

- 1 WHAT IS A DRUG?
- 2 PRESCRIPTION DRUGS
- 3 MISUSE OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS
- 4 SOCIAL DRUGS
- 5 ALCOHOL 1
- 6 ALCOHOL 2
- 7 THE EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL
- 8 TOBACCO
- 9 SMOKING
- 10 PRESSURES
- 11 WHAT IS ADDICTION
- 12 ILLEGAL DRUGS
- 13 WHY DO PEOPLE TAKE DRUGS?
- 14 PAYING FOR DRUGS
- 15 THE EFFECTS OF DRUGS
- 16 DRUGS DESCRIBED 1
- 17 DRUGS DESCRIBED 2
- 18 WHO WINS WITH DRUGS?
- 19 ANXIETY AND STRESS
- 20 PHYSICAL EFFECTS OF ANXIETY

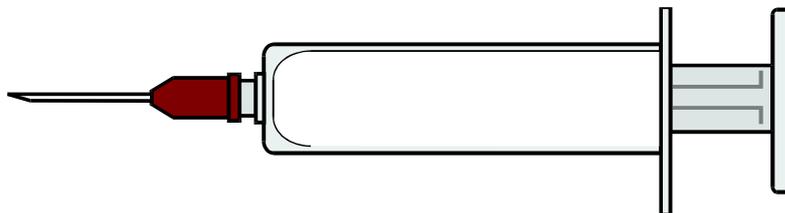
---

---

# DRUGS - THE FACTS

---

---



By Harry Jivenmukta

# WHAT IS A DRUG?

---

A DRUG IS A SUBSTANCE WHICH WHEN USED WILL ALTER THE WAY THE BODY WORKS. Drugs can have physical effects (by influencing the body), or mental and psychological effects (by influencing the brain).



## PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

When we think of drugs misuse we may have a stereotyped image of a down and out person sitting in a dimly lit alleyway injecting a needleful of something very sinister. One of the main difficulties with coming to terms with drugs and drug use is the stigma which is attached to it.

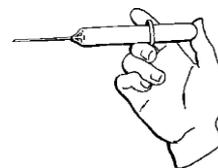


## SOCIAL DRUGS

The drug categories considered in this pack are:

- z PRESCRIPTION DRUGS
- z SOCIAL DRUGS
- z ILLEGAL DRUGS

It is important to look at drugs issues from a calm, non-judgemental standpoint in order that we can assess the facts about drugs and then form a positive attitude and an action plan on how to deal with drugs misuse and the care and re-habilitation of users.



One area of drugs use which we often neglect to consider is prescription drugs. All drugs are designed to influence the body or mind and as such drugs which we get from our doctor are potentially both beneficial and damaging. We have a child like trust in our doctors and very rarely ask what is in the prescription we are given or what the effects or side effects of the drug is likely to be.

## DEFINITIONS

### **EFFECT**

In this case relates to the main influence of the drug on our body.

### **SIDE EFFECT**

The drug we are given may have something in it which helps the problem which we have but might also do other things to the body, (e.g. some drugs have side effects which may make you put on weight.)

Prescription drugs usually have a time limited use. If you need antibiotics (to fight bacterial or viral infection), for instance, your doctor will give you enough medicine to last for a period of one week or two weeks. After that time the drug will have had it's effect and may continue to protect you for a long time to come.

Other time limited drugs help people to cope with very stressful situations. Tranquillisers may be given to help people to cope with a death in the family, or with stress at home or at work. These types of drugs usually are given to the patient for a short time just to help immediately at the time of crisis. Some prescription drugs are for long term use. Some people have illnesses which require regular medication if they are to lead a normal life. People with epilepsy, for instance, or diabetes must take medication on a regular basis. Prescription drugs are changing all the time. The large drug companies are continually designing better and more various drugs to deal with both old and newer illnesses. They usually get it right but for some people lives have been damaged by the use of an inappropriate drug, or incorrect use of a drug.

