



DRUGS EDUCATION GUIDE //

Student Edition



When you think of Britain,
what comes to mind?



We all love to watch The Great British Bake Off with a cup of tea, but would you think it's normal for a stranger to offer you cocaine in the street? It's true! You may not believe it, but Britain is known as *'the cocaine capital of Europe'* * because we use more of it than any other European country.

You may already be aware that drinking alcohol is normal in Britain and how dangerous it can be. This guide will also tell you everything you need to know about drugs, including cannabis, ecstasy and prescription drugs, and the dangers of addiction – so you can make wise choices and stay safe.

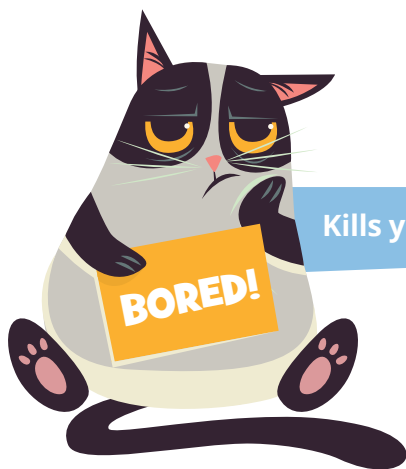
* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-44215983>



Is cannabis really harmless?

Being young is tough. There are expectations from parents, too much homework and the pressure of keeping up with social media trends. So it's understandable that you want to switch off and relax sometimes. Some people do this by drinking alcohol or taking drugs, like smoking cannabis. And you may think this is a good idea too. But did you know they actually have the opposite effect? These substances trick your body into thinking you feel better by giving you a 'high'. But when that feeling goes away, you will feel worse than before!

People fall for this trick most with cannabis (also known as weed, skunk, pot, grass and marijuana). You may think cannabis is harmless, but it actually does all the following things to your body:



Kills your motivation.



Affects your relationships with others.

Causes physical and psychological problems.

