

Alcohol, Drugs, and Crime



Author: Unknown (By: NAADAC)

The use of alcohol and drugs can negatively affect all aspects of a person's life, impact their family, friends and community, and place an enormous burden on American society. One of the most significant areas of risk with the use of alcohol and drugs is the connection between alcohol, drugs and crime.

Alcohol and drugs are implicated in an estimated 80% of offenses leading to incarceration in the United States such as domestic violence, driving while intoxicated, property offenses, drug offenses, and public-order offenses.

Our nation's prison population has exploded beyond capacity and most inmates are in prison, in large part, because of substance abuse:

- 80% of offenders abuse drugs or alcohol.
- Nearly 50% of jail and prison inmates are clinically addicted.
- Approximately 60% of individuals arrested for most types of crimes test positive for illegal drugs at arrest.

The Impact of Alcohol

Because alcohol use is legal and pervasive, it plays a particularly strong role in the relationship to crime and other social problems. Alcohol is a factor in 40% of all violent crimes today, and according to the Department of Justice, 37% of almost 2 million convicted offenders currently in jail, report that they were drinking at the time of their arrest.

Alcohol, more than any illegal drug, was found to be closely associated with violent crimes, including murder, rape, assault, child and spousal abuse. About 3 million violent crimes occur each year in which victims perceive the offender to have been drinking and statistics related to alcohol use by violent offenders generally show that about half of all homicides and assaults are committed when the offender, victim, or both have been drinking. Among violent crimes, with the exception of robberies, the offender is far more likely to have been drinking than under the influence of other drugs.

Alcohol is often a factor in violence where the attacker and the victim know each other. Two-thirds of victims who were attacked by an intimate (including a current or former spouse, boyfriend or girlfriend) reported that alcohol had been involved, and only 31% of victimizations by strangers are alcohol-related. Nearly 500,000 incidents between intimates involve offenders who have been drinking; in addition, 118,000 incidents of family violence (excluding spouses) involve alcohol, as do 744,000 incidents among acquaintances.

Drugs and Crime

The relationship between drugs and crime is complex, and one question is whether drug use leads people into criminal activity or whether those who use drugs are already predisposed to such activity. Many illegal drug users commit no other kinds of crimes, and many persons who commit crimes never use illegal drugs. However, at the most intense levels of drug use, drugs and crime are directly and highly correlated and serious drug use can amplify and perpetuate preexisting criminal activity.

There are essentially three types of crimes related to drugs:

- **Use-Related crime:** These are crimes that result from or involve individuals who ingest drugs, and who commit crimes as a result of the effect the drug has on their thought processes and behavior.
- **Economic-Related crime:** These are crimes where an individual commits a crime in order to fund a drug habit. These include theft and prostitution.
- **System-Related crime:** These are crimes that result from the structure of the drug system. They include production, manufacture, transportation, and sale of drugs, as well as violence related to the production or sale of drugs, such as a turf war.

Those with a drug use dependency are more likely to be arrested for acquisitive crimes such as burglary or shop theft, or for robbery and handling stolen goods — crimes often related to “feeding the habit.” For example, in 2004, 17% of state prisoners and 18% of federal inmates said they committed their current offense to obtain money for drugs. There are also close links between drug use and women, men and children who are involved in, or exploited by, the sex trade, many of whom are caught up in the criminal justice system. However, there is evidence that drug use is both a pre-determining factor in such sexual exploitation and a means of coping with it.

Driving While Intoxicated (DWI)

More than one million people are arrested annually for driving while intoxicated, which is the third most commonly reported crime in the United States. Drinking and drugged driving is the number one cause of death, injury and disability of young people under the age of 21, and nearly 40% of all traffic fatalities are alcohol related. Every day 36 people die and approximately 700 are injured in motor vehicle crashes that involve an alcohol-impaired driver. Drugs other than alcohol (e.g., marijuana and cocaine) are involved in about 18% of motor vehicle driver deaths, often in combination with alcohol.

In 2007, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, approximately one in eight weekend, nighttime drivers tested positive for illicit drugs. Moreover, approximately one in eight high school seniors responding to a 2010 study reported driving after smoking marijuana within two weeks prior to the survey interview.