## CASE STUDY

It is a fact that doctors make mistakes.

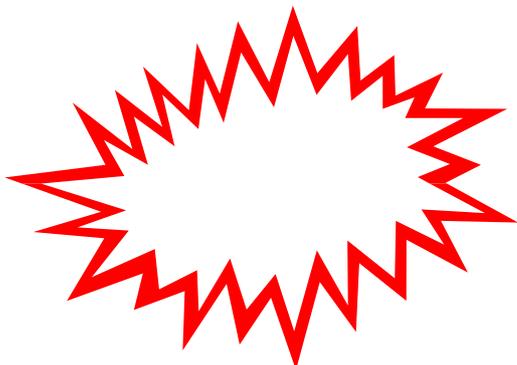
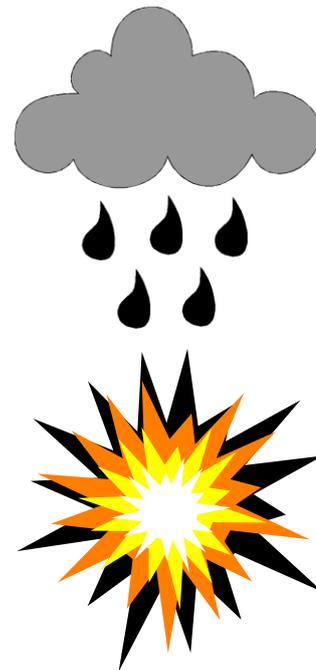
TRANQUILLISERS are used to help people who may be depressed or are suffering from stress or 'nerves'. They are a short term treatment designed to take the symptoms away and give the patients some respite and allow them to build up their energy to tackle the problems in their lives.

In the 1960s when a new generation of tranquillisers were introduced in the UK, doctors prescribed them like 'Sweets' to many people. There were very few checks and repeat prescriptions were given out for years to come without the doctor bothering to check his or her patients to see what effect the drugs were having on the patient.

Originally designed to be a short term cure for people with stress or anxiety problems, the long term use of these drugs caused addiction.

People couldn't bring themselves to step outside their homes without first taking a pill. For some people normal life was wrecked because without their medication they were just nervous, anxious, and unable to 'face the world'.

Tranquillisers are designed to suppress a person's feelings but for many people they create a sense of numbness and unreality. Doctors eventually realised that by giving tranquillisers to their patients they were not helping them to solve their problems but only to delay the process of facing up to problems and causing harmful side effects into the bargain.



Today there are a whole new generation of tranquilliser which have very few or no side effects and are not addictive. Even so their use is usually limited. Long term solutions to stress and depression are now sought in therapy sessions.

# SOCIAL DRUGS

Social drugs are drugs which are not illegal and which most of us take on a regular basis daily. They are drugs because they have an effect on our bodies and/or minds. A list of some of the products we use would include;



- COFFEE TEA
- CHOCOLATE
- WINE
- BEER
- CIGARETTES



Some of these products are not really harmful. Coffee, tea, and chocolate contain caffeine which is a drug that stimulates the body. Do you know someone who regularly drinks two or three cups of coffee or tea in the morning? They need the caffeine in their body which has reduced during the night. This is an addiction. The body of that person is craving a ‘hit’ of caffeine. We tend to accept caffeine addiction because it doesn’t have any painful effects or side effects, is cheap to buy, and it’s products are used by most people.

### EXERCISE.

Make a chart of your caffeine addiction.

CAFFEINE INTAKE EACH DAY	AM	PM	EVENING
CUPS OF TEA CUPS			
OF COFFEE			
CHOCOLATE BARS			

# ALCOHOL 1

“One of the most damaging yet socially acceptable drugs of our time...”

