even socially, with other people?
3. Do young people need alcohol to connect sexually? What are some non-alcoholic ways to connect sexually?
4. The following are quotes from some of the students interviewed:
  - "I know a lot of people who will not dance until they have at least 5 beers in 'em—they're like, 'I gotta have 4, 5 drinks, then I'll get out there.'"*
  - "You're too nervous to approach the person, and when you're drinking, you're not thinking about nothing—you're carefree. Complete confidence. No worries, nerves of steel."*
  - "People depend on getting drunk, or just having alcohol involved to hook up with the person you've always wanted to hook up with."*
  - "People will be like, 'Oh, I feel lonely. I'm going to have a few drinks and I'm gonna go out to this place, and I'm gonna find a guy, and I'm gonna hook up with him.'"*

## COURAGE IN A CAN

In a group of 3-4, discuss these quotes. Are the experiences/attitudes expressed by the students interviewed similar to your experiences/attitudes? If the producers had interviewed students on your campus, would they hear similar things? What other opinions have you heard?

5. **Jackson Katz** describes a typical beer ad scenario: “Often the men in beer ads are very ordinary looking guys, which is understandable because the male viewers are positioned to identify with that ordinary guy who is often getting all these beautiful women to pay attention to him. Sometimes, not only do these guys get one woman, they are getting more than one woman.”

In a group of 3-4, list and briefly describe as many beer and/or alcohol ads as you can that follow the scenario Katz has described. If the male viewer is positioned to identify with the ordinary guy in these ads, with whom is the female viewer positioned to identify? What affect might ads like these have on men’s expectations of themselves, women, sex, sexuality, and alcohol? What affect might ads like these have on women’s expectations of themselves, men, sex, sexuality, and alcohol? How are the effects similar and different for men and women? Why?

6. **Jackson Katz** notes that “one of the stereotypical scenarios in beer ads is a highly sexualized woman, who is the object of male heterosexual desire, who is in a sense a reward for the purchase or the use of that product; so in other words, you’re not just buying the beer or consuming the alcohol, you’re actually getting the woman.” In a group of 3-4, list and briefly describe as many alcohol ads as you can that follow this scenario. In these ads, the woman comes with the alcohol—in this situation what power does she have? Is the woman acting as subject or object? What is the difference? What is objectification? What are some of the possible consequences of objectification? For further discussion of objectification see, *DVD Extra Collected Commercials* section: *Objectifying & Mocking Women*, and the *Killing Us Softly 3 Study Guide*, available online at [www.mediaed.org](http://www.mediaed.org).

7. In *Killing Us Softly 3*, **Jean Kilbourne** argues that in the world of advertising “women are constantly turned into things, into objects...and certainly turning a human being into a thing is almost always the first step toward justifying violence against that person.” Discuss the links between objectification, violence, and alcohol. In ads for beer and other alcohol, which gender is usually objectified? In our culture, which gender is usually the victim of violence, particularly sexual violence? Which gender is usually the perpetrator? Can you think of any alcohol ads that follow the stereotypical scenario described by **Jackson Katz** above in **question 6**, where the role of men and women are reversed? If there are (*or were*) such ads, are the consequences the same? Discuss. For further discussion see, *DVD Extra Collected Commercials* sections: *Objectifying & Mocking Women*, and *Targeting Women*, and the *Killing Us Softly 3 Study Guide*, available online at [www.mediaed.org](http://www.mediaed.org).

8. In the video **Sally Linowski** suggests that “everywhere you look in the media it’s sex, sex, sex, sex, sex. You’re supposed to want sex all the time, you’re supposed to be sexy, you’re supposed to be having a lot of it, it’s supposed to be magical and wonderful.” Discuss how in real life, sex, and in particular drunken sex, might be different from the sex we see portrayed in the media. Discuss how the alcohol industry portrays sex in its advertising. What impact might media representations of sex have on our real sex lives, particularly with respect to our sexual health?

9. In a group of 3-4, list and describe examples of how drunken sex—*i.e.* not remembering who you went home with or what you did—is glamorized and normalized in our culture. What is the role of storytelling in this process? Do men and women tell different ‘morning after stories’? Why? If our ‘morning-after stories’ are supposed to be glamorous and fun, what do we do with our ‘morning-after stories’ if they are not glamorous

# COURAGE IN A CAN

or fun; if they are painful and dangerous? How might this situation be conducive to sexual assault? What role does it play in silencing us?

10. **Jean Kilbourne** suggests that many college students have never had sex while sober, or have rarely had sex that they didn't regret the next day (*Note: one of the common myths around sexual assault and rape is that victims have just had bad sex. Regret is not the same as sexual assault. See Rape Myths Dispelled in the Other Resources section of this guide for further information*). In your own experience, and/or the experiences of your friends and colleagues, do Kilbourne's words ring true? What role does alcohol play in this situation? Discuss.

11. Discuss the following statement: If something bad happens to someone when they are drunk, it is their own fault for drinking too much. Does the alcohol industry operate from this belief? What dangers exist when one operates from this belief? How would a person operating from this belief respond to a situation in which a woman was raped while she was drunk? How else could one respond to this situation? Does alcohol cause rape? What role does it play in sexual violence?

## **ASSIGNMENTS & ACTIVISM ACTIVITIES**

---

Do activities 1 and 2 listed in **INSTRUCTOR DIRECTED ACTIVITIES**.

The **ASSIGNMENTS & ACTIVISM ACTIVITIES** in the next section, **BODY SHOTS: ALCOHOL, SEX & VIOLENCE** are also appropriate to this section.

# BODY SHOTS

## KEY POINTS

- » We are surrounded by cultural messages that say young men should drink heavily, score as often as possible, and be powerful and in control; women should make themselves sexually available to men; everyone should use alcohol as a route to wild, uninhibited (*heterosexual*) sex—these messages tell us that men have a right to women’s bodies.
- » The world created by alcohol ads, and other cultural representations of gender, sex, and alcohol, create a set of expectations in both women and men that condone sexual assault and rape.
- » A double standard exists about the relationship of alcohol to rape. If a man is drinking at the time of the attack, the culture considers him less responsible—he was drunk, he didn’t know what he was doing. If the woman was drinking, even if she’s just been at a bar, or had a drink or two, the culture considers her more responsible—what was she doing? What was she thinking? Why was she in that bar?
- » Victims of sexual assault are often blamed for what has happened to them. Many people, even friends, will say—you shouldn’t have gone to that fraternity party/his room/that bar; look at what you were wearing; you asked for it. The readiness with which we blame the victim here, indicates that in many ways sexual assault has been normalized—we are not surprised when it happens, indeed the victim is often told she should have expected something like that to happen.
- » No one should have to live with the fear of being sexually assaulted.
- » Alcohol is involved in over half of all date rapes on college campuses (*for further info see Alcohol and Sexual Assault, online at [www.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/arh25-1/43-51.htm](http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/arh25-1/43-51.htm) and the FAQ web page at Alcohol Policy Solutions, online at [www.alcoholpolicysolutions.net/sb\\_faqs.htm](http://www.alcoholpolicysolutions.net/sb_faqs.htm)). Many of these rapes are not reported to police because the victims are made to feel ashamed, guilty, and responsible.*
- » Regardless of what a woman was wearing, regardless of how much she had to drink, regardless of whom she was with, being sexually assaulted or raped is not her fault.
- » Alcohol has been described as a weapon. Some men use alcohol to get women drunk, with the intention of then taking advantage of them sexually.
- » On campuses across the US, some upperclassmen (*young men in their last year of college*) organize parties, specifically recruit first-year female students to come to these parties, and then offer them free alcohol with the obvious intent of sexually assaulting them. This is one of the reasons why the first several weeks of college are the most vulnerable time for young, female students when it comes to sexual assault. These upperclassmen take advantage of the inexperience and vulnerability of the first-year student, their inexperience with drugs and alcohol, and some of the fantasies a first-year student might have about meeting the ‘perfect guy’ at a party.
- » Date-rape drugs—*i.e.* Rohypnol, and GHB—are often used in association with alcohol (*note: alcohol continues to be the number one date rape drug in North America, for further discussion see for example [www.vanderbilt.edu/ProjectSafe/rapedrugs.html](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/ProjectSafe/rapedrugs.html) or contact the National Sexual Violence Resource Center, [www.nsvrc.org](http://www.nsvrc.org)*). Some men slip these drugs into women’s drinks, and to a lesser extent other men’s drinks, for the purpose of sedating them with the intent of assaulting them. Usually victims cannot remember anything that happens after the drug has entered their system.
- » For further study, see also the *Spin the Bottle DVD Extras: Women & Sexual Assault* and *Personal Responsibility*.

# BODY SHOTS

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION & WRITING

1. **Jean Kilbourne** notes, "There's a real double standard about the relationship of alcohol to date rape. If a man is drinking at the time of the attack he's considered less responsible...if a woman was drinking, even if she's just been in a bar or had a drink or two, she's considered more responsible... So the exact same behavior is interpreted entirely differently according to gender." What is going on in our culture that fosters this double standard? How might our definitions of gender support this situation? What are some possible consequences of this double standard? See also the article *The "Rape" of Mr. Smith* available in *Other Resources*.

2. The following are quotes from some of the students interviewed:

*"It's something that there's risk for, and I just wanted to put all the blame on her, almost like, you asked for it, you deserved it for doing that, for putting yourself in that situation."*

*"If you step into a certain situation, say a frat party or something, where drinking is prevalent and assaults can be prevalent, you're stepping into a lion's den. I mean, you have to take that into consideration."*

*"You shouldn't go into any situation expecting to be assaulted."*

*"It's so hard being a woman and drinking because it's almost like you have so much more responsibility for your actions than other people do. I mean, I don't know if that makes sense, but it's like you're responsible if something happens to you that you couldn't even control."*

In a group of 3-4, discuss these quotes. Are the experiences/attitudes expressed by the students interviewed similar to your experiences/attitudes? If the producers had interviewed students on your campus, would they hear similar things? What other opinions have you heard?

3. **Jackson Katz** says, "The world created by beer ads, other alcohol ads, and other pop cultural representations, create a set of expectations in both women and men that are at the very least conducive to sexual assault." In the world created by beer and alcohol ads what is men's relationship to power? What is men's relationship to sex? What is women's relationship to power? What is women's relationship to sex? How might these relationships work together to create a set of expectations in both women and men that is conducive to sexual assault? How might our attitudes about alcohol and gender work to support these expectations? What needs to change for us to live in a culture that is not conducive to sexual assault?

4. Alcohol has been described as a weapon. Generally speaking, who might use alcohol as a weapon? For what purpose? How might the expectations we have around drinking and gender be conducive to using alcohol in this way? Generally speaking, does our culture consider alcohol a weapon? Why? In what ways might our culture condone the use of alcohol as a weapon?

5. Discuss the following statement: If you're with people you know, nothing bad will happen. Research indicates that most rapists target people they know (*for more information see the Bureau of Justice Statistics [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/cvict\\_c.htm#relate](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/cvict_c.htm#relate)). How might our cultural representations of gender, and our cultural representations of alcohol, particularly of sex and alcohol, play a role in creating a society in which the statement above is not true?*

6. One of the young men interviewed in *Spin the Bottle* says, "Sometimes you just see those shady guys who just keep feeding girls drinks and feeding 'em drinks and you know they're gonna try and pull something." What definitions of masculinity and femininity do you see present in this situation? How does this situation mirror popular culture? What is it about our culture that facilitates and promotes this situation? How might this relate to sexual violence on campus?

## BODY SHOTS

7. One of the young women interviewed in *Spin the Bottle* says, "If a girl's at a bar not drinking, every guy around her comes up to her and says, 'Like, why aren't you drinking? You know, loosen up, can I buy you a drink?'" What definitions of masculinity and femininity do you see present in this situation? How does this situation mirror popular culture? What is it about our culture that facilitates and promotes this situation? How might this relate to sexual violence on campus?

