

# Safety

## Ensuring women's safety in consumer contexts is a collective responsibility.

- Alcohol consumption among women increases the risk of **experiencing or perpetrating violence**.
- About 8 out of 10 women say **they feel unsafe in bars in Quebec**.
- More than a third of young women say **they drink more quickly** in a public place because they are afraid someone will slip a drug into their drink.

Alcohol consumption has many social impacts, including the emergence of violent behaviour.<sup>1</sup> Thus, women's safety can be compromised when they are in consumer contexts. Such situations can lead to stress and worry in part because of gender-based expectations.<sup>2</sup> As a result, eight out of ten women say they do not feel safe in bars in Quebec.<sup>3</sup>

Women use a variety of strategies to ensure their safety in settings where alcohol consumption is common. One frequently used approach is to travel in groups and stay constantly in touch with each other, thereby strengthening mutual protection among friends.<sup>4</sup> More than a third of women surveyed in 2023 by Léger for the ASPQ (Quebec Public Health Association) say they drink more quickly in a public place for fear that someone will slip a drug into their drink.<sup>5</sup> Despite this, more than one in ten women aged 18 to 54 report that a drug has been slipped into their drink without their knowledge.<sup>5</sup>

Citizens consulted as part of the Women and Alcohol project stress the importance of using a collective approach to alleviate the burden that women carry to ensure their own safety. They insist that all individuals, event organizers and authorities must be involved in ensuring a climate of safety in spaces where consumption is present. However, they also demonstrate that personal protection strategies remain necessary to reduce the real risks to safety and integrity.



- 1 CCDUS Analyse des revues sur le lien entre la consommation d'alcool et les actes d'agression et de violence.
- 2 Attention in the Night-Time Economy: Behaviors, Safety Strategies, and Conceptualizing "Feisty Femininity". *Fem Criminol* 15: 24–46.
- 3 ASPQ-Léger (2023) Perception sur la consommation d'alcool.
- 4 Graham K, Bernards S, Abbey A, et al. (2017) When Women Do Not Want It: Young Female Bargoers' Experiences With and Responses to Sexual Harassment in Social Drinking Contexts. *Violence Women* 23: 1419–1441.
- 5 ASPQ-Léger (2023) L'alcool au féminin : sondage auprès des Québécoises.