

ALCOHOL AND MENTAL HEALTH

Research shows those who drink a lot of alcohol are more likely to develop mental health problems. People with severe mental ill-health are more likely to have alcohol problems.
(Mental Health Foundation)

Regular heavy drinking is linked to symptoms of depression

For those with anxiety:

- Alcohol can offer short-lived relaxation – but this quickly disappears
- If you rely on alcohol to cover your anxiety, you may begin drinking more to relax - over time, this can lead to alcohol dependence

Alcohol

Some view alcohol as a coping mechanism - but this can be an issue.

Alcohol problems and mental ill-health are closely linked

- It's a depressant - it can disrupt the balance of neurotransmitters in the brain and affect feelings, thoughts and behaviour
- Affects the part of the brain that controls inhibition - may experience depression, anger or anxiety
- It reduces information processing - hard to work out what feelings and consequences of actions

Alcohol can make you lose your inhibitions and act impulsively - so it can lead to actions such as self-harm or suicide. Heavy drinking is also linked to suicidal thoughts and attempts.

Ask for help and explore what a new relationship with alcohol could look like



STUDENTS
ORGANISING FOR
SUSTAINABILITY
UNITED KINGDOM



#mentalhealthawarenessweek

SUBSTANCE USE AND MENTAL HEALTH

Main reasons for drug use is recreation (57%), stress relief (21%) and boredom (21%) (SOS-UK)

Research (The Tab) on students found:

- 44% used drugs out of boredom
- 37.5% said they used drugs for 'relaxation or self medication'
- 17% admitted to falling victim to peer pressure
- 43.9% use weed, 12.5% cocaine, 12.1% nitrous oxide, 11.7% ketamine

Cocaine

- When the effects of cocaine use wear off, you can feel tired and depressed
- It impacts the pleasure centres of the brain - leading to addiction
- It can cause long-term damage to mental health
- It can cause fits, heart attacks and strokes, can overdose or die when mixed with other drugs

Cannabis

- 44% of students at UK universities admit to using it (National Institute on Drug Abuse)
- Young people aged 16-24 are more likely to use it
- It can make you feel relaxed, but It can also make you feel anxious or paranoid.

Ketamine

Frequent use/abuse can lead to:

- Memory loss
- Confusion
- Paranoia
- Shortened attention span
- Mood swings

Nitrous oxide (Laughing Gas)

Abuse of it can lead to:

- Personality changes
- Emotional disorders (e.g. anxiety, depression, mania)
- Impulsive and aggressive behaviour
- Hallucination and delusions

Many who develop substance use disorders are also diagnosed with mental disorders, and vice versa (National Institute on Drug Abuse)

If you have been using substances and you feel that it is affecting your physical and/or mental health, make an appointment to see your GP