On evening television use of alcohol is shown on many programmes and is seen to be socially acceptable and almost compulsory if a good time is to be had. Many sports sponsorships are by alcohol companies linking alcohol to fitness. 96% of people do use alcohol sensibly, but there is evidence that the abuse of alcohol is growing especially amongst younger people.

### EXERCISE

Each person should select a day of the week. Select a television channel. E.G. I select Wednesday and BBC 1. Watch television from 7.00pm to 9.00pm and note down how many times and in which circumstances alcohol is portrayed, (E.G. drowning sadness, celebrating, etc.)

NAME.....

DAY.....

CHANNEL.....



TIME	THE WAY IN WHICH ALCOHOL IS PORTRAYED	APPROXIMATELY HOW MUCH ALCOHOL CONSUMED

# ALCOHOL 2

In measuring alcohol, there is a standard accepted way which is used by doctors and alcohol experts. The measure is called a unit. A unit of alcohol is:



half a pint of ordinary beer or lager  
 a single measure of spirits (gin, vodka, whisky, etc.)  
 a small glass of wine  
 a small glass of sherry



one quarter of a pint of strong lager, beer, cider.

All of the units listed above are equivalent to the measures you would get in a pub. The home measure of a 'small measure of spirits' is likely on average to be two or three times the pub measure. The problem with a 'small measure' is that small to one person may be a big measure to someone else. The recommended maximum unit intake of alcohol per week is as follows:

	0	5	10	15	20	25	30	35
<b>MEN</b>					21 UNITS MAX			HARMFUL>>>
<b>WOMEN</b>					14 UNITS MAX			HARMFUL>>>

If men regularly drink more than 50 units a week and women more than 35 units they are seriously impairing their health and damaging their body organs. Women are allocated a lower limit because their body weight is made up of 45-55% water, and men have 55-65% water. Alcohol can dilute in a man's body more effectively than in a woman's body. Also the relative average body size of men is greater than women. For someone who is not used to drinking even these limits of 21 units for men and 14 for women are too high. One big drinking session can potentially kill a person who is not used to drinking.

Alcohol consumption on a daily basis is also potentially damaging. Your liver works like a one gear machine. It can only process alcohol at a certain speed. It needs to process other foods and liquids in your body as well and it is a good idea to have at least two days a week when no alcohol is consumed at all.

# THE EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL

---

---

7

When you drink alcohol, the effects it will have on you depends on a number of factors:

- z HOW MUCH YOU DRINK
- z WHETHER YOU HAVE EATEN OR NOT
- z YOUR HEIGHT
- z YOUR WEIGHT
- z YOUR SEX
- z WHETHER YOU ARE USED TO DRINKING OR NOT

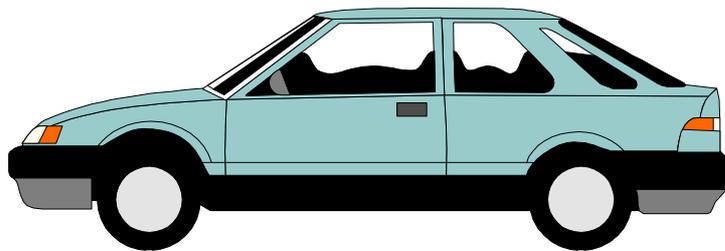
The alcohol you drink will mostly enter your bloodstream. It will be dealt with by your liver which will have to work longer the more you drink. Your liver will dispose of about one unit of alcohol each hour.

Alcohol makes some people happy, some sad. For some people it relaxes them and allows otherwise shy people to be outgoing and forward. Some people become violent. Many people incorrectly believe that alcohol is a stimulant. In fact alcohol is a depressant. It depresses some brain functions and therefore affects your judgement, self-control and co-ordination.

The depressant aspect of alcohol explains why people under the influence of alcohol do unusual things. Sometimes the activity may be high risk and have implications long after the effects of the alcohol has worn off. One third of people killed in car accidents involve drivers who are over the limit.