8. **Jackson Katz** and **Ojae Beale** describe how some upperclassmen sometimes take advantage of the inexperience and vulnerability of the first year student, their inexperience with drugs and alcohol, and some of the fantasies that a first year student might have about meeting that perfect guy at a party. What definitions of masculinity and femininity do you see present in this situation? How does this situation mirror popular culture? What is it about our culture that facilitates and promotes this situation?

9. **Jackson Katz** is visibly angry when he says, "I mean, the reality is that today, in the United States, women in college, and even in high school, can't even put their drinks down—they're taught that, in high school, and in orientation sessions in college—can't even put their drinks down and go to the dance floor and come back because some guy in their social circle might drop a drug in their drink with the purpose of sedating and then assaulting them. How low have we sunk?" Discuss the situation Katz has described. Discuss the following directive: Never leave your drink unattended. Within this statement, who is to blame if a woman is assaulted? If then a person does leave her drink unattended, where does the blame lie? What is going on here?

10. In response to the situation described by **Jackson Katz** above (*see question 9*), some companies have developed products designed to test drinks on-site for some (*though not all*) date rape drugs, *i.e.* the Drink Safe Coaster. Discuss these products (*if necessary, conduct an online search to familiarize yourself with the types of products available, how they work, and their limitations*). Will these products put an end to the problem of date rape drugs, *i.e.* will people stop dropping them in drinks? What are the benefits of these products? What are the drawbacks? Why might some individuals suggest that they are a band-aid solution?

11. Discuss the following statement: *Rape and sexual assault are women's issues*. Why might some people maintain this belief? Although the majority of rape victims are women—in 2002, 7 out of every 8 rape victims were female—men are also victims of sexual assault—in 2002, 1 in every 8 rape victims was male. Additionally, almost all perpetrators are male ([www.rainn.org/statistics.html](http://www.rainn.org/statistics.html)). How might the belief that rape is a women's issue, limit discussions about rape and sexual assault? How might this belief inhibit rape prevention education? Read and discuss the handout *Rape as a Men's Issue*, available online at [www.mencanstoprape.org/info-url2699/info-url\\_show.htm?doc\\_id=49607](http://www.mencanstoprape.org/info-url2699/info-url_show.htm?doc_id=49607).

# BODY SHOTS

## ASSIGNMENTS & ACTIVISM ACTIVITIES

1. Read the excerpted section of *Big Trouble, Little Pond: Reflections of the Campus Pond Incidents* by Sut Jhally and Jackson Katz (available in the *Other Resources* section of this study guide). If you have Internet access it is strongly recommended that you read the entire article, available at [www.umass.edu/umassmag/archives/2001/winter2001/athens.html](http://www.umass.edu/umassmag/archives/2001/winter2001/athens.html), and the linked article *Heads up Knuckle Draggers*, available at [www.umass.edu/umassmag/archives/2001/winter2001/menshealth.html](http://www.umass.edu/umassmag/archives/2001/winter2001/menshealth.html).

Referring to the article(s) you've just read, *Spin the Bottle*, and other relevant work, discuss in a paper:

- » How, within a broader social context, do our cultural representations of alcohol (*i.e. alcohol ads, the way alcohol is portrayed in movies, on TV, and in music videos*) help maintain a definition of femininity that insists girls and young women be both virgin and whore. How do we use alcohol to maintain this definition of femininity?
- » How, within a broader social context, do our cultural representations of alcohol help maintain a definition of masculinity that insists being a man means being powerful, in control, and violent (*though being powerful and in control is not always exhibited through violence, violence is often used as a way to maintain power and control*). How do we use alcohol to maintain this definition of masculinity?
- » How, within a broader social context, do our cultural representations of alcohol help keep gender identities separate and strictly bordered—as if men and women are opposite binaries with no overlapping characteristics, qualities, or values. How do we use alcohol to maintain this separation?
- » The link between our cultural representations of alcohol and the following situation—just as some women do not realize that they have been sexually violated because they believe that men have a right to use women's bodies, some men may not realize they have sexually violated or exploited a woman because they too believe men have a right to women's bodies. How do we use alcohol to normalize and even excuse sexual assault and rape?
- » What you can do to challenge what feminists call our 'rape culture.'

See also the *Spin the Bottle DVD Extras: Women & Sexual Assault and Personal Responsibility*.

2. "One indication of the connection between alcohol and sexual violence is something that's been happening on college campuses across the country, where you have upperclassmen organizing parties, where they're targeting first year female students and offering these young women free alcohol, with the obvious intent of taking advantage of them." JACKSON KATZ

- a. How does this situation relate to the article you read for **exercise 1** above? What are some of the possible negative consequences of this situation?
- b. Is this happening on your college campus? Investigate. Have you experienced or seen anything that would suggest some upperclassmen are targeting first-year female students on your campus, *i.e.* flyers advertising fraternity parties posted in first-year student halls or dorms, reference by senior students to first-year students as 'fresh meat'? Compile your evidence.
- c. Analyze the situation: what might be the motivation for an upperclassman to target a first-year student? How might campus culture condone and support this behavior? How might our cultural definitions of gender support this situation? How might the media's portrayal of campus life and alcohol support and facilitate this situation? How might our attitudes towards campus life and alcohol support and facilitate this situation?

# BODY SHOTS

d. In a group of 4, research how different colleges/universities address this situation. Each person should research a different college/university. Incorporate four of the following: a small liberal arts college, a large state university, a large private school, an all-women's school, and a military academy. Investigate each college/university's alcohol policies—do these policies address the situation Katz describes above? Investigate each college/university's orientation program—do these programs address the situation? Discuss the information each person has compiled. Compare and contrast the colleges/universities your group has investigated. Discuss your results in a group paper or presentation. Include suggestions for some best-practice approaches on how to address the situation. Be sure to include suggestions for both the administration and the student body.

3. Read *The "Rape" of Mr. Smith* (available in the *Other Resources* section of this study guide).

a. If Mr. Smith was Ms. Smith, and if she were the victim of a rape or sexual assault, how might this conversation be similar or different? Why is this article called *The "Rape" of Mr. Smith*? Discuss this article in the context of the different expectations our culture places on men and women with respect to drinking and sexual assault.

b. Adapt the article as a performance piece; perform *The "Rape" of Mr. Smith* on your campus. Consider modifying the article for your performance—*i.e.* include other characters or scenes, or re-write the piece completely, with a focus on the double standard that exists around men's and women's drinking behavior and sexual assault. After your performance, engage your audience in a discussion about sexual assault. Ask the audience to consider the role alcohol plays in sexual assault. *Note:* if your campus has a sexual harassment officer or rape prevention program they may be interested in incorporating this performance into their education campaigns—check it out.

4. Does your campus or community have a rape crisis services center or a women's center? If it does, interview the center's director or one of its volunteers and find out what it does; what kinds of education and prevention programs does it have? Get some information on sexual assault and rape. How do they help survivors of sexual assault? What type of help do survivors of sexual assault need? How can you help a survivor of sexual assault? Discuss the links between alcohol and sexual assault. How can you get involved in your campus or community based center? Get involved!

If your campus or community does not have a rape crisis services center or a women's center, lobby to get one started! It may help to begin by researching how similar centers got started on other campuses. Contact the National Sexual Violence Resource Center for resources and information [www.nsvrc.org](http://www.nsvrc.org).

5. Many men are involved in the fight to end sexual violence against women.

a. Find out what men are doing to prevent sexual violence in your community and on your campus. Are there any organizations/groups on your campus, or in your community, working to involve men in the struggle to end sexual violence, *i.e.* a chapter of Men Against Sexual Violence, or the White Ribbon Campaign? Interview the organization's director or someone who volunteers there—what does the organization do? How do they define their role in helping to end men's violence against women? What kinds of education and prevention programs do they have? How do people generally respond to their work? How do they help survivors of sexual assault? Discuss the link between alcohol and sexual assault. How can you get involved?

# BODY SHOTS

If there are no such groups/organizations in your area, contact and interview someone from an organization/group nearby; then start one in your own community! The following websites provide some excellent examples of what can be done.

- » Men Against Sexual Violence (MASV) | [www.menagainstsexualviolence.org](http://www.menagainstsexualviolence.org)
- » Men Can Stop Rape | [www.mencanstoprape.org](http://www.mencanstoprape.org)
- » Men Ending Rape | [www.menendingrape.org](http://www.menendingrape.org)
- » No More Rape | [www.nomorerape.org](http://www.nomorerape.org)
- » Men Stopping Rape, Inc. | <http://danenet.danenet.org/msr/>
- » Masculinity & Sexual Harassment | [www.mun.ca/sexualharassment/Masculinity.html](http://www.mun.ca/sexualharassment/Masculinity.html)
- » Men Against Sexual Assault at the University of Rochester | [www.sa.rochester.edu/masa/index.php](http://www.sa.rochester.edu/masa/index.php)
- » Men Against Sexual Assault at the University of Texas (MASA) | <http://studentorgs.utexas.edu/utmasa/>

See also *Spin the Bottle DVD Extras: Women & Sexual Assault* and *Personal Responsibility*.

# LAST CALL

## KEY POINTS

- » While the media, the alcohol industry, and perhaps even our college administrators and society at large, may see college culture as a drinking culture, many students want their college experience to look different and are ready for change.
- » High-risk drinking on college campuses is a public health problem. To address public health problems, it is necessary to devote attention to the environment in which the individual makes his or her choices, and to the industries that profit from those choices.
- » The alcohol industry aims to get inside the world of young people and they've been quite successful. Alcohol iconography and symbolic imagery has in many ways colonized college campuses.
- » The alcohol industry spends \$3 billion a year on advertising (*this figure has risen from \$3 billion in 2001 to \$5.7 billion in 2002, see the Fact Sheets available at [www.camy.org](http://www.camy.org) for further information*). A tiny fraction of that amount is spent on so-called prevention messages. These prevention messages focus on the individual and say things like, "Know when to say when," or "Think when you drink," or "Drink responsibly." But they never define what they mean by that, nor do they discuss the variety of negative consequences alcohol can have.
- » Many of the alcohol education programs on college campuses are sponsored by the alcohol industry. Given that the alcohol industry has a vested interest in targeting college students as potential consumers, this situation is problematic. These industry-sponsored programs put the focus on the individual, and do not acknowledge that marketing, retail outlet density, and how the industry targets youth by glamorizing alcohol, is directly linked to the choices an individual makes around alcohol.
- » The main concern of the alcohol industry is profit, not the well-being of students.
- » Individuals who are in positions of educational influence need to provide students with the analytic tools necessary to understand the ways they are being manipulated by the alcohol industry, and in particular, how their gender and sexual identities are being manipulated.
- » Men and women need to challenge stereotypical definitions of beauty and sexuality, define their own sexuality, and not let it be crafted by people with something to sell.
- » When young men are trying to force each other to drink too much or to drink to prove their masculinity, they need to be called on it—it is abusive behavior. Young men need to give each other, and themselves, permission to operate outside our culture and the alcohol industry's narrow definitions of masculinity.
- » Because excessive drinking is condoned by our society, we often find it difficult to confront friends who have drinking problems. However, it is important to recognize these problems and to talk about them. Confronting an alcohol problem takes courage.
- » Many students are rejecting the idea that their college experience has to center around drinking; the number of students choosing not to drink, or who are drinking in low risk ways, is increasing. Additionally, many students are involved in trying to create healthier environments on their campuses
- » The alcohol industry has co-opted the college experience—they've gotten us to believe that if we don't drink, we'll have nothing to do. The challenge is to imagine a campus where good times, fun, excitement, joy, and passion are possible without alcohol being the main focus.
- » If we choose to drink alcohol we can do so on our terms, without having to conform to the media and the industry's idea of who we should be, and what our college and social experiences should be like.
- » For further study, see *Spin the Bottle DVD Extras: Addressing the Environment and Personal Responsibility*.