Many prescription drugs including opioid pain relievers and benzodiazepenes prescribed for anxiety or sleep disorders come with warnings against the operation of machinery — including motor vehicles — for a specified period of time after use. When prescription drugs are abused (taken without medical supervision), impaired driving and other harmful reactions become much more likely.

Juvenile Crime

Four of every five children and teen arrestees in state juvenile justice systems are under the influence of alcohol or drugs while committing their crimes, test positive for drugs, are arrested for committing an alcohol or drug offense, admit having substance abuse and addiction problems, or share some combination of these characteristics.

1.9 million of 2.4 million juvenile arrests had substance abuse and addiction involvement, while only 68,600 juveniles received substance abuse treatment.

Alcohol and Violence in College

- Each year, more than 600,000 students between the ages of 18 and 24 are assaulted by another student who has been drinking.
- 95% of all violent crime on college campuses involves the use of alcohol by the assailant, victim or both.
- 90% of acquaintance rape and sexual assault on college campuses involves the use of alcohol by the assailant, victim or both.

Alcohol, Drugs and Domestic Violence

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, two-thirds of victims suffering violence by a current or former spouse or partner report that the perpetrator had been drinking, compared to less than one-third of stranger victimizations. Among spouse victims, three out of four incidents reportedly involved an offender who had been drinking.

According to a 1999 study, women assaulted by intimate partners during the past 12 months reported significantly higher substance abuse as well as other health-related problems. Of those women experiencing physical violence, 33 percent reported drug and alcohol problems, compared to 16 percent of those who did not experience violence.

Domestic violence also has an effect on other family members. A study in Massachusetts found that children who witnessed abuse of their maternal caregiver were 50 % more likely to abuse drugs and/or alcohol.

Among victims of domestic violence, alcohol played a role in 55% of the cases, while drugs played a role in only 9% of the cases; for spousal violence, alcohol was a factor in 65% of the cases, versus only 5% for drugs.

Alcohol, Drugs and Child Abuse

Though there is no “cause” of abuse and no specific profile of abusers, many factors contribute and make abuse more likely to occur. Pressures on the family, alcohol and drug abuse, and social isolation can all lead to parental stress and increase the chances that a parent will strike out at their child.

- Nearly 4 in 10 child victimizers reported that they had been drinking at the time of the crime. Among drinkers, about half reported that they had been drinking for 6 hours or more preceding the offense.
- A 1999 study by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse found that children of substance-abusing parents were almost three times likelier to be abused and more than four times likelier to be neglected than children of parents who are not substance abusers.

Investing in the Solution – Not the Problem: How Agents with Wyoming Bail Agency Are Combating Addiction

Wyoming Bail Agency has provided a superlative bail bonds surety service in Wyoming since 2015. Within that time they have seen countless instances of addiction related crime, and almost always find that the defendant goes right back to using after their release. Their families have sometimes paid hundreds of dollars to have their son, daughter, niece, nephew or who ever their loved one may be in order for their release and not be incarcerated while they are awaiting trial. It almost appears as a never ending cycle for some.

The question is: What can a bail bonds company do in order to help combat the problem? Bail Bonds companies have the right to revoke the bond. However, that is not always the answer. So, what else can they do?

This year Wyoming Bail Agency has began taking steps in order to divert bond revocation of the defendant in to sponsorship of the defendant. Instead of arresting the defendant and taking them to jail right away they have started offering clear directives for them to complete, if they don't complete those directives, then they offer bond revocation as their only option. Things like attending meetings, counseling, seeking treatment, education, or employment. At that point, if they can not follow these directives, then other options such as bond revocation are sought.

Among other things, Wyoming Bail Agency-Agents are taking certifications in Addiction Intervention, and becoming Certified Addiction Interventionist. "We are educating ourselves to combat the problem, rather than trying to subdue the problem with incarceration". Further, Wyoming Bail Agency has been linking-up with local addiction counselors to facilitate a programs for these individuals.

"We are not here to just bond people out so they can get back on the street and start using again. On the other hand we are not here just to try and revoke somebodys bail bond so that way we have an easy out and don't have to deal with them anymore". Jason Nobles-Chief Underwriting Agent

For more information on Wyoming Bail Agency, and how they may help you or your loved one through the culmination of addiction and incarceration, call to speak to an agent today.

307.216.BAIL(2245)