## THE LIMIT FOR DRIVING

The legal limit of alcohol to drive a car is 80 milligrams of alcohol in 100 millilitres of blood or 35 micrograms of alcohol in 100 millilitres of breath. You cannot estimate an amount of alcohol which you could drink and still be under the limit to drive. The traditionally accepted 'two pints is OK' does not apply. It all depends on the factors listed at the top of the page.

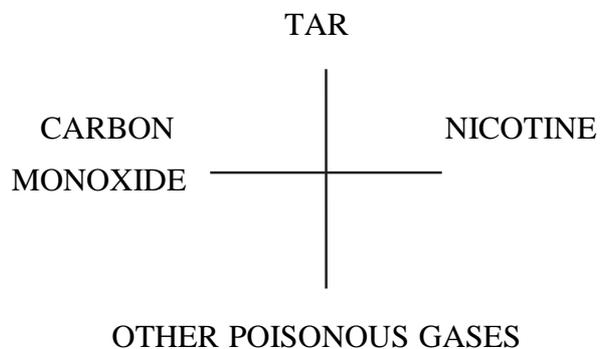


# TOBACCO

---

---

When you smoke you inhale:



If you smoke for a long time you will be more likely to suffer from:

- z HEART DISEASE
- z STROKES
- z BRONCHITIS
- z BLOOD CLOTS
- z CANCER
- z BAD CIRCULATION
- z ULCERS



# TOBACCO

---

---

It is a fact that people who are addicted to tobacco learn early. If you are not a smoker by the age of 18 you probably will not start smoking at all. The most popular age for learning to smoke is between 13 and 18. It is also true that whilst the number of smokers in the UK is reducing, the number of young people smoking is reducing least. Girls are actually smoking more now than in the past. As with other drugs the fact that people who smoke have a greater chance of dying from a variety of illnesses early does not make people stop smoking. An addict can think of many reasons and excuses for continuing to smoke.

## EXERCISE

Conduct a survey of your group. Find out how many people smoke regularly, how many have tried a cigarette or other tobacco product. Of the people who do smoke find out why they do and why they like it. How many of the smokers are female and how many male?

NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN

NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO SMOKE REGULARLY.....

NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE TRIED SMOKING.....

NUMBER OF FEMALES WHO SMOKE REGULARLY.....

NUMBER OF MALES WHO SMOKE REGULARLY.....

TOP FIVE REASONS FOR SMOKING

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

CAN YOU THINK OF ARGUMENTS TO DEFEAT THESE REASONS?

## PRESSURES TO SMOKE, DRINK, OR TAKE DRUGS

### EXERCISE

Can you think of different ways in which you are influenced to smoke, drink, or take drugs?

Three ways you are influenced by television

- 1
- 2
- 3

Three ways you are influenced by magazines or newspapers

- 1
- 2
- 3

Are you influenced either to smoke and drink or not to by your family and friends? How?

- 1
- 2
- 3

Who else influences you to smoke or drink?

- 1
- 2
- 3

Who influences you to take drugs?

- 1
- 2
- 3

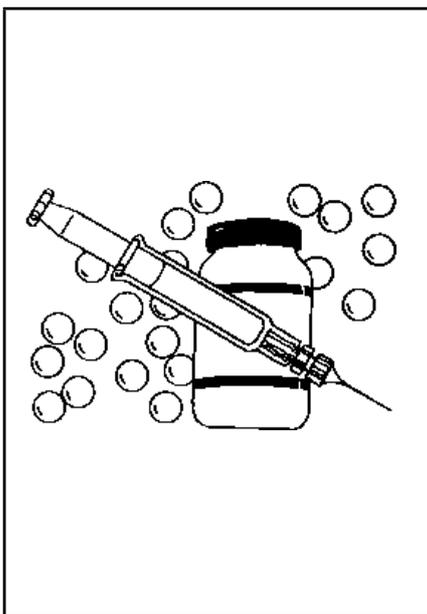
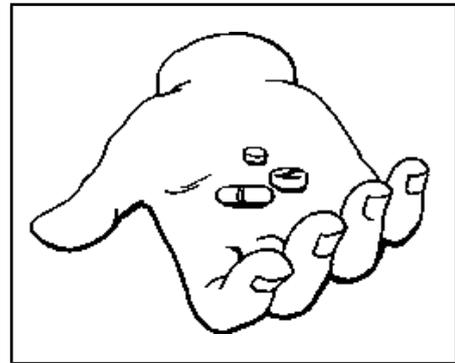
Discuss your answers in a group. How many of your answers are similar? Which influences are most important to you?