# LAST CALL

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION & WRITING

---

1. What role has alcohol played in your college experience?
2. What does it mean to treat high-risk drinking as a public health issue?
3. In a group of 3-4, list and briefly describe as many alcohol-related images and icons that you can recall seeing on your campus—*i.e.* posters, logos on clothing or elsewhere. In your opinion, has the alcohol industry colonized your campus?
4. In a group of 3-4, list and briefly describe as many alcohol problem prevention messages that you've seen/heard on your campus. In these messages, is high-risk drinking considered a public health problem or an individual problem?
5. In a group of 3-4, discuss what you could do to help a friend who had an alcohol problem.
6. What is the primary goal of the alcohol industry? Why might the alcohol industry sponsor alcohol education programs? Are alcohol industry-sponsored education programs likely to include a critique of the industry itself? Discuss.
7. In a group of 3-4, brainstorm a list of things to do on the weekend, or after class, that have nothing to do with alcohol. Discuss your favorite thing to do on the weekend, or after class, that does not involve alcohol.
8. **Jean Kilbourne** argues that the alcohol industry has co-opted the college experience, "They've actually gotten us to believe that we will have nothing to do if we can't drink." What does the alcohol industry want your college experience to be like? What do you want your college experience to be like?

## ASSIGNMENTS & ACTIVISM ACTIVITIES

---

1. *"This isn't just about a few beer ads or even popular culture references in television or Hollywood film. There are also posters on walls in guys' dorm rooms, there's t-shirts people wear, there's slogans, there's bumper stickers, there's all kinds of iconography and symbolic imagery that surrounds the environment."* **JACKSON KATZ**

**The College Campus Tour:** For one day (*from when you wake up until when you go to bed*), keep a log of all the alcohol-related iconography and imagery you see on your college campus. During the day, visit the places you typically frequent—the cafeteria, the washroom, the library, the dorms—and briefly describe what you see and where. Spend at least an hour sitting in a public place frequented by other students, *i.e.* the cafeteria. Make a note every time you see a person wearing some type of alcohol related item, *i.e.* a t-shirt with a beer logo on it. Review your log—in your opinion, has the alcohol industry colonized your campus?

2. Read the report *Environmental Management: A Comprehensive Strategy for Reducing Alcohol and Other Drug Use on College Campuses* (available online at <http://www2.edc.org/hec/pubs/>) and if possible watch the *Spin the Bottle DVD Extra: Addressing the Environment*. Write a report that explores the philosophy behind addressing the campus environment and assess the ways in which your campus and community are using, or could be using, this approach.

## LAST CALL

3. Most of the men and women we see in alcohol ads, and in the mass media in general, are fictional characters played by actors—the way they behave, what they value, even what they wear, is decided for them. A great deal of attention is paid to how they look—only certain actors have the ‘right look.’

a. In a group of 3-4, discuss the men and women you have seen in alcohol ads; outline the characteristics of the typical ‘alcohol ad man’ and the typical ‘alcohol ad woman.’ What does he look like? How does he act? What is most important to him? What does she look like? How does she act? What is most important to her? How do the two interact?

b. Think of a person who you would describe as socially and civically responsible. Outline this person’s characteristics in your journal. What does s/he look like? How does s/he act? What is most important to him/her? How does s/he interact with others?

c. In *Killing Us Softly 3*, **Jean Kilbourne** states that social change will depend upon “an aware, active, educated public that thinks of itself primarily as citizens rather than primarily as consumers.” In your journal discuss the following: What does it mean to think of oneself primarily as a citizen rather than a consumer? What does this distinction mean for society? Are the ‘alcohol ad man’ and ‘alcohol ad woman’ you’ve outlined above in **3a**, primarily citizens or primarily consumers? What about the men and women you see in the mass media in general? Is the person you’ve described above in 3b as socially and civically responsible, primarily a citizen or primarily a consumer? What about you?

4a. Read *The Role of State, Community, and Institutional Policy in the Prevention of College Alcohol Problems* available online at [www.edc.org/hec/pubs/prev-updates/swi.html](http://www.edc.org/hec/pubs/prev-updates/swi.html).

4b. Obtain and review a copy of your college/university’s alcohol policy. You can also check to see if your college/university is listed on the site *What Campuses and Communities Are Doing* at [www.edc.org/hec/ideasamplers/](http://www.edc.org/hec/ideasamplers/).

4c. Compare and contrast your college/university’s alcohol policy to two of the following:

» the *Model Campus Alcohol Policy Adopted by the Inter-Association Task Force on Campus Alcohol Issues* available in *Appendix D* of the document *The Role of State, Community, and Institutional Policy in the Prevention of College Alcohol Problems* online at [www.edc.org/hec/pubs/prev-updates/swi.html](http://www.edc.org/hec/pubs/prev-updates/swi.html)

» the alcohol policy of a nearby college/university

» the alcohol policy of 1 of the 5 colleges listed in *Appendix E: Alcohol and Other Drug Policies* of the document *The Role of State, Community, and Institutional Policy in the Prevention of College Alcohol Problems* online at [www.edc.org/hec/pubs/prev-updates/swi.html](http://www.edc.org/hec/pubs/prev-updates/swi.html)

» 1 of the case studies detailed at *Case Studies: What Campuses are Doing*, online at [www.edc.org/hec/casestudies/](http://www.edc.org/hec/casestudies/)

4d. Assess your institution’s alcohol policy in a paper. Does it address high-risk drinking as a public health issue? How does it compare to the others you have reviewed? What are its strengths? What are its weaknesses? How have students been, and/or how might they become, involved in creating and implementing alcohol policy at your college/university? Forward your paper, along with recommendations, to the administration and other relevant groups.

5a. Visit the website [www.beeresponsible.com](http://www.beeresponsible.com). Review the site. Who is sponsoring it? What are the sponsor’s main goals, in other words what do they care most about? How might their goals affect the information presented on this website? What are the sponsor’s motivations for creating this site? How does this site talk about alcohol consumption? According to the site, what are the main problems associated with drinking? Are any alcohol-related problems/negative consequences not mentioned on the site? How is high-risk drinking defined? Is high-risk

# LAST CALL

drinking addressed as a public health issue? In your opinion, what is the main goal of the site? Does it achieve this goal?

5b. Visit one of the alcohol education websites listed below, none of which are sponsored by the alcohol industry. Apply the same questions you asked in your review of the industry-sponsored site above, to this site:

- » Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth | [www.camy.org](http://www.camy.org)
- » US Department of Health & Human Services & SAMHSA's National Clearinghouse for Drug & Alcohol Information | [www.health.org](http://www.health.org)
- » Alcohol Concern | [www.alcoholconcern.org.uk](http://www.alcoholconcern.org.uk)
- » The Marin Institute | [www.marininstitute.org](http://www.marininstitute.org)
- » The Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention | [www.edc.org/hec](http://www.edc.org/hec)

5c. Compare and contrast the sites you reviewed above in 5a and 5b in a paper or presentation.

6. Intentionally abstain from alcohol for a weekend. If you already abstain from alcohol, use this opportunity to reflect on your choices and why you make them. What are you going to do? Plan an exciting, fun weekend for you and your friends that does not involve consuming alcohol. Working in a group of 2-3, make a list of everything you will do on that weekend—plan something for Friday night, Saturday night, and at least one day time activity for Saturday or Sunday. Throughout the weekend take a few moments to write down your thoughts—how is the weekend going? How are you feeling? On Sunday night write a longer piece reflecting on your weekend—how did it go? Did you have fun? Did you miss alcohol? What are some of the benefits of having had an alcohol-free weekend? Plan future alcohol-free activities for you and your friends.

7. The following statements were made by students interviewed for *Spin the Bottle*:

*"First of all, it's so good to bring up the questions and let people talk about them and think about them; let people really reflect, like 'oh yeah, how are my experiences with alcohol? How was every weekend for the last two years in college for me?' Let's talk about these things and hear what people have to say."*

*"I never thought about it, and I'm just realizing it now, that I don't have to do this to have a good time."*

The students interviewed in *Spin the Bottle: Sex, Lies & Alcohol* found the process of talking and thinking about their experiences with alcohol empowering and enlightening. Conduct your own student discussion group(s); ask students on your campus to talk about what their experiences with alcohol have been like—recruit friends, dorm-mates, or teammates. Be sure to include students from a variety of disciplines. If possible, record, transcribe, and analyze the discussion (*if you cannot record and transcribe the discussion, taking notes during and after the discussion also works well*).

Consider showing a section of the video to the group, or invite the students who participate in these discussions to a screening of *Spin the Bottle: Sex, Lies & Alcohol* at a later date. Use the information you gather during the discussion group(s) to talk to the audience about how the video relates to student life on your campus (*be sure to keep the identities of students who have participated in the discussion group(s) anonymous*). Have a facilitator lead the audience in a post-screening discussion. See the *Spin the Bottle DVD Extra: Personal Responsibility*, for an example of the dynamics of student discussion groups.

8. Create a response piece. Choose some aspect of *Spin the Bottle: Sex, Lies & Alcohol* that stands out for you—for example, something a student said that rings true for you, or a fact that surprised or angered you. You may

## LAST CALL

find it helpful to review the section of the video that you most related to, or its key points. Reflect on why this particular point caught your attention. Create your response piece. Your response piece can take any form—perhaps a letter, poem, visual art, or a performance piece. It's your response piece—its form is up to you. Be creative. Present your response piece to the class. Discuss why you chose to respond to this particular part of the video.

# DVD EXTRA: PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

## **NOTE TO INSTRUCTORS:**

---

You may find that it is difficult to listen to some of the thoughts and emotions expressed in the *DVD Extra: Personal Responsibility*. Yet, as Producer **Ronit Ridberg** suggests below in her “Note from the Producer,” it is important for students to feel that they can express their thoughts and emotions honestly. At the same time, your students need to know that some people in the group are survivors of sexual assault; when you speak about ‘the victim of sexual assault’ s/he is not an abstract other, s/he is sitting in the class with you. Some students may express beliefs you want and need to challenge; for example, people often blame victims of sexual assault for what has happened to them. Allow students to express their opinions—if they do not express these opinions how can you challenge them? Challenge their belief systems respectfully. Let students learn from one another. Often, as is evident in this DVD Extra, when a student hears a colleague articulate the belief system they themselves operate from, they become better able to challenge and interrogate that belief system themselves. Make sure students know it is okay for them to change their minds; discussion and dialogue are meant to facilitate growth. Keep in mind, given that some students in your class are survivors of sexual assault, it is essential that the myths and misconceptions that surround sexual violence be challenged and corrected.

For further reading see: *Issues for Teachers in Sexual Violence Prevention Education*, available at [www.nsvrc.org](http://www.nsvrc.org). While this document addresses teachers of middle and high school age students, much of the information is also relevant for college and university instructors.

## **A NOTE FROM THE PRODUCER**

---

The students featured in the *DVD Extra: Personal Responsibility*, represent three different colleges. The group did not know one another prior to the discussion, though most came with one friend. The students knew they were being filmed, and agreed to have their images and conversations used in the video *Spin the Bottle: Sex, Lies & Alcohol*.

Working with the student discussion group featured here was one of the most challenging and rewarding aspects of this entire project. The students were eager to talk about alcohol’s role in sex and sexual assault. As producer and discussion facilitator, my goal was to intervene as little as possible and let the conversation flow, both on the day the discussion group was conducted and in the editing. This segment is edited for length and flow, but because it is important to me that the students’ voices and stories are heard, it has not been edited much for content.

During the discussion group, I wanted to allow for all thoughts, opinions, and questions to be expressed, while at the same time stressing, as some of the students did, that no one should expect or ever deserves to be violated. The question of blame in cases of rape and assault can be triggering for survivors and perhaps confusing for others. It is important to talk about, interrogate, and challenge victim blaming.

