



TEA-BREAK GUIDE



What is the first thing you think of when you hear the word drugs?

Dangerous, illegal, scary, fun, mind-altering, helpful. These are just a few words that may spring to mind. Drugs come in all shapes and sizes, legal, illegal, prescription and over the counter medication and alcohol. They are used for a number of reasons to provide a number of different feelings and responses. The important thing to remember is the effect the drug is having more than what the drug is.

This guide will look at how the central nervous system is affected by drugs, and which drugs sit in which category. We will focus on three of the groups; depressants, stimulants and hallucinogens. Depending on how they affect the central nervous system will determine how someone may behave and what risks may be involved.

Depressants

Alcohol
Heroin
Morphine
Benzodiazepines
Codeine
Tranquilisers
New Psychoactive Substances

- Slow down the central nervous system
- Slow down heart rate and breathing
- Can make you feel sleepy, tired, relaxed
- Speech can become slurred
- Inhibitions are lowered
- High doses can lead to fatal overdose

Stimulants

Speed/amphetamine
Cocaine
Crack
Caffeine
Energy drinks
Nicotine
New Psychoactive Substances

- Speed up the central nervous system
- Increase breathing and heart rate
- Can make you feel awake and alert
- Improve concentration
- Lessen appetite
- Can make you feel more energetic or confident
- Can become dependant

Hallucinogens

Magic mushrooms
LSD/Acid
Cannabis
Ketamine
Spice
New Psychoactive Substances

- Alter perception through our senses
- Effects are often dependant on how you feel, who you're with and where you are
- May induce auditory and visual hallucinations
- Not usually physically addictive

How to raise the subject - Ask questions; do not be afraid to ask someone if they use drugs or alcohol. Most of the assessments we do will have questions about substances, it is important to get all of the information we can and not to feel uncomfortable asking. Don't make assumptions. Explain any concerns you have. Give people the facts. Advise on the support available and refer if requested.

The Cannabis Risk

Cannabis has a reputation for being less harmful, not as worrying as the hard drugs. It comes in three forms: herbal, resin and oil, and can be smoked in a joint, inhaled or eaten. Here are some facts:

The effects of cannabis have changed over the years due to the increase in THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) the hallucinogenic property of cannabis. Spice and Black Mamba are synthetic versions of cannabis that are dangerously stronger than the traditional weed that people would relax with sharing a joint.

Cannabis users expect to feel relaxed, happy, giggly, talkative, lethargic, light-headed and they may not know about the increased risk of developing psychotic illnesses. It can -

- Mess with your mind and your mood
- Disturb your sleep
- Impact fertility
- Increase feelings of depression and low mood
- Make you feel anxious, panicky and even aggressive

The legal bit -

- Cannabis is a class B drug Under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971
- Possession is illegal, if you are caught with cannabis in your possession the maximum penalty is five years imprisonment
- The penalty for supply is up to 14 years in prison and an unlimited fine, this includes supplying to friends

Practical advice when you need to help someone

What to look for:

- Appearance or behavioural changes
- Lack of personal care or hygiene
- Financial difficulties
- Slurred or rapid speech
- Forgetfulness, poor concentration or clumsiness
- Weight loss or gain
- Irregular sleep pattern
- Presence of bottles or paraphernalia

Change is key to this, people present at different stages of their journey and it may not always be clear that substances are playing a part in the reason we are working with them. The list above gives us a checklist of things that may change and could indicate that substances are involved, however, it does not mean that someone is definitely using or misusing substances.

Support available

STAR - One number for all treatment services in Northamptonshire - 0808 169 8512

S2S - Drug and alcohol treatment service for Northamptonshire - 01604 211 304

Bridge - A substance misuse programme which offers clients the chance to take part in sporting and other activities - 01604 621259 <http://bridge-northants.org.uk>

Family Support Link - For families and carers affected by drugs and alcohol in Northamptonshire - 01933 227 078 fslcontact@yahoo.co.uk

NDAS - Northamptonshire Domestic Abuse Service. Supporting people affected by domestic abuse - 0300 0122154 www.ndas.co/

NGage - confidential drug and alcohol service for those under 19 and their families/carers - 01604 633848 ypnorthamptonshire@aquarius.org.uk

Aquarius - Training for frontline workers/volunteers. Counselling for problem gamblers and affected others – 0300 456 4292 northamptonshire@aquarius.org.uk

If you would like to know more please contact Aquarius on 0300 456 4292.