# WHAT IS ADDICTION?

---

An addict is someone who relies on a particular substance in order to function normally (normal in this case relates to that which the addict considers normal). The person feels that he or she cannot live a worthwhile life without the substance which they need. Everything in their mind and in their day to day existence revolves around getting more of the substance in question, and having acquired the substance the rest of their life revolves around consuming it. Even if the person has a job or other commitments and does them well, he or she will always have the thought of the drug foremost in their mind.

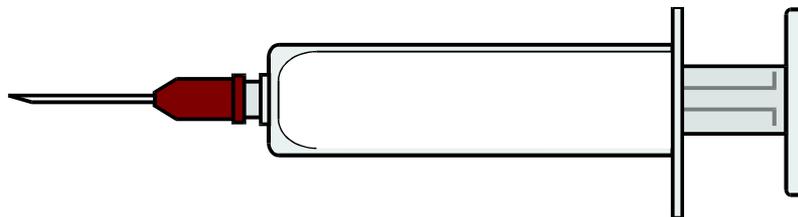
It is incredible the lengths that an addict will go to in order to acquire the drug required. In most cases the drug is available and the addict knows where to go to get it. The difficulty that the addict usually has is affording the habit. A drug habit can cost anything between £10 and £100 per day. Most of the addict's time is spent working out ways to pay for the habit. It is not unusual for the addict to turn to criminal activity (more than 50% of people in prison at any one time were under the influence of some form of drug when arrested), or sell everything that he or she owns, and eventually even turn to prostitution to pay for the drug.



## ADDICTION AND OBSESSION

We must distinguish between addiction and obsession. Some people are obsessed with a particular idea or situation. Someone who buys all the records of a particular pop group, goes to all their gigs, plasters their wall with their pictures and posters and dreams every night about their heroes is not an addict. That person may be in need of some help or not as the case may be, but that person is clearly obsessed with the pop group. An addict behaves in a similar way to the obsessional person but what distinguishes the addict from the obsessional is that the addict relies on a SUBSTANCE not on an idea.

Most people who try illegal drugs do so only once or twice. They usually try 'soft drugs' like marijuana. Often the reason for trying these drugs is partly to do with the excitement of doing something illegal and partly to see what all the fuss is about. A few of these people will like the drug to the point where they will become addicted.



Many addicts become so for the same reasons as why alcoholics or smokers become addicts

- z FRIENDS DO IT
- z IT'S COOL
- z I CAN FORGET ALL MY PROBLEMS
- z IT'S GROWN UP

There are also other reasons why people become addicted to illegal drugs:

- z IT'S COOLER THAN ALCOHOL OR TOBACCO
- z IT'S ILLEGAL
- z IT GIVES ME MORE OF A HIGH
- z MAKES ME FEEL BIG

These reasons are all ill founded. There is nothing cool about taking drugs. The fact that they are illegal means that sooner or later the person taking them will be caught out. The drugs might give more of a high, but ultimately they also give more of a low feeling afterwards. If drugs make you feel big then you've got a confidence problem!

Illegal drugs tend to be seen as being more fashionable than legal drugs. Rave parties attract designer drugs. Designer drugs tend to be ones which give you a big hit for a very short time and at about £20-£30 a time are very expensive.