Through the experience of this group discussion, I think we all realized how often we are silenced on these issues—those of us who have been assaulted and those of us who have not. Students want to break the silence that exists around sex, sexual assault, and alcohol and are hungry for safe venues where they can have these conversations and learn from one another. I am impressed by the honesty and thoughtfulness that can come from those spaces.

I have included this extra on the DVD because I think it is important and powerful to put faces to experiences. I hope the stories and questions in this section help others to confront their own understandings of rape and sexual assault. I also hope that others will recognize the need for and importance of this kind of discussion, and engage in their own respectful dialogue. **RONIT RIDBERG** | *Producer*

## DVD EXTRA: PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

### QUESTIONS & ASSIGNMENTS FOR DISCUSSION & WRITING

1. *"I think in general, sexual assault is about power and control. And, having said that, I think [when] alcohol [is present]...accountability is just absent. And so when you can engage in behavior that's either destructive, or dangerous, or whatever, and you don't feel like you're held accountable for it, I think that's a perfect marriage... So when they engage in sexual assault, or when it's some behavior that relates to sexual violence, I think that the lack of accountability for that maybe causes people to feel like it's okay to do."*

**OJAE BEALE** | Program Director, Rape Crisis Services at UMass-Amherst

- a. At one time or another, even if it was only for a brief moment, most of us have been in situations where our power or control has been taken from us. In your journal, reflect on a situation when you felt that your power had been taken from you and/or you had no control over a situation. How did that situation make you feel? How did you feel about the person(s) who and/or circumstances that took your power and control away? What is it like to have no power/control over a situation?
- b. What does it mean to be held accountable for your behavior?
- c. Describe and discuss some situations in which alcohol might be used to excuse behavior, particularly relating to sex and/or violence. Does the gender of the person matter? How? In your opinion, is "I was drunk" ever a justifiable excuse for injurious behavior? Discuss the definition of accountability and how it applies to alcohol-influenced behavior.

2. *"I've heard guys say, which I think is wrong, if a girl is drinking a Bacardi Breezer, they're like, 'Oh, I'm gonna buy her a Bacardi Breezer,' or some fruity drink per se, they're like, 'Yeah, get her some panty droppers.' And I mean, alcohol is alcohol. You can drop whatever you're gonna drop, whatever you drink. I think it's tough, and for women especially, you guys do have a lot more responsibility put on you when you're drinking. Because you can go out and dance, and if you're just dancing and you're drunk, 'Oh, that girl's a ho, she's a slut, we gotta go get her' that's what you hear, and it's all around you in your environment, and it sucks."*

**DARREN** | student discussion-group participant

No one mentions young women talking about buying young men some 'boxer droppers,' or calling men who are drunk and dancing 'sluts.' Find at least two feminist articles that talk about the significance of the language we use. Discuss, with reference to the articles you've read and the words Darren and some of the other students recall hearing, how the language we use mirrors and shapes our society's structures of power.

3. *"...Sometimes I have to get into a performance role of going out. Sometimes, if I get disrespected or something, sometimes I let it slide. And it doesn't sound like a big deal because I'm in that situation, but that's the mentality we have. We have to accept it, 'cause I'm here. But I think advertising and our culture plays a huge role in that mentality, 'well she's here, so it's okay'—and it's like a lessening up of your personal things. And the times I do say something, like god forbid I do say, 'Please don't do that'...I've gotten strangled, I've gotten punched in the face, boys, girls, both—it's sick. So you have to accept it. I've gotten to a point where I have to—if I want to go out and dance and I'm dancing on the dance floor, I know someone's gonna come up to me and touch me and I have to be like, 'Please don't do that' and then have to get into some kind of fight, or 'You're a bitch'—it just, it sucks."*

**AMANDA** | student discussion-group participant

- a. If Amanda were somewhere else, in a line waiting to take out books at the library for instance, she probably wouldn't hesitate to tell someone who touched her to back off. What makes the dance floor different? Why does she feel she must accept it here? How might the presence of alcohol contribute to this situation? A young man who might choose to touch Amanda on the dance floor probably wouldn't consider touching

## DVD EXTRA: PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

her if he were standing behind her in a line-up at the library; what makes the dance floor situation different? Why does he feel it is acceptable here? How might the presence of alcohol contribute to this situation? Why?

b. Darren calls the situation Amanda describes a “catch-22.” Discuss how this is a catch-22 situation for Amanda and other young women.

4. *“I think it works both ways though at the same time. I mean, I think, due to factors such as a male physique, it’s easier to get out of certain situations that maybe a woman couldn’t get out of, in terms of rape or any kind of sexual assault. But at the same time, I’ve been in plenty of situations where a woman’s come on pretty strongly and, especially if they’re hammered, but I’ve been in enough situations to say, ‘Hey—cool it.’ And you have to do it, whether you’re not attracted to them, whether you don’t want to be in that kind of situation at that particular time, or whatever the reason is. There’s plenty of times where I’ve been like, ‘back off’ or if I think something’s getting a little too heavy, you know, ‘cool it.’ But I can get away, pretty easily—I just turn my back and scoot and that’s the gist of it, and I think maybe it does get a little more physical if it’s a man on a woman, obviously.”*

**RYAN** | student discussion-group participant

Ryan suggests that his physical size could be the reason he has less trouble getting away from women who give him unwanted attention. How might our attitudes about gender and alcohol, and our cultural definitions of gender, also help to make it easier for Ryan to say “no”, and get out of a situation that is making him uncomfortable?

5. *“I think that some men—I would never say all men—but some men tend to use alcohol as some type of domination you know, over women. Because I know a lot of instances where we’ll go out to a bar and a guy will come up to you and buy you a couple of drinks, but you know, they kind of have this hidden [agenda]...I remember one time that happened to me and like, I left and was like, ‘Okay, bye, thanks’ and he was like, ‘What are you doing? You’re coming home with me.’ And I was like, ‘No, I’m not.’ And he was like, ‘No, I just wasted \$50 dollars on you, you’re really coming home.’ And I was like, ‘I’m not worth \$50. It’s not that serious.’ I don’t know—I kind of feel like that’s what a lot of guys use alcohol as kind of dominating force.”*

**TAKESHA** | student discussion-group participant

Would this situation look the same if the genders were reversed, if Takesha bought drinks for a man she found attractive? Why might some men think if they buy a woman drinks she should go home with him? Might some women also hold this belief? Is this an attitude our culture fosters? How? How might cultural representations of alcohol foster this attitude? How might our gender definitions foster this attitude?

6. *“...I think what she was getting at though was more of an increased likelihood. I wouldn’t walk into a Hell’s Angels bar dressed the way I am right now knowing that there would be a huge likelihood that a problem might arise, just judging upon the way I look or the way I act. Just as if you step into a certain situation, say a frat party or something, where drinking is prevalent and assault can be prevalent, you’re stepping into a lion’s den. I mean you have to take that into consideration. If you engage in something, I mean anyone who’s in the military, if you engage in a battle there’s a likelihood that you will get shot at or die. If you engage in something like that, there’s a likelihood, it may not be an overwhelming likelihood, but there is an increased likelihood, that you will encounter an assault, a fist-fight, some kind of altercation, more so than you if just sat in your apartment and had a couple beers.”*

**RYAN** | student discussion-group participant

a. Discuss some of the things/situations you might be prepared to encounter when you attend a party or go to a bar where drinking is prevalent. Do any of these things make you uncomfortable? How might

## DVD EXTRA: PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

gender factor into what you are prepared to encounter in these settings? How does the prevalent cultural attitude, “She should have known better” contribute to a climate of victim blaming?

b. Discuss the conflict between the pressure to attend parties (*to fit in and have a good time*) and the attitude that, if a woman is assaulted at a party, “she should have known.” What is going on in the culture that allows for these conflicting pressures? How might going to a fraternity party be different from Ryan going into a Hell’s Angels bar or a soldier going into battle? How do you respond to Ryan’s comparisons?

c. Emily responds to Ryan’s comments by saying, “You shouldn’t go into any situation expecting to be assaulted...I know you were saying certain things go along with certain things. I’m just saying they shouldn’t.”

Discuss Emily’s response. What do Ryan’s comments imply about responsibility and where accountability lies? What does Emily’s response imply about responsibility and where accountability lies?

*Note to Educator:* This can be an extremely difficult discussion to facilitate, but also important. Allow students to voice the myths of the culture and the prevalent attitudes that reinforce victim blaming, so you can challenge these ideas. It should be asserted, clearly and strongly, that no one ever deserves to be assaulted. No one ever asks for it. No one should ever expect it. The culture will only change when the burden of responsibility is placed on the perpetrator.

7. *“There’s a point at which the burden of responsibility needs to be shifted. Like yes, I won’t walk into a fraternity party expecting utter respect, but I also think that there’s a possibility that maybe that side should be responsible for the way that I’m treated or the type of interactions you can expect in that environment.”*

JIN-YOUNG | student discussion-group participant

a. How might fraternities and bars take responsibility for what happens on their premises and ensure that the women and men who frequent these places are treated in respectful ways?

b. How does challenging gender norms help shift responsibility off of the victim and onto the perpetrator?

*See Note to Educator in question 6 above.*

8. *“I think that a lot of people don’t understand unless they’ve been in it [that situation]. I hate to be like that, but it’s the truth. Unless you know, you’ve picked up one of your friends after that’s happened to her or you’ve had it happen to yourself, you don’t realize the responsibility isn’t really put in the right place.”*

MINDY | student discussion-group participant

What is empathy? What does it look, and/or sound, like to respond to a victim of sexual assault with empathy? What is the relationship between empathy and putting responsibility on the perpetrator?

9. *“The control is taken from you, and I don’t mean to be like, ‘Women have no control over their actions,’ but you shouldn’t anticipate just cause you’ve had a few beers or you’ve had a few drinks that someone’s going to do this to you. And I think that alcohol escalates it, but it’s problems that men and women have in sober situations as well, and it’s that that kind of control that just gets even more out of control when you’ve both been drinking or one of you has been drinking.”*

MINDY | student discussion-group participant

a. Mindy makes it very clear that she is not suggesting women have no control over their actions. Find at least two feminist articles that address victimization of women. With reference to the articles you’ve

## DVD EXTRA: PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

read, discuss how naming systems of oppression and domination, is different from relegating a person, or an entire gender category, to the role of victim.

b. Mindy suggests that the problems we see happening between men and women with respect to power and control are not limited to situations involving alcohol. How do our societal power structures, specifically in relation to gender, factor into this equation? What are some of the root causes of sexual assault? How might alcohol and our cultural representations of alcohol exacerbate some of the problems we see happening between men and women with respect to power and control? What are some possible solutions to these problems?

10. *“Personally I’m just faced with what do I tell my women friends? Don’t drink too much because you have this risk, or should I say you should do whatever you want because that’s right.”*

**JULIA** | student discussion-group participant

Discuss what you think Julia should tell her women friends. What might she tell her men friends?

11. *“I would not go to a club, or a bar, or meet someone randomly at a party and be like ‘Oh yeah, lets go home together.’ No, because too many implications can happen when you’re not thinking straight. And it’s something where, ‘Yo, why don’t you take my number, why don’t you do this, and then get to know me as a person.’ And it’s just my personal rule.”*

**DARREN** | student discussion-group participant

Discuss Darren’s personal rule in the context of accountability and personal responsibility. In what ways is Darren challenging gender norms with this action?

