

Boozed and abused: party rape victims fear parents

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UNDERAGE girls raped at parties in Cairns are reluctant to report the crimes because booze has clouded their memories and they fear backlash from their parents.

Police and the Cairns Sexual Assault Service say there has been a number of reports of girls being sexually assaulted and having trouble remembering what had happened to them because they had been drinking.

Cairns Sexual Assault Service co-ordinator Clare Oppy said rather than blaming underage victims for drinking, people should remember that "no one deserves to be sexually assaulted".

"We see young people who are too scared to tell their parents where they're going or too scared to tell their parents they might be sexually active and too scared to say, 'I was drinking'," Ms Oppy said.

"Then they are too scared to tell if they are sexually assaulted because of fear of the reaction.

"And this fear does nothing but drive young people further away from being connected and safe.

"It's widely known that drinking alcohol affects our capacity to make decisions especially at a time when the brain is still developing. We can be more likely to make decisions that are not typical normal behaviour.

"There is still so much baggage teenagers are carrying and it's not possible to have honest conversations about alcohol and drug use or about sexuality. There are lots of mixed messages out there.

"Like, if girls didn't get drunk, they wouldn't get sexually assaulted or young men with lots of sexual experience are studs and young women with sexual experience are sluts.

"Or the other myth that it's a boy's job to pursue and a girl's job to say no."

Cairns Child Protection and Investigation Unit Det Sen-Sgt Glenn Horan said sexual assault victims needed to report the offence.

"That is regardless of their age or circumstances surrounding the assault as many sexual assaults are not reported," Sen-Sgt Horan said.

"Plan ahead where you are going, who you are going with and how you are getting home."

This month is Sexual Violence Awareness Month. To seek help or advice, call Family Planning Queensland's Cairns Sexual Assault Service on 4031 3590.

To report an offence call [Crime Stoppers](#) on 1800 333 000.

http://www.cairns.com.au/article/2009/10/05/67901_local-news.html