

Table 12.1 Summary of sociological perspectives: Alcohol and drug abuse

| | Functional | Conflict/Feminist | Interactionist |
|---|---|--|--|
| Explanation of drug abuse | Drug abuse is likely to occur when society is unable to control or regulate our behavior. | Powerful groups decide which drugs are illegal. Certain social groups are singled out for their drug abuse. There has been a lack of sensitivity to the range of drug abuse experiences. | Drug abuse is learned through interaction with others. The perspective also focuses on society's reaction to drug abuse, noting that certain individuals are more likely to be labeled as drug users than others. |
| Questions asked about drug abuse | What rules exist to control or encourage drug abuse? Are some groups or individuals more vulnerable to drug abuse than others? | What groups are able to enforce their definitions of the legality or illegality of drug use? How are they able to enforce their definitions? How are the experiences of women and minority drug users different from those of White males? | How is drug abuse learned through interaction? How are drug users labeled by society? Why are specific groups targeted? |