

STAYING SAFE



Serving the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender,
Queer and HIV-affected Communities

August 21, 2012

AVP encourages our community members to stay safe! Nightlife Safety Tips

AVP has recently heard of concerns about lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) community members being robbed or assaulted in connection with drug related sales. This violence can occur in both public and private spaces, such as bars, bathrooms, private homes or the street. People are often reluctant to report these violent incidents to the police due to stigma and fear of arrest around recreational drug use, and/or previous experience of bias, discrimination or violence from the police. Often people go without the support they need because they don't know where to turn for help.

Violence can have both physical and emotional impacts, and AVP encourages our community members to get support and stay safe. AVP can help even if the incident isn't reported to the police and we keep all information confidential. If you witnessed or experienced violence, you can call AVP's 24-hour bilingual (English/Spanish) hotline at 212-714-1141 at any time and speak to a counselor to get support. You can also [report online](http://reportonline.avp.org) at avp.org.

Below are our tips for our communities about staying safe.

If you or your friends are engaged in drug-related activity, be aware of these incidents of violence and use these tips below:

Staying Safe

- **Have a safety plan:** Let someone know your plans, such as who you'll be with, the location of your meeting place, the phone number of the person you are meeting, and your plans for the evening. Give this information to people you are comfortable sharing with before you go out. Also talk with your friends about ways that you can support each other. Plan in advance what will happen if you feel unsafe and need to contact them – will they come to you? Call the police? Meet you somewhere? Agree on your plan before you go out.
- **Leave a trail and use your tech:** Text yourself or friends about where you'll be or where you are throughout the night; save messages on Facebook, MySpace, OKCupid, Grindr, etc.
- **On bathrooms and other public spaces:** Be aware that incidents can occur in these locations. Be aware of others in the restroom, stay near the exit if possible, use single stall restrooms where available, and if you feel uncomfortable find a different restroom to use.
- **Be aware of your surroundings:** Let friends, other patrons or bar/nightclub staff know if you leave temporarily and when you intend to return. When you are outside, scan the street for establishments (such as a bodega or car service) where you can go to seek help if you feel unsafe.
- **Trust your instincts:** If you feel threatened or unsafe at any point, if at all possible leave the area as quickly as possible.
- **You can say no:** No matter who initiates or how far you've gone, you can stop at any time for any reason.

- **Get involved!** To help keep our communities safe, get involved with AVP's community organizing work. Help develop our programs and projects to bring safety for all communities.

Getting Support

- **If possible, consider medical attention or getting counseling after any incident:** Violence can create many physical and emotional issues.
- **Document the incident:** Take photos of any injuries; keep records of emails, texts, calls.
- **Take care of yourself by utilizing supportive friends, partners and family.**
- **Call AVP!** AVP is here to support survivors of all forms of violence, including pick up, dating, sexual, intimate partner, hate, and police violence. If you have witnessed or experience violence, we encourage you to call our 24-hour bilingual (English/Spanish) hotline at 212-714-1141 where you can speak with a trained counselor or to use our secure online reporting form at www.avp.org.
- **Find out more** about the New York City Anti-Violence Project at our [website](http://www.avp.org) (avp.org) and [Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/antiviolence) (Facebook/antiviolence).