

# Drug Harm Reduction



SUSU Advice  
Centre



## DRUG HARM REDUCTION

Please be aware that some drugs are not always as you think they may be. It's impossible to tell exactly what is in a drug just by looking at it. Taking drugs always carries a risk and can potentially be harmful, if you chose to take them, please bear in mind the following points for safer use. Effects of drugs are subjective and whether they are desired or undesired depends on the mind-set of the user, their previous experience and the environment in which they use – Drug, Set & Setting.

## GENERAL TIPS ON STAYING SAFE

- **Start with a small amount, e.g. a dab or half a pill**
- **Don't be afraid of seeking help and being honest about what you have taken**
- **Avoid mixing drugs, especially with alcohol**
- **Look after friends, if they are sleeping or unconscious, put them in the recovery position**
- **Tell someone you are with what you have taken**
- **Try and buy from a trusted source**
- **Try to avoid injecting as getting the right amount is difficult for first time users and it carries greater risks.**
- **For more information on this please refer to the 'injecting drug use' section**
- **Try to use with trusted friends in a safe environment, especially if it's your first time. Do not drive after taking drugs as it poses a risk to yourself and other road users.**

As well as these tips, take into consideration the following for types of drugs



## STIMULANTS

a substance that raises physiological or nervous activity in the body - e.g. cocaine, ecstasy etc.

- **Always wait at least 2 hours before taking more**
- **Avoid mixing with other drugs, especially alcohol Drink small sips of non-alcoholic drinks (e.g. water or isotonic drinks) but don't exceed 1 pint in 1 hour**
- **Take regular breaks from dancing**
- **Avoid using stimulants if you have high blood pressure, heart disease, epilepsy, and if you have psychiatric problems like depression or anxiety.**
- **This is particularly relevant to ecstasy and ecstasy-like drugs. Take advice if you are unsure.**

## HALLUCINOGENS

a drug that causes hallucinogen - e.g. LSD, mushrooms etc

- **If you find or fear that you may be experiencing a 'bad trip' try to find a place you feel safe and remember – it will pass.**
- **Be aware that single doses can vary even in visually identical samples**
- **Try to use with people you know and trust around you, ideally at least one of whom is not using a substance, or at least make sure someone knows where you are.**
- **Try not to get overstimulated- it is very easy to get dehydrated if you're dancing for hours, and anxiety can sometimes set in, causing a potential increase in paranoid ideation.**



## OPIATES

a drug that dulls the senses – e.g. Heroin, Morphine etc

- **Dosage is very easy to get wrong and the biggest risk from opiate use is overdose.**
- **Smoking on foil is safer than injecting or snorting If it is possible keep some Narcan (antidote to overdose) at hand**
- **Do not mix with other Central Nervous System (CNS) depressants (alcohol, benzodiazepines or barbituates)**
- **Make sure you are in a safe environment, with trusted people as opiates can make the user less aware of other high risk behaviour.**

## DEPRESSANTS

a drug that reduces functional or nervous activity – e.g. alcohol, GBH etc

- **Doses can vary so always try a small test amount first, particularly for GHB and GBL**
- **Stay hydrated and have something to eat before/while drinking**
- **Avoid mixing depressants with each other, e.g. alcohol and GHB as it can be physically disabling leaving the person very vulnerable. It could also potentially lead to respiratory depression and death.**
- **'Spiking' of alcoholic drinks with GHB or Rohypnol does occur; the best advice to avoid this is do not accept a drink unless you have seen it being prepared and do not leave your drink unattended**
- **If you think you have been 'spiked', stay with a trusted friend (not someone you have just met) and go to a safe place (your home/hospital/police station).**



## LEGAL HIGHS

a mood altering or stimulant substance whose sale is not yet banned by current legislation.

- **Always take a small test dose first, and wait at least 2 hours before taking more**
- **Don't mix with other drugs**
- **Try to check drug forums beforehand to get a better idea of other users experience of dosage as some drugs are extremely potent (e.g. 25l NBome)**

## SUPPORT

*If you have concerns about yours or a friends drug use, please contact Frank (talktofrank) If you have concerns about how drugs are affecting your academic work or finances, please speak to The Advice Centre - [advice@susu.org](mailto:advice@susu.org).*