Illegal drugs are now so widely used that it is now much easier to get hold of them. Awareness about the effects of drugs is therefore even more important.

The question could quite easily be WHY DO YOU DO THE THINGS YOU DO? The same pressures that encourage you to support a particular football team, or a pop group, also encourage you to take drugs. The following are some of the pressures which encourage people to try drugs.

- z FRIENDS DO IT (You don't want to be left out)
- z IT'S COOL
- z IT'S RELAXING (you can escape the real world for a while)
- z I CAN FORGET ALL MY PROBLEMS
- z IT'S GROWN UP
- z PARENTS HATE IT

We could go on with this list forever. The main point is that the reasons why people start are not all that dramatic. People are not kidnapped and forced into it. Most people just have a go and some people like it. Ask any alcoholic why they drink. Even if it makes them ill they will still say they do it because they like it. Some people are forced to try drugs because of the relentless pressure from their 'friends'. Once the person who is trying it likes the sensation there is a very strong desire to try it again. The big difference between drugs used in the past and the ones used now is that they are now very addictive and even two or three 'experiments' with the drug can make you an addict.

## EXERCISE

Taking the list at the top of the page, can you think of arguments of how you could get out of trying drugs.

E.G. friends do it.

If they are into drugs are they the sort of people you want to be with? Can you still be friends with them but not participate in the drugs part? Are they right to try to involve you? Should you take them if they are only soft drugs? Can you tell if their health is suffering? If it's not is that a good sign? Are drugs really dangerous? Are you strong enough to say no?

# PAYING FOR DRUGS

---

---

## EXERCISE

In the exercise below fill in the average earnings you think that the people earn each week.

OCCUPATION	MONEY EACH WEEK
BANK CLERK	
SOLICITOR	
TEACHER	
ROADSWEEPER	
BUS DRIVER	
UNEMPLOYED	
HOUSEWIFE	

Now work out how much it costs to pay the bills and maintain each household each week.

COST	TOTAL IN £s
GAS 5% ELECTRICITY	
5% RENT/MORTGAGE	
25% CLOTHES 10%	
FOOD 30%	
OTHER HOUSING 10%	
LEFT OVER 15%	

Each of the above people are drug users. You are budgeting for them. The alcoholic needs £70 each week at least, the soft drug user needs £60 each week, the hard drug user needs £150 each week, (these are averages, some people need much more. Some drug users would spend more than £100 each day!).

List on a piece of paper where you would make the savings out of the weekly budget to pay for the habit. Where else could you get the money?

The after effects of drinking a lot of alcohol is a HANGOVER. A hangover is caused by several factors. One factor is dehydration. When you drink alcohol the water in your body cells move out of them and some of this water is expelled from the body. That is the reason why people drinking alcohol go to the toilet so often. One way to get over a hangover is to drink lots of non-alcoholic liquids. The other main reason for a hangover is that sometimes the ingredients used to make alcohol affect your body. Essentially drinking alcohol is a form of poisoning your body. Some people become addicted to drugs. SEE THE PAGE CALLED WHAT IS ADDICTION?. The effects of addiction to drugs can be devastating. Excessive drugs taking in someone who is not used to it will cause poisoning which may require hospitalisation. For people who drink regularly or take certain drugs the effects can be:

- z STOMACH DISORDERS (ulcers, bleeding, etc.)
- z DEPRESSION AND PSYCHIATRIC DISORDERS
- z HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE
- z SEXUAL IMPOTENCE OR DIFFICULTIES
- z CANCER OF THE MOUTH, THROAT OR GULLET
- z CIRRHOSIS OF THE LIVER (permanent scarring)
- z MALNUTRITION Drug addicts also often neglect food and are sometimes very under nourished.

There are other implications of drugs. One of the most damaging factors is the cost. Many addicts eventually lose their jobs because they cannot function properly at work, (although these people do sometimes keep working for years without letting anyone know that they are ill). Drug users can spend between £10 and £100 each day depending on which drugs they use In serious cases it is common for people to have blackouts, convulsions and loss of memory.