12. *“I know someone extremely close to me that was raped and I almost—I blame her, because she’s an attractive person, she’s a nice person. And when I found out about it I just wanted to like, kick her in the face myself, because I feel like—once again I don’t want to say you should expect it, like you guys were saying, but its something that there’s a risk for and I just wanted to put all the blame on her and be like, almost like you asked for it, you deserved it, for doing that, for putting yourself in that situation. And, I feel like when you’re out with your group of friends, something like that’s not going to happen—I know you said that you’ve had that experience—me personally, I haven’t, I don’t think I ever would with my group of friends. But, I don’t really know what I’m trying to get at here but I just—sometimes I feel like people, women, who put themselves in that situation are to blame for it because they did it to begin with and that’s how I feel...”*

**KRISTIN** | student discussion-group participant

a. Blaming a victim of sexual assault for what has happened to her is very common. What are some of the possible consequences of victim blaming for survivors of sexual assault? For women and men who have not personally experienced sexual violence? For our society as a whole? Who is responsible for sexual violence? *See Note to Educator in question 6 above.*

b. Kristin says she doesn’t think sexual assault could ever happen to her. How might victim blaming help young women maintain the belief that nothing like that could ever happen to them? Are certain women exempt from sexual assault? What are some of the myths and misconceptions around rape and sexual assault that make us believe that they are? How might the media work to support these myths and misconceptions? How might our cultural representations of and beliefs about alcohol work to support these myths and misconceptions? What purposes might these myths and misconceptions serve? What illusions of safety do they create? How might they serve to create distance from a situation?

## DVD EXTRA: PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

c. Can you think of any other crimes where the victim of the crime is blamed for what has happened to them? Read and discuss *The “Rape” of Mr. Smith*, available in the *Other Resources* section of this guide. Can you think of any other crimes where the victim is put on trial for the crime that has been committed against them? Why is it currently acceptable in our culture to blame and interrogate a victim of sexual assault for what has happened to her?

d. Read the article *A Voice Crying Out* by Bill Hewitt (available in *People Weekly* vol. 44, August 21, 1995 pages 48-50; your library may have online access). This article discusses the court case of Krista Absalon, a woman who was gang-raped. If possible, find other articles that discuss this case, and/or other court cases involving sexual assault. Ensure that these articles consider the victim’s point of view. Do you see any evidence of victim blaming in these cases? Where and by who? How might our cultural definitions of and beliefs around gender (and race, class, and/or sexual orientation, if relevant) have played a role in the proceedings and outcome of the case? How might our cultural beliefs around alcohol and sex have played a role in the proceedings and outcome of the case? How do the articles you’ve read for **12d** relate to the article you read above in **12c**, *The “Rape” of Mr. Smith*?

13. *“We’ve been socialized, and we’ve been brainwashed, to think, and to be comfortable with, the fact that sexual assault has a very, very narrow interpretation and definition. And so a lot of times, men don’t understand—and I’m not saying they’re not held accountable for it—but don’t necessarily understand that when she says ‘no’, when she says, ‘I didn’t bargain for this’, when she says ‘I don’t want to do this’, when she pushes away, when she gives you real clear, concrete signs, that engaging in sex with you is not what she wants to do, it’s rape. What we do know, and what we do understand, we need to frame in effective ways so that we can address this issue for what it is, as opposed to looking at it in the more standard ways, and talking about rape and sexual assault in a limited way. We need to really expand our understandings so that we teach, and make people more aware, from a broader perspective.”*

**OJAE BEALE** | Program Director, Rape Crisis Services at UMass-Amherst

a. You’ve probably heard the anti-sexual violence slogan, “No means no.” How might the mass media’s portrayal of sex, sexuality, sexual freedom, and gender in advertising, movies, TV shows, and music, help create a climate in which “no” isn’t always comprehended as really meaning no? How might our attitudes about and our cultural representations of alcohol exacerbate this situation? How might the ‘good-girl/bad-girl’ dichotomy girls and young women face contribute to this situation? In what ways might the expectations our culture places on men to be tough, physical, and in control contribute to this situation? In what ways might all of these factors—the way the media portrays, sex, sexuality, sexual freedom and gender; our attitudes about and cultural representations of alcohol; the ‘good-girl/bad-girl’ dichotomy; and the expectations placed on boys and men to be tough, powerful and in control—impact the lives of young women and men and their relationships with one another? For further reading see *Flirting with Danger* by Lynn Phillips and *The Male in the Head* by Janet Holland.

b. The following is one possible answer to the question: What is sexual assault?

*“Sexual violence is a sex act completed or attempted against a victim’s will or when a victim is unable to consent due to age, illness, disability, or the influence of alcohol or other drugs. It may involve actual or threatened physical force, use of guns or other weapons, coercion, intimidation, or pressure. Sexual violence also includes intentional touching of the genitals, anus, groin, or breast against a victim’s will or when a victim is unable to consent; and voyeurism, exposure to exhibitionism, or undesired exposure to pornography. The perpetrator of sexual violence may be a stranger, friend, family member, or intimate partner.”*

National Center for Injury Prevention & Control | [www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/svoverview.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/svoverview.htm)

## DVD EXTRA: PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Discuss this definition in groups of 3-4. Using this definition as a model, and keeping in mind the material you've covered while working with *Spin the Bottle: Sex, Lies & Alcohol*, create a class answer to the question: What is sexual assault?

14. Visit your campus or community rape crisis center. Talk with some of the people who work/volunteer there, find out what they do, who they help, and how. Discuss how they define/describe sexual assault and rape. Discuss the difference(s) between the identifying phrases: victim of sexual assault and survivor of sexual assault. Discuss how you can help in the struggle to end sexual violence.

15. In your journal, reflect on the significance of discussion and dialogue. Think of a belief that you held when you were younger but which you no longer subscribe to; reflect on the significance of being able and allowed to change and adapt your belief systems. How can discussion and dialogue assist with this process? Reflect on the discussions you've had, and the work and reflection you've done with respect *Spin the Bottle: Sex, Lies & Alcohol*. What have you learned? How have you, your attitudes, and belief systems changed or expanded?

## DVD EXTRA: COLLECTED COMMERCIALS

*The DVD Extra: Collected Commercials* is a collection of sample television ads for alcohol. Viewers are encouraged to think about the material presented in *Spin the Bottle: Sex, Lies & Alcohol* as they watch and deconstruct these ads. These ads are a sample—viewers are encouraged to collect and deconstruct other ads they have seen (*both on television and in print*).

*The Collected Commercials* are broken into 5 sections, as are the questions presented here: *Objectifying & Mocking Women*; *Sex & Male Fantasy*; *Ads Targeting Women*; *Playing on Male Anxiety*; and *A Different Approach*. The questions and assignments presented here are meant to serve as a starting block. Viewers and instructors are strongly encouraged to ask their own questions and conduct their own investigations into the world of alcohol advertising/marketing. Refer also to the MEF handouts *Deconstructing an Alcohol Advertisement* and *Deconstructing a Video Advertisement*, both are available online at [www.mediaed.org/handouts](http://www.mediaed.org/handouts).

### PRE-VIEWING ACTIVITIES

---

1. Read the article *Alcohol Ads Outnumber Responsibility Ads 226 to 1*, available online at [www.jointogether.org/sa/news/alerts/reader/0,1854,571112,00.html](http://www.jointogether.org/sa/news/alerts/reader/0,1854,571112,00.html).
2. Read the article *Advertising at the Edge of the Apocalypse*, available online at [www.sutjhally.com/onlinepubs/apocalypse.html](http://www.sutjhally.com/onlinepubs/apocalypse.html).
3. Collect 20 print alcohol ads. 10 of these ads should be from magazines aimed at women, *i.e. Cosmopolitan* or *Glamour*; 10 should be from magazines aimed at men, *i.e. Maxim* or *Sports Illustrated*. Compare and contrast the two groups of ads. Who is in the ads—men, women, or men and women? How do the people in the ads look? How do the ads taken from men's magazines talk about sex, sexuality, and relationships? How do the ads taken from women's magazines talk about sex, sexuality, and relationships? Refer to the handout *Deconstructing an Alcohol Advertisement* available online at [www.mediaed.org/handouts/](http://www.mediaed.org/handouts/), to further deconstruct and analyze the ads that you've compiled.
4. For further study watch the videos *Advertising and the End of the World* and/or *Deadly Persuasion: The Advertising of Alcohol & Tobacco*, [www.mediaed.org](http://www.mediaed.org).

### OBJECTIFYING & MOCKING WOMEN

1. How does feminism define the objectification of women?
2. Describe, discuss, and define "the male gaze."
3. What are some of consequences of objectification?
4. How does objectification affect individual women's lives?
5. In what ways does our culture condone and support the objectification of women?

# DVD EXTRA: COLLECTED COMMERCIALS

## Commercial 1

*Bud Light Beer: Two men 'observe' a women's yoga class.*

- a. What stories does this commercial tell about men?
- b. What stories does this commercial tell about women?
- c. The women in this commercial are exercising, yet this activity is reinterpreted as a 'show' for men. What is going on in this commercial and in our culture that makes this reinterpretation seem okay, harmless, and even funny?
- d. Do women want to be watched all of the time? Why does our culture act as if they do?
- e. What does unwanted attention, i.e. stalking, feel like?
- f. When the instructor asks the guys in this commercial to leave, they say, "She's not very relaxed." What is the function of this comment? How does it diminish women's anger and women's power?
- g. The men in this commercial look harmless, their faces are boyish, but we know many times women feel uncomfortable and even afraid when men stare at them. How do the stories told in this commercial contribute to this situation? How do they diminish and mock women's discomfort, and even fear?
- h. Consider the camera angles of this commercial. What does the camera focus on, i.e. does it focus on a particular body part? Where the camera looks is where the viewer looks—what are some possible consequences of this situation?
- i. Respond to the following comment: *Lighten up; it's just a joke. This commercial is funny.* In what way do comments like this serve to silence those who speak up against degradation, objectification, and harassment?
- j. What stereotypes does this commercial rely on?

## Commercial 2

*Bud Light Beer: "Get a good look at the mother because that's what the daughter will look like in 20 years."*

- a. Describe male 1 and his surroundings. Describe male 2 and his surroundings. What differences do you notice? What might these differences imply?
- b. What stories does this commercial tell about men and about how to be a man?
- c. The two men in this commercial appear to be friends. Based on the short interaction you witness, describe their friendship and its basis. Does it seem to be supportive? What stories does this commercial tell about men's friendships with other men?
- d. What stories does this commercial tell about women?
- e. Obviously the most important thing about a woman in this commercial is her appearance. Why is it okay for this commercial to suggest that? Is this a situation you see happening in real life?
- f. Sarah is eating nachos and her mother has an enormous, to the point of caricature, rear-end and thighs—what does this commercial say about the way women should eat?
- g. In this commercial the audience is meant to laugh at the size of the mother's rear-end and thighs—what does this say about body size? What is going on in our culture that makes it okay to laugh at someone's body size?
- h. What stories does this commercial tell about men's attitudes towards relationships with women?
- i. How might the alcohol industry profit from messages that devalue men's relationships with women?

## DVD EXTRA: COLLECTED COMMERCIALS

- j. Respond to the following comment: *Lighten up; it's just a joke. This commercial is funny.*
- k. What stereotypes does this commercial rely on to work?

### Commercial 3

*Coors Light Beer: features the song, Here's to the wingman.*

LYRICS:

*This chick's rockin' your bro on the dance floor  
But she's towing an anchor  
A junior investment banker  
She's talking about herself and not much more  
So buy her a beer, it's the reason you're here  
Mighty wingman  
You're taking one for the team  
So your buddy can live the dream  
Mighty wingman*

- a. What is the “chick” in this commercial doing? How does she look? How is she dressed? How does the camera look at this woman? Where the camera looks is where the viewer looks—what are some possible consequences of this situation? How does her dance partner look at her? Where does he look?
- b. What is the “anchor” doing? How does she look? How is she dressed? How does the camera look at her? Where the camera looks is where the viewer looks—what are some possible consequences of this situation? How does the “wingman” look at her? Where does he look?
- c. Are the physical appearances of the two women very different? What is the biggest difference between the two women? What messages does this send about how women should behave?
- d. What stories does this commercial tell about successful, powerful women?
- e. What stories does it tell about men?
- f. What is the most important thing about women in this commercial?
- g. What stories does this commercial tell about men and women’s relationships?
- h. Why is being the wingman framed as such a “noble” role?
- i. Respond to the following comment: *Lighten up; it's just a joke. This commercial is funny.*
- j. What stereotypes does this commercial rely on to work?

