

Working with bar/club security personnel to prevent underage drinking and alcohol-related violence

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Presenter Disclosures

Gisela A.M. Rots

(1) The following personal financial relationships with commercial interests relevant to this presentation existed during the past 12 months:

No relationships to disclose



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Learning Objectives:

- Explain the role security bar/club personnel perceive in preventing violence and ID-Checking;
- Identify the main barriers security personnel face, which prevent them from interfering in situations that look suspicious;
- Design specific training modules for security personnel in bars and clubs to improve ID-Checking & reduce alcohol-related violence.



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City of Cambridge

- City of over 100,000 year-round residents plus an additional 35,000 college students every year;
- Over 255 alcohol licensees in the City;
- Multiple 'squares' and 'cap' areas, with different norms, attitudes and populations;
- Increased awareness of fake ID-usage and alcohol-related violence in the area.



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Underage Drinking Prevention

- Cambridge Prevention Coalition established in 1989;
- Developed Responsible Beverage Service training (*21 Proof*) based on research and community feedback in 2000;
- Works closely with License Commission and Licensee Advisory Board.



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Violence Prevention

- City of Cambridge was the first to start a DV-Free Zone initiative in 1994;
- Staffed by a Violence Prevention Coordinator in the Cambridge Public Health Department;
- The initiative works closely with businesses to prevent DV among employees and patrons.



Methodology

- Conducted surveys with managers/owners and bar-staff in 2008;
- Recruited 50 licensees (25 participated);
- Conducted three focus groups;
- Conducted two one-on-one interviews with licensees deemed important to the process.



Role in ID-Checking

- Check IDs;
- Follow establishment policies;
- Set the tone;
- Due diligence.



Barriers to ID-Checking

- Quality of fake IDs;
- Being busy;
- Varying business values among establishments;
- Few "Acceptable Forms of ID";
- Patrons are often uninformed about rules and regulations;
- Promoting a responsible drinking message in a mixed-age setting without promoting alcohol consumption.



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Role in Alcohol-Related Violence Prevention

- Observe behavior of patrons, including indicators of being over-served and tendencies towards violence;
- Differentiate between a 'couple' and two strangers when intervening;
- Safety of other patrons;
- Quick intervention when a situation arises.



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Barriers to Preventing Alcohol-Related Violence

- Difficult to watch everyone in the establishment, especially on a crowded dance floor or on a busy night;
- Watching & intervening depending on the relationship between two people;
- Over-serving of alcohol & increased propensity for violence;
- 'Staggered' closing times and violence outside establishments.



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ID-Checking Best Practices

- ID-Checking Fact Sheet, including lists of the most popular out-of-state/international IDs, and what to look for when checking specific IDs;
- Asking friends of a patron with a suspicious ID details about their friend, such as name and where they live;
- How to recognize a person who has been over-served.



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Violence Prevention Best Practices

- Mentoring: linking new security staff with experienced staff (shadowing);
- Building relationships with police;
- Monitoring bathrooms and/or hallways to observe patrons.



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Recommendations: Community-Level

- Connect licensees with violent or underage drinking incidents with establishments with a good record (mentoring/round-tables);
- Connect trainers with current bar/security staff to review real-time trends, integrating suggestions into trainings in an on-going manner;
- Provide easy access to laws & current issues;
- Encourage good working relationships among neighboring establishments.



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Recommendations: Establishment Policies

- Honesty;
- Enforce all rules strictly at the beginning of a 'busy' season (this will set a positive tone for the establishment);
- Promote creative ways to reduce over-serving;
- Keep management informed of all incidents;
- Set the tone by setting policies and putting them in writing.



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Recommendations: Staffing

- Hire security staff who are personable and have good communication skills;
- Understand gender differences in responding to and preventing violence;
- Staff should mirror age and gender of patrons.



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Conclusion

To improve ID-checking and reduce violence:

- Increase communication between sectors;
- Train establishment staff in violence and ID-checking;
- Update trainings regularly;
- Provide a forum for managers and owners to share best practices.



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