## **HEROIN**

Heroin is made from the opium poppy. It can be sniffed, smoked or injected. Heroin creates a feeling of total relaxation by depressing brain activity and widening blood vessels. It relieves stress and anxiety. After some use, however, the feelings of relaxation reduce and the user has to inject more and more to get the same effect. At some point the user will overdose resulting in coma or death. Mixing with alcohol or other drugs will increase the chances of fatality considerably.

## **BARBITURATES**

These are downers which are used to calm people down. They are usually prescribed by doctors and come in a capsule form. Drug users open the capsule and swallow the contents. Side effects include irritability, sleeplessness, and convulsions. Sudden withdrawal from them can cause death.

## **TRANQUILLISERS**

These are commonly prescribed by doctors to help people who are anxious or have problems sleeping. Drug users sometimes inject them to feel calm, and this also causes reduced alertness. They are dangerous especially if mixed with alcohol.

## **SOLVENTS**

Solvents are found in products like aerosols, glue, lighter fuel, and paints. Users inhale the vapours. This makes them feel drunk as with alcohol. Too much sniffing leads to unconsciousness and sometimes death.

## **COCAINE**

'Coke' used to be very expensive and was made famous by the rich. Now it is cheaper to buy. It makes users feel exhilarated and full of physical and mental strength. Sometimes these feelings lead on to anxiety and panic. More and more has to be taken to get the desired effect. In the end it causes sleeplessness and illness.

## **CRACK**

This is cocaine which is mixed with other chemicals so that it can be smoked. It has a very initial high followed by withdrawal after effects that make it highly addictive. It is more dangerous than cocaine.

## **LSD**

Also known as acid, this is a substance which is man made. A quantity is impregnated onto blotting paper and then dissolved on the tongue. It's effect comes after about an hour and can last for several hours. Feelings of being out of the body, or sight and hearing distortions are common. In strange or uncommon surroundings it can cause panic.

## **ECSTACY**

Known as 'E' it usually comes in tablets or capsule form. Ecstasy gives the user a feeling of extra energy and friendliness but makes them feel miserable and depressed afterwards. It has been known to cause heatstroke because it is used in hot places like rave discos. Very dangerous for people who are epileptic or who have heart problems.

## **AMPHETAMINES**

Originally these were prescribed for depression and as appetite suppressants. They can be taken as pills, sniffed as powder or injected. Their effect is to give the body a sense of energy and confidence. High doses cause panic attacks, anxiety and irritability. Users have to keep increasing doses to get the same effect.

## **CANNABIS**

This has traditionally been the most used illegal drug in the UK. It makes people feel more relaxed. It also slows reaction time.

## **MAGIC MUSHROOMS**

The effect is like LSD but is immediate and lasts for a shorter time. It is not illegal to pick them, but is illegal to prepare them for use.

# WHO WINS WITH DRUGS?

---

Someone must win with illegal drugs. Someone always wins. The most visible winner is the dealer. The dealer is the person who buys the drugs from the producer and refiners. Once the drugs are refined they are bought in bulk by the dealer who then spends time reducing the bulk into small packets. The dealer has many suppliers who then distribute the drug amongst the addicts at prices which are usually out of reach of ordinary people. There is a clear link between the increase in illegal drug use and crime.