### SEX & MALE FANTASY

1. In what ways do specifically “male” fantasies frame the representations of sex we see in the media? What affect might this have on our real sex lives?
2. Find and read some work in the areas of Cultural Studies, Communications, Women’s Studies and Men’s Studies that discuss these questions.

# DVD EXTRA: COLLECTED COMMERCIALS

## Commercial 1

*Miller Genuine Draft: male writer rewrites scene.*

- a. Discuss “the male gaze” with respect to this commercial.
- b. What type of sexual fantasies do you see played out in this commercial?
- c. The voice over in this commercial says, “Cold filter what you don’t need, keep what’s good—MGD.” What does the writer in this commercial need? What does he not need? What do the women in this commercial need?
- d. What are the women in this commercial doing?
- e. What is the male writer’s relationship to power in this commercial? What are the women’s relationships to power? What gender stereotypes do you see present in this commercial?
- f. Which gender calls the shots in this commercial? Does this situation mimic real-life power structures?
- g. What stories does this commercial tell about sex and sexuality?
- h. How might the story told in this commercial, and others like it, contribute to what many feminists call our “rape culture”?
- i. Respond to the following comment: *Lighten up; stop taking things so seriously. It’s just a commercial.*
- j. What stereotypes does this commercial rely on to work?

## Commercial 2

*Miller Lite Beer (part of a series): fantasy ‘cat fight’ over whether Miller Lite is great because it “Tastes great” or is “Less filling.”*

- a. What type of sexual fantasies do you see played out in this commercial?
- b. What gender stereotypes are present in this commercial?
- c. Which gender calls the shots in this commercial? Does this situation mimic real-life power structures?
- d. What stories does this commercial tell about sex and sexuality?
- e. What stories does this commercial tell about women’s anger?
- f. This commercial ends when one of the women says, “Let’s make out.” What have Queer Theorists written about media representations of lesbian sex as part of male sexual fantasy?
- g. How might the way this commercial is set up absolve the alcohol industry of any responsibility for its content?
- h. Respond to the following comment: *Lighten up; it’s just a joke. This commercial is funny.*
- i. What stereotypes does this commercial rely on?

## Commercial 3

*Miller Lite Beer (part of a series): continues from Commercial 2 with one of the men replacing one of the fighting women.*

- a. What type of sexual fantasies do you see played out in this commercial?
- b. What gender stereotypes are present in this commercial?
- c. Which gender calls the shots in this commercial? Does this situation mimic real-life power structures?
- d. How does this “fantasy fight” differ from what you know about real-life physical “fights” between men and women?

## DVD EXTRA: COLLECTED COMMERCIALS

- e. What stories does this commercial tell about sex and sexuality?
- f. What stories does this commercial tell about women's anger?
- g. This commercial ends when one of the women in the bar changes the "fantasy commercial" by replacing the model-like woman with a large man. What stories does this commercial tell about heterosexuality and homophobia?
- h. How might the way this commercial is set up absolve the alcohol industry of any responsibility for its content?
- i. Respond to the following comment: *Lighten up; it's just a joke. This commercial is funny.*
- j. What stereotypes does this commercial rely on?

### Commercial 4

*Michelob Beer: "cleaning lady day."*

- a. What type of sexual fantasies do you see played out in this commercial?
- b. What gender stereotypes are present in this commercial?
- c. Which gender calls the shots in this commercial? Does this situation mimic real-life power structures?
- d. The cleaning lady in this commercial doesn't seem to mind that the apartment she is cleaning is such a disaster, and that after all of her hard work, her employer throws more stuff on the floor. What stories does this commercial tell about women's work and the value of women's work?
- e. Respond to the following comment: *Lighten up; it's just a joke. This commercial is funny.*
- f. What stereotypes does this commercial rely on?

### Commercial 5

*Miller Lite Beer: beautiful older woman cannot resist younger man.*

- a. What type of sexual fantasies do you see played out in this commercial?
- b. What gender stereotypes are present in this commercial?
- c. Which gender calls the shots in this commercial? Does this situation mimic real-life power structures?
- d. What stories does this commercial tell about sex and sexuality?
- e. In this commercial, the son isn't thrilled that his friend is telling a joke and having a sexual fantasy about his mother, but he doesn't do much to defend her; he simply says, "Oh come on, can't we go one night without a joke about my mother," smiles, and shakes his head. What stories does this tell about men's relationships with women? What stories does it tell about respect?
- f. Respond to the following comment: *Lighten up; it's just a joke. This commercial is funny.*
- g. What stereotypes does this commercial rely on?

### Commercial 6

*Smirnoff Ice: party in a Laundromat.*

- a. What type of sexual fantasies do you see played out in this commercial?
- b. What gender stereotypes are present in this commercial?
- c. How does this commercial work to link alcohol and sex?

## DVD EXTRA: COLLECTED COMMERCIALS

- d. What stories does this commercial tell about sex, sexual freedom, and alcohol?
- e. Respond to the following comment: *Lighten up; stop taking things so seriously. It's just a commercial.*
- f. What stereotypes does this commercial rely on to work?

### TARGETING WOMEN

The alcohol industry has increasingly targeted women in its marketing campaigns in an effort to open up bigger markets.

1. Discuss, describe, and define “the new male objectification.” Find and read some work in the areas of Cultural Studies, Communications, Women’s Studies and Men’s Studies that discusses “the new male objectification” and its implications.
2. In most alcohol commercials that target men, the men in the commercials are quite ordinary looking, while the women are very beautiful. In most of the commercials that target women, the physical appearance of the men seems to change—generally, they get stereotypically better looking—but the physical appearance of the women stays the same—they’re still stereotypically beautiful. What is going on here?

### Commercial 1

*Miller Lite Beer: revenge on a cheating boyfriend.*

- a. What stories does this commercial tell about women?
- b. What stories does it tell about men?
- c. What stories does it tell about relationships between men and women?
- d. Which gender calls the shots in this commercial? Does this situation mimic real-life power structures?
- e. What stories does this commercial tell about physical abuse? Would this commercial work if the gender roles were reversed? Discuss.
- f. What stories does this commercial tell about women’s anger? About women’s power?
- g. How might this commercial work to ensure that, even if it’s targeting women, it is not upsetting to male viewers? Might it also appeal to male viewers on some level?
- h. Respond to the following comment: *Lighten up; it's just a joke. This commercial is funny.*
- i. What stereotypes does this commercial rely on?

### Commercial 2

*Bud Light Beer: male model for a birthday present.*

- a. Discuss “the new male objectification” with respect to this commercial.
- b. What stories does this commercial tell about women and about what women want?
- c. What stories does it tell about men?
- d. What stories does it tell about relationships between men and women?
- e. How might this commercial work to ensure that, even if it’s targeting women, it is not upsetting to male viewers? How might it also appeal to male viewers on some level?
- f. Respond to the following comment: *Lighten up; it's just a joke. This commercial is funny.*

## DVD EXTRA: COLLECTED COMMERCIALS

g. What stereotypes does this commercial rely on?

### Commercial 3

*Miller Lite (part of a series, see also commercials 2 and 3 in SEX & MALE FANTASY): women's fantasy commercial. Two model-like men fight over whether Miller Lite is great because it "Tastes great" or is "Less filling."*

- a. What stories does this commercial tell about women and about what women want?
- b. What stories does it tell about men and male bonding?
- c. Which gender calls the shots in this commercial? Does this situation mimic real-life power structures?
- d. How might this commercial work to ensure that, even if it's targeting women, it is not upsetting to male viewers? How might it also appeal to male viewers on some level?
- e. How might the way this commercial is set up absolve the alcohol industry of any responsibility for its content?
- f. Respond to the following comment: *Lighten up; it's just a joke. This commercial is funny.*
- g. What stereotypes does this commercial rely on?

### Commercial 4

*Miller Lite Beer: woman recounts photocopier incident.*

- a. What is the role of alcohol in this commercial?
- b. What is the man in this commercial like? What stories does this commercial tell about men?
- c. How might this commercial work to ensure that, even if it's targeting women, it is not upsetting to male viewers? How might it also appeal to male viewers on some level?
- d. Respond to the following comment: *Lighten up; it's just a joke. This commercial is funny.*
- e. What stereotypes does this commercial rely on?

### MALE ANXIETY

*"So overwhelming has the commercial takeover of culture become, that it has now become a problem for advertisers, who now worry about 'clutter and noise'—that is, how do you make your ad stand out from the 3600 commercial impressions that people are exposed to [each day]...To communicate to a cynical and reluctant audience, you smack them, metaphorically, in the mouth. You make the advertising visceral, something you feel, not something you necessarily think...in this move from the cognitive to the emotional, it's not just pleasant emotions, like sexuality, that will be targeted, any emotion, however unpleasant, that cuts through the clutter will be used. If at one level advertising reflects our dream life, it will also draw upon our nightmares as well."*

**SUT JHALLY** | *Advertising and the End of the World*

1. Discuss, describe, and define what is meant by "clutter and noise." What tactics do you see alcohol ads using in an effort to break through this clutter and noise?

2. Discuss why alcohol ads might play on male anxiety in an effort to sell their products.

# DVD EXTRA: COLLECTED COMMERCIALS

## Commercial 1

*Budweiser Beer: woman wears her ex-boyfriend's big shirt and rejects her current boyfriend's small one.*

- a. What type of male anxiety does this commercial play on?
- b. How is this type of anxiety linked to our cultural definitions of masculinity?
- c. Why would Budweiser play on this type of male anxiety in an effort to sell beer?
- d. Respond to the following: *Lighten up; it's just a joke. This commercial is funny.*
- e. What stereotypes and/or assumptions does this commercial rely on?

## Commercial 2

*Coors Beer: guy makes a fool of himself dancing at a concert.*

- a. What type of male anxiety does this commercial play on?
- b. How is this type of anxiety linked to our cultural definitions of masculinity?
- c. What stories does this commercial tell about men's friendships with other men and male bonding?
- d. Why would Coors play on this type of male anxiety in an effort to sell beer?
- e. Respond to the following: *Lighten up; it's just a joke. This commercial is funny.*
- f. What stereotypes and/or assumptions does this commercial rely on?

## Commercial 3

*Rolling Rock Beer: guy dances with attractive woman; his friends watch him.*

- a. What type of male anxiety does this commercial play on?
- b. How is this type of anxiety linked to our cultural definitions of masculinity?
- c. What stories does this commercial tell about men's friendships with other men and male bonding?
- d. Why would Rolling Rock play on this type of male anxiety in an effort to sell beer?
- e. Respond to the following: *Lighten up; it's just a joke. This commercial is funny.*
- f. What stereotypes and/or assumptions does this commercial rely on?

## A DIFFERENT APPROACH

The following commercials illustrate that it is not necessary to rely on stereotypes to advertise alcohol:

### Commercial 1

*Australian Black Swan Shiraz Wine*

- a. In what ways does this commercial differ from the others you've watched in the *Collected Commercials DVD Extra*?
- b. The product being advertised here is wine, why might it work for wine advertisers to use a "different" approach in their marketing efforts? Who decides when it is, and when it is not, acceptable (*and profitable*) to use a different approach?

### Commercial 2

*Californian Gallo of Sonoma Wine*

## DVD EXTRA: COLLECTED COMMERCIALS

- a. In what ways does this commercial differ from the others you've watched in the *Collected Commercials DVD Extra*?
- b. The product being advertised here is wine, why might it work for wine advertisers to use a "different" approach in their marketing efforts? Who decides when it is, and when it is not, acceptable (*and profitable*) to use a different approach?

### Commercial 3

*Michelob Light Beer: men play soccer to win beer.*

- a. How does male bonding look in this beer commercial? How does it look in the other commercials you've watched in the *Collected Commercials DVD Extra*? Do you notice any differences?
- b. Would a similar commercial work on the air today? Why or why not?
- c. This commercial was made in the early 80s. Why do today's alcohol ads look so different from this one? What has changed?

### Commercial 4

*Natural Light Beer: men in bar have friendly conversation about Natural Light Beer.*

- a. How do men's interactions with other men look in this beer commercial? How does it look in the other commercials you've watched in the *Collected Commercials DVD Extra*? Do you notice any differences?
- b. Would a similar commercial work on the air today? Why or why not?
- c. This commercial was made in the early 80s. Why do today's alcohol ads look so different from this one? What has changed?

# INSTRUCTOR DIRECTED ACTIVITIES

Most of the questions and assignments in this guide address the student. This gives instructors the opportunity to simply photocopy sections of the guide and, without modification, hand them out to students. This section of the guide is slightly different, it addresses instructors directly, and the activities require some guidance on behalf of the instructor.

1. Below are two stories about Chris, followed by questions. The stories are almost identical except in one story Chris is a young man; in the other, Chris is a young woman. The objective of this assignment is to challenge students to think critically about gender and how gender frames the ways we understand and explain sexual assault.

Give half of your class the “Chris as young woman” story; give the other half the “Chris as young man” story. Do not let the class know they have been given different stories. Allow time for students to answer the questions. Divide the class into same-story groups of 3-4. Allow time for the students to discuss their answers. Next ask the groups to report their answers back to the class. Jot their answers down on the board—on one side of the board Chris is a young man; on the other Chris is a young woman. Does Chris’ gender make a difference?

*Note:* some students may suggest that the male Chris would not say “no” to sex; some students may insist that all men want sex, all the time. Discuss this stereotype—what types of pressure does this stereotype place on men? How might this stereotype be conducive to sexual assault—in what ways might it contribute to men excusing their own violent behavior? In what ways might it contribute to women excusing/accepting men’s violent behavior? In what ways might it contribute to the phenomena of victim blaming—others blaming the victim and the victim blaming herself?

# INSTRUCTOR DIRECTED ACTIVITIES

Chris is an attractive young woman. She is at a party and she has been drinking. She cannot remember exactly how much she has had, but she knows it has been quite a bit and is feeling pretty drunk. Chris came to the party with her roommate but she's not sure if her roommate is still here. She knows some of the people at the party, but not all of them. She likes meeting new people, and she's having a great time. Chris is pretty fashion conscious—she likes to look sexy, and she does tonight. She is flirting with lots of different guys. She would like to hook up. Chris gets another drink.

- » List five adjectives other young women at the party might use to describe Chris.
- » List five adjectives young men at the party might use to describe Chris.

Chris hooks-up with a guy at the party, she doesn't know him that well but he's attractive and fun to talk to.

- » What might some of the guys at the party be saying/thinking about Chris?
- » What might some of the other girls at the party be saying/thinking about Chris?

Chris and the guy she hooked up with go somewhere a little more private. They're having a lot of fun. Chris doesn't want to have sex. When she tells the guy this he will probably:

- a. be disappointed/surprised but say "no problem"
- b. try to pressure her to have sex
- c. be angry and do something to hurt Chris  
(*i.e. force himself on Chris, storm away and start spreading rumors about her*)
- d. other:

If the guy she has hooked up with does do something to hurt Chris:

- a. it's her own fault, she was drunk, flirting, and she hardly knew him—what do you expect?
- b. it's not her fault she just wanted to have fun, not get hurt
- c. it's not his fault he was drunk and didn't know what he was doing
- d. other:

Do gender stereotypes and boundaries have any impact on Chris' situation?

# INSTRUCTOR DIRECTED ACTIVITIES

Chris is an attractive young man. He is at a party and he has been drinking. He cannot remember exactly how much he has had, but he knows it has been quite a bit and he is feeling pretty drunk. Chris came to the party with his roommate but he's not sure if his roommate is still here. He knows some of the people at the party, but not all of them. He likes meeting new people and he's having a great time. Chris is pretty fashion conscious—he likes to look sexy and he does tonight. He is flirting with lots of different girls. He would like to hook up. Chris gets another drink.

- » List five adjectives other young men at the party might use to describe Chris.
- » List five adjectives young women at the party might use to describe Chris.

Chris hooks-up with a girl at the party, he doesn't know her that well but she's attractive and fun to talk to.

- » What might some of the other guys at the party be saying/thinking about Chris?
- » What might some of the girls at the party be saying/thinking about Chris?

Chris and the girl he hooked up with go somewhere more private. They're having a lot of fun. Chris doesn't want to have sex. When he tells the girl this she will probably:

- a. be disappointed/surprised but say "no problem"
- b. try to pressure Chris to have sex
- c. be angry and do something to hurt Chris  
(*i.e. force herself on Chris, storm away and start spreading rumors about him*)
- d. other:

If the girl he has hooked up with does do something to hurt Chris:

- a. it's his own fault, he was drunk, flirting, and he hardly knew her—what do you expect?
- b. it's not his fault he just wanted to have fun, not get hurt
- c. it's not her fault she was drunk and didn't know what she was doing
- d. other:

Do gender stereotypes and boundaries have any impact on Chris' situation?

## INSTRUCTOR DIRECTED ACTIVITIES

2. The objective of the following exercise is to address some of the common myths that exist about sexual assault and rape. There is a high probability that some of the students in your class have been victims of sexual assault. Myths surrounding rape blame the victim and excuse the perpetrator. It is essential that these myths be dispelled. Have students answer the survey below anonymously. Collect the survey and compile the results. Report back to the class with the results, i.e. for question 1, 20% of the class answered a. It is very common for students to believe the myths that exist around rape. Use the *Rape Myths Dispelled* page to discuss, challenge, and dispel these myths and misconceptions.

It is important not to blame students for their beliefs; it is very difficult for students to think reflectively and critically about the roots and consequences of their belief systems if they feel that they are coming under attack. It is also important to think about your own belief systems. Rape myths are widely held and deeply rooted. Consider the following: “Don’t leave your drink unattended”; “Don’t go to a party on your own”; “Don’t walk home alone”—all of these directives may sound like good advice and on the surface they are, but they also put the impetus on the victim and infer that if you do leave your drink unattended, go to a party on your own, or walk home alone and you are attacked, then it is your own fault. While delivered with good intent, these safety tips do not get at the root of the problem; they do not challenge the belief systems that support what many feminists call our ‘rape culture’—we need to challenge and change that culture.

For further information, including information on how to address some other commonly held myths and misconceptions about rape and sexual assault see:

Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault, Rape Myths & Facts  
[www.ccasa.org/documents/Rape\\_Myths\\_&\\_Facts.pdf](http://www.ccasa.org/documents/Rape_Myths_&_Facts.pdf)

The Young Women’s Project | [www.web.net/~wavawrcc/mhtysp.htm](http://www.web.net/~wavawrcc/mhtysp.htm)

# INSTRUCTOR DIRECTED ACTIVITES

1. If a woman is wearing sexy clothes and she is sexually assaulted or raped:

- a. it's her fault
- b. she is somewhat to blame
- c. it's not her fault

2. If a woman is drunk and she is sexually assaulted or raped:

- a. it's her fault
- b. she is somewhat to blame
- c. it's not her fault

3. If a man is drunk and he sexually assaults a woman he is:

- a. not responsible for his actions
- b. somewhat responsible for his actions
- c. responsible for his actions

4. Only women can be raped.

T—true                  F—false

5. Men rape women for sex and because they cannot control their desires.

T—true                  F—false

6. If a woman is sexually assaulted or raped and she doesn't fight:

- a. it's her fault
- b. she is somewhat to blame
- c. it's not her fault

7. Most women who report being raped are making false accusations; they've probably just changed their minds or had bad sex.

T—true                  F—false

8. If a woman has had many sexual partners and she is sexually assaulted or raped:

- a. it's her own fault
- b. she is somewhat to blame
- c. it's not her fault

9. If a woman agrees to go up to a man's room and fool around and she's sexually assaulted or raped:

- a. it's her own fault
- b. she is somewhat to blame
- c. it's not her fault

# INSTRUCTOR DIRECTED ACTIVITIES

10. Rape is no big deal; after all, it's just sex

T—true

F—false

# INSTRUCTOR DIRECTED ACTIVITIES

## RAPE MYTHS DISPELLED

1. *If a woman is wearing sexy clothes and she is sexually assaulted or raped:*

**c. It's not her fault.** A woman has a right to choose how she wants to dress; dressing in a sexy way is not an invitation for sexual assault.

2. *If a woman is drunk and she is sexually assaulted or raped:*

**c. It's not her fault.** Legally if a woman is unconscious or her judgment is impaired by alcohol she cannot give consent for sex. No one ever has a right to violate another person's body; sex without consent is a crime.

3. *If a man is drunk and he sexually assaults or rapes a woman he is:*

**c. Responsible for his actions.** Rape and sexual assault are illegal; drunkenness does not excuse an individual's abusive behavior. If a woman does not say "yes" to sex, no sex of any type should happen. No one ever has a right to violate another person's body.

4. *Only women can be raped.*

**b. False.** Anyone, regardless of age, physical appearance, ethnic or socio-economic background can be sexually assaulted or raped. Men can be victims of sexual assault and rape. It is estimated that about 3% of American men have been the victims of an attempted or completed rape ([www.rainn.org/statistics.html](http://www.rainn.org/statistics.html)). Many men do not tell anyone they have been victimized because our cultural definition of masculinity does not acknowledge that men can be vulnerable—men are supposed to be strong and tough, not victims; this makes it very difficult for men to reach out for help. It is important to remember that no matter who you are, being the victim of sexual assault is not your fault! There are many online resources that can help, for more information check out the booklet *For Men Only* available online at [www.utexas.edu/student/cmhc/booklets/maleassault/menassault.html#anchor1010018](http://www.utexas.edu/student/cmhc/booklets/maleassault/menassault.html#anchor1010018) see also the *Resources for Male Survivors* page at [www.mencanstoprape.org](http://www.mencanstoprape.org).

5. *Men rape women for sex and because they cannot control their desires:*

**b. False.** Rape is not about sex; it's about power and control. The perpetrator acts like he has a right to the victim's body and the victim has no rights—her right to decide what happens to her body is taken away. Men can decide not to use sex as a weapon.

6. *If a woman is sexually assaulted or raped and she doesn't put up a fight:*

**c. It's not her fault.** There could be many reasons why a woman does not fight off her attacker. She may be too frightened or too shocked to fight back; many of our cultural messages suggest that men have a right to her body and so she may believe she does not have the right to resist; she may believe that this is normal. No one has the right to another person's body.

7. *Most women who report being raped are making false accusations; they've probably just changed their minds or had bad sex.*

**False.** False accusations do occur but they are rare; most victims of sexual assault are not making false accusations. (For further information see *Successfully Investigating Acquaintance Sexual Assault: A National Training Manual for Law Enforcement* by Dr. Kimberly A. Lonsway, Research Director, National Center for Women

## INSTRUCTOR DIRECTED ACTIVITIES

*& Policing*). It's important to remember that most victims are telling the truth and one of the main reasons why victims do not report sexual assault, and do not seek the medical and emotional support they need, is they are afraid of not being believed. If someone confides in you, offer your support—believe her/him.

8. *If a woman has had many sexual partners and she is sexually assaulted or raped:*

**c. It's not her fault.** A woman's sexual history is not relevant; every person has a right to say "no". If a woman has said "yes" to sex in the past (*even if she has said "yes" to sex with the perpetrator in the past*) she still has the right to say "no" now. "No" means "no"!