THE GROWER



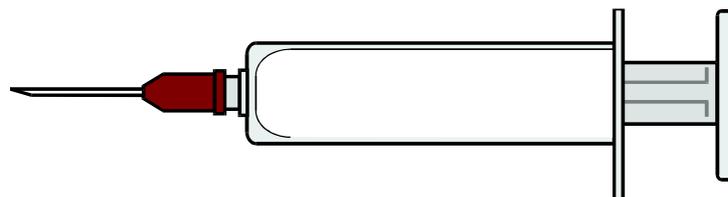
THE REFINER

THE DEALER



THE PUSHER

THE ADDICT



Anxiety is common amongst drug users. The anxiety is usually triggered because the person is always under pressures. These pressures can be from family and friends to stop the drug activity which then sometimes leads to secretive use. This adds a sense of danger, but also stress relating to the danger. There is always the anxiety relating to any illegal activity going on to fund the drug use, (more than 50% of people sent to prison are using some form of drugs). There is a feeling of shame in case anyone finds out, and in some cases a feeling of worthlessness and a lack of confidence. Extensive drug use also causes psychological and mental problems which may require medical treatment.

Anxiety often accompanies withdrawal from drugs, so that when the high from the drug wears off the user becomes very anxious and sometimes may even suffer panic attacks. This in turn heightens the need to acquire more drugs to offset the withdrawal.

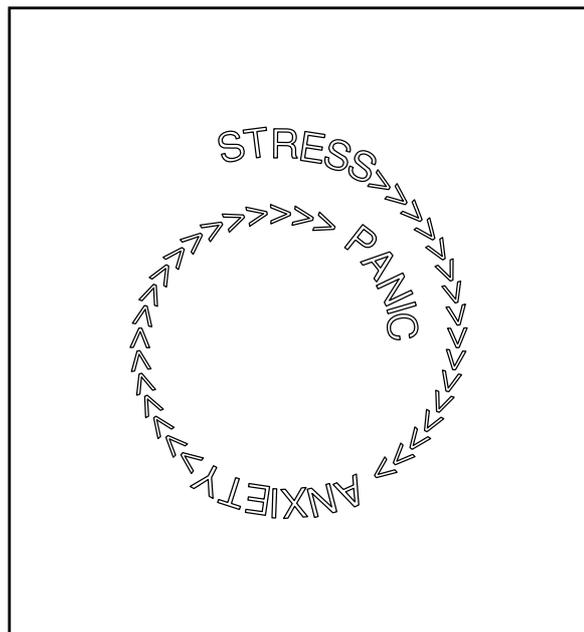
In serious cases anxiety and panic attacks can lead the person to feel that he or she are going to die. This panic in turn creates more panic.

All health authorities have therapists or staff who can help individuals to cope with these types of anxiety and stress, (which are usually not mental illnesses but psychological), but the prerequisite for treatment usually requires the drug user to reduce or stop using drugs. Sometimes the treatment can be run parallel to a programme with drugs counsellors.

As with alcohol abuse, the reformed drug addict will almost always return to excessive drugs use if he or she tries to take drugs again. The addict always feels that once the psychological and physical scars have been cured he or she can return to drugs just to take occasionally. This is almost impossible.

Within days the user can be hooked again, and will probably suffer the re-surfacing of the anxiety problems. (some research in the USA suggests that negotiated use works. This operates in a way where the user contracts to use only a certain amount of the drug and is helped by public services to keep to the contract. In the UK very few facilities are available for this sort of negotiated reduction in drugs use. Only total abstinence is recommended by most health bodies here).

In many cases where anxiety is recognised and treatment sought, the individual concerned is using some type of drug, and the drug itself is at least partly to blame for the anxiety and stress. It is clear that psychological and sometimes mental problems go hand in hand with long term drugs misuse.



- z SENSES SHARPEN SOMETIMES ASSOCIATED AS VISUAL/AUDITORY DISTURBANCE
- z DRY MOUTH
- z BREATHING BECOMES FAST AND SHALLOW
- z HEART RATE SPEEDS UP
- z BUTTERFLIES AND NAUSEA
- z STOMACH CHURNS
- z BLOOD CIRCULATION TO MUSCLES INCREASES AND THEY BECOME TENSE
- z SKIN STARTS TO SWEAT
- z URGE TO EMPTY BOWEL AND BLADDER