9. *If a woman agrees to go up to a man's room and fool around and she's sexually assaulted or raped:*

**c. It's not her fault.** She has not agreed to be sexually assaulted! "No" means "no".

10. *Rape is no big deal, after all, it's just sex.*

**False.** Rape is a big deal and it's not about sex; it's about power, abuse, and violation. It is illegal and it impacts victim's lives in many ways. In addition to the pain and terror of the actual assault, some women may suffer long-term physical trauma, *i.e.* sexually transmitted diseases, and long-term emotional and/or psychological trauma. Many victims suffer from depression, and intense feelings of fear, anger, anxiety, and isolation—this affects their relationships, and their ability to function in daily life. Many survivors of sexual violence do not tell anyone that they have been victimized, as they are afraid they won't be believed and/or blame themselves for what happened; this prevents them from getting the care and support they need. This is why it is important to dispel the myths that surround rape—do not blame the victim! No one ever asks or deserves to be assaulted! No one ever has the right to assault you or blame you for having been assaulted! If you have been sexually assaulted it is important that you talk to someone who is educated about the issues. Visit your campus or community women's or rape crisis center for information and assistance or the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network website [www.raainn.org](http://www.raainn.org) (US), or the Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres website [www.casac.ca](http://www.casac.ca) (CA).

## OTHER RESOURCES

Excerpt from *Big Trouble, Little Pond: Reflections of the Campus Pond Incidents* by **SUT JHALLY** and **JACKSON KATZ** (2001). Entire article is available online at: [www.umass.edu/umassmag/archives/2001/winter2001/athens.html](http://www.umass.edu/umassmag/archives/2001/winter2001/athens.html)

...When discussing the normalization of sexual violence, at least two important aspects of pop cultural representation require attention. The first is the representation of modern western femininity as innately connected with sexuality, but in contradictory and dangerous ways. Feminist scholars have pioneered our understanding of how girls' and women's bodies have become a kind of "war zone" on which are played out all kinds of conflicts of identity. Our culture relentlessly assaults girls and women with the idea that femininity and sexuality are intertwined: that their bodies and sexual behavior are the only things that are valued and desired by heterosexual men. Young girls especially can internalize this story and become obsessed with appearance and (hetero)sexuality. Millions over the past few generations have responded to pressures to become sexual at younger and younger ages; hence the decline in the average age of first intercourse for girls.

Socially validated largely through men's response to their bodies, women may find it only a short – logical leap to linking "feminine" identity with men's use of their bodies. As one young woman writes:

*"I have been raped twice and have had several other sexual assaults. I was not even fully aware that I had been raped either time until much later. It was so ingrained in my mind, personality, behavior or whatever that this was how things are in the world. I believed that men had a right to my body and I was supposed to let them."*

While the forced choice between "virgin" and "whore" has been around for a long time—at least as far back as the Old Testament—in the contemporary period a new twist has been added: Girls now have to be both virgin and whore. Along with the cultural imperative that "sexuality is everything" is the equally powerful message that "good girls don't." In popular culture this contradiction is manifested in the figure of teenage pop star Britney Spears – highly sexualized in everything from appearance to vocals but "saving herself till marriage." While there is no culturally validated figure of "virgin"—virginity being regarded as geeky by large majorities of both girls and boys—there is the powerful negative icon of the "slut" which effectively functions in the same way.

Young women caught in this Catch-22—where social validation comes from sexuality, but the more sexual you act the more you may be despised—are constantly negotiating an impossible balance between virgin and slut, constantly concerned that admiration may change to contempt. If girls are confused about their sexual identities and appropriate ways to behave, it is because the culture itself tells a contradictory story about female identity.

The second part of the pop-cultural storyline that needs attention is the linking of socially dominant notions of masculinity to violence, and to violence against women. The pandemic of rape and abuse in our society is not due simply to millions of individual men acting out violently. Individuals need to be held accountable for their actions, but violent individuals must be understood as products of a much larger cultural system. By offering up a steady stream of images of sexually violent men—and connecting dominant notions of masculinity with the control of women—the mainstream media, especially, play a critical role in constructing violent male sexuality as a cultural norm.

And here's the paradox: This very "normality" makes it harder to see just how pervasive the problem of sexual violence really is. If heterosexual men are routinely turned on by representations of women in which sexiness

## OTHER RESOURCES

is indistinguishable from mistreatment, the equation becomes unremarkable – if not part of sexuality itself. (*Consider the way Marilyn Monroe's vulnerability has been sexualized to this day, four decades after her sad life ended in self-destruction at age 36.*) Sexualizing violence against women has the effect of blinding people to its seriousness. The focus shifts from the pain and trauma of a person to the eroticism of a portrayal.

Over the past several decades, a developing body of research in the social sciences has demonstrated that repeated exposure to depictions of sexualized violence can have the effect of desensitizing viewers—especially males—to the humanity of female victims. This desensitization begins early in life, and today, due to the proliferation of pornographic images on the Internet, cable TV, and increasingly in mainstream film and television, millions of boys and men are exposed to an unprecedented level of sexualized brutality against women.

This proliferation is not only dehumanizing but self-perpetuating. Repeated images and references to women as “bitches” and “ho’s” in rock and rap music and video, or sexually bullied on *The Howard Stern Show* and pro wrestling telecasts, make men’s sexual domination of women seem normal, routine, expected, even humorous. In this light, the public assaults on female joggers in Central Park on Puerto Rican Day in June, 2000, and the rapes that took place at Woodstock ’99, should be seen as part of a normative cultural pattern.

Nor should we underestimate the degree to which homophobia plays itself out on women’s bodies. In male peer culture, homophobic insults (“fag,” “pussy,” “bitch,” etc.) operate as policing mechanisms to bully boys and men into narrow and dangerous conceptions of what it means to be a man. In this context, physically controlling women is one of the major ways in which men can act out dominant heterosexual notions of masculinity. Women’s bodies literally become the stage on which this male performance is enacted, in some cases through public displays of “keeping her in line.”

Sexual violence, in short, is part of a cultural pattern in which maleness comes to be linked with power and control. One of the great insights of the battered-women’s movement is that, contrary to conventional wisdom about batterers having “anger-management” problems, abusers typically use emotional, psychological, and physical intimidation and violence in a conscious attempt to control their partners. This helps explain why the time when a woman is most likely to be murdered by her abusive male partner is after she has attempted to leave the relationship. Where manhood is linked to the ability to intimidate and control, murder becomes a way to reassert control permanently.

Just before the first campus rape was reported a year ago last fall, university employee Jean Hosmer, having just extended a restraining order for her estranged husband, was killed by him in the middle of the day on a Northampton street. By all accounts, he was just a “quiet, average guy.” This is revealing. Men’s violence toward women has become so much a cultural norm that perpetrators are generally indistinguishable from the rest of us. In this regard, it is significant that as the overall crime rate has dropped in the past decade, rates of sexual assault, rape and teenage relationship abuse have not. The cultural environment in which they occur, in fact, has become even more blatantly aggressive and misogynous.

Sexual violence thus needs to be understood in a cultural context. And to the extent that universities do not exist in a vacuum, whatever valuable work that takes place on campuses will have limited impact if it is not accompanied by broader efforts to transform what feminists for decades have described as a “rape culture.” Men have a special responsibility to do this work. Those feminist organizations that actually have some resources to mount challenges to the present situation, such as the Everywoman’s Center on our campus, are

## OTHER RESOURCES

easily dismissed as “angry.” (*As if they shouldn’t be!*) This makes it all the more important that progressive men support these vital efforts.

This work can take place at many levels. Among them is the recognition that even in the midst of a cultural deluge linking maleness with control and intimidation and femininity with submission and acquiescence, real men and women are living very different, interdependent, and egalitarian lives – largely as a result of the social transformations brought about by the modern multicultural women’s movement. One way to reexamine the horrible statistics we’ve cited is to view them from the reverse perspective: the majority of women will not be victims of sexual violence; the majority of men are in fact non-violent.

Indeed, the reaction of hundreds of UMass men to last year’s assaults was to look to try and do something, anything, to make a difference. Yet lacking cultural resources beyond the traditional, chivalrous idea of protecting women, all that seemed to be possible was organizing escort services. What we have to do now is offer more resources to these men—the majority—in order to help them intervene in male culture in a productive fashion.

The silence of non-violent men in the face of other men’s violence is a key factor that allows masculinity to be coded in narrow and destructive ways. We have now to engage in the hard educational work of providing boys and young men with the inspiration and tools to become, in the words of Pearl Jam’s Eddie Vedder, “better men.”

\* \* \* \* \*

*The “Rape” of Mr. Smith*, AUTHOR ANONYMOUS

The law discriminates against rape victims in a manner that would not be tolerated by victims of any other crime. In the following example, a holdup victim is asked questions similar to those usually asked a survivor of rape.

“Mr. Smith, were you held up at gunpoint on the corner of Mayfield and Campus?”

“Yes.”

“Did you struggle with the robber?”

“No.”

“Why not?”

“He was armed.”

“Then you made a conscious decision to comply with his demands rather than to resist?”

“Yes.”

“Did you scream? Cry out?”

“No. I was afraid.”

“I see. Have you ever been held up before?”

“No.”

“Have you ever given money away?”

“Yes, of course...”

“And did you do so willingly?”

## OTHER RESOURCES

"What are you getting at?"

"Well, let's put it like this, Mr. Smith. You've given money away in the past—in fact, you have quite a reputation of philanthropy. How can we be sure that you weren't contriving to have the money taken from you by force?"

"Listen, if I wanted..."

"Never mind. What time did this holdup take place, Mr. Smith?"

"About 11pm."

"You were out on the streets at 11pm? Doing what?"

"Just walking."

"Just walking? You know that it's dangerous being out on the streets that late at night. Weren't you aware that you could have been held up?"

"I hadn't thought about it."

"What were you wearing at the time, Mr. Smith?"

"Let's see. A suit. Yes, a suit."

"An expensive suit?"

"Well, yes."

"In other words, Mr. Smith, you were walking around the streets late at night in a suit that practically advertised the fact that you might be a good target for some easy money, isn't that so? I mean, if we didn't know better, we might think that you were asking for this to happen, mightn't we?"

"Look, can't we talk about the past history of the guy that did this to me?"

"I'm afraid not, Mr. Smith, you wouldn't want to violate his rights, now would you?"

# WEB RESOURCES

Adbusters | [www.adbusters.org](http://www.adbusters.org)

*Counter-culture magazine; includes many examples of alcohol spoof-ads.*

Alcohol Concern | [www.alcoholconcern.org.uk](http://www.alcoholconcern.org.uk)

Alcohol Policy Solutions | [www.alcoholpolicysolutions.net](http://www.alcoholpolicysolutions.net)

Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse | [www.ccsa.ca](http://www.ccsa.ca)

*Information on various substances, including alcohol.*

Center for Disease Control Sexual Violence Web Page | [www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/svoverview.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/svoverview.htm)

Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth | [www.camy.org](http://www.camy.org)

*Includes large alcohol ad database.*

Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention | [www.edc.org/hec](http://www.edc.org/hec)

*Includes information on steps colleges and communities are taking to reduce student problems related to alcohol.*

Jackson Katz's website | [www.jacksonkatz.com](http://www.jacksonkatz.com)

Jean Kilbourne's website | [www.jeankilbourne.com](http://www.jeankilbourne.com)

Media Education Foundation | [www.mediaed.org](http://www.mediaed.org)

NSVRC (National Sexual Violence Resource Center) | [www.nsvrc.org](http://www.nsvrc.org)

Prevention Research Institute | [www.askpri.org](http://www.askpri.org)

RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network) | [www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org)

US Department of Health & Human Services and SAMHSA's National Clearinghouse for Drug & Alcohol Information  
[www.health.org](http://www.health.org)

*Includes resources targeting families, schools, communities, the workplace, and youth.*

StopHazing.org | [www.stophazing.org](http://www.stophazing.org)

The Marin Institute | [www.marininstitute.org](http://www.marininstitute.org)

*Alcohol problem prevention site; includes current campaigns information.*

World Health Organization Sexual Violence Web Page

[www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/violence/interpersonal/ip3/en/](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/interpersonal/ip3/en/)