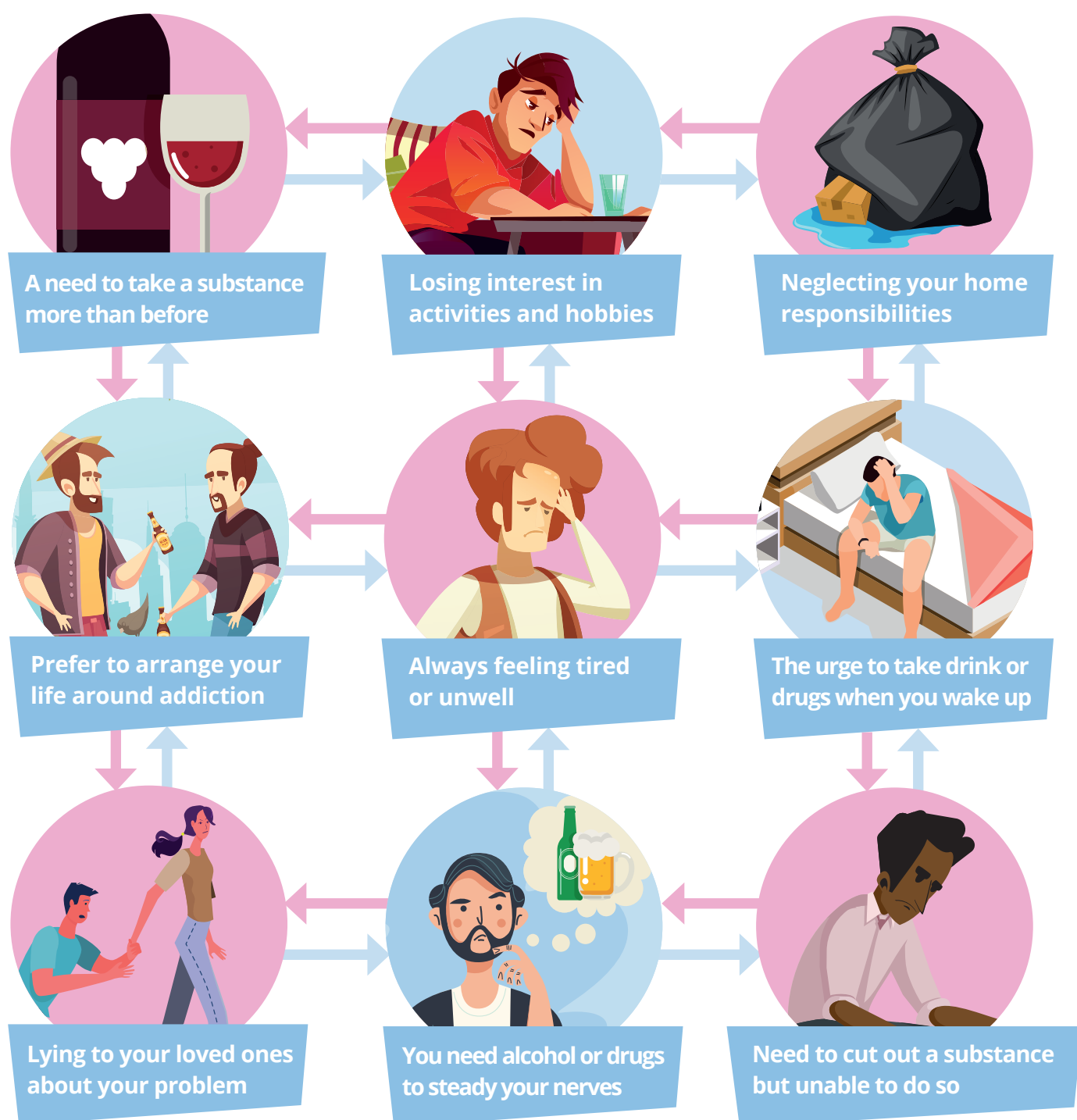


Makes you give up on personal aspirations.



Long-term effects of drugs and alcohol

Cannabis can do lots of damage if you take it over time. Alcohol and more powerful drugs can have even worse impact.





Reasons you may want to drink or take drugs

You feel sad.



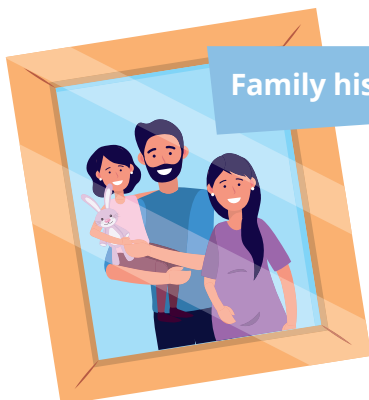
To help you sleep.



You are bored.



Family history.



Peer pressure to fit in.



To stop pain if you have a medical issue.



To give you confidence if you feel nervous.



If you are ever in pain or feeling sad, then drugs and alcohol may be something your friends recommend to cheer you up. If they do, remember how harmful these products can be and the negative effects they will cause on your mood after a few hours. You won't always suffer these symptoms when you drink or take drugs. But every time you try a drug, there is a risk you'll become addicted to it, and these problems can develop over time.



How addiction works

Do you remember the first time you did something scary as a child, like ride a rollercoaster? It gave you a rush of fear and adrenaline, didn't it? But then when you did it more often that feeling soon wore off.

It's the same thing with drugs and alcohol.

When you drink or take drugs, it changes the processes inside your body and gives you the feeling of being 'high'. So, it can be tempting to do it again. If you keep taking drugs, then eventually your body will get used to it, and you will need to find something more dangerous and powerful to feel adrenaline again.

This is called addiction and is very dangerous. Drugs have different effects on different people, so while your friends may have no problems at all, your body could have a horrible reaction or become addicted more easily.

Drugs meddle with your brain and have addictive properties; even if you plan to stop if you don't enjoy it, you may not be able to.

Drugs and alcohol are just like a rollercoaster.





How addiction affects those around you

We work with people with addictions and know that the illness can be so bad that it can damage your friendships and the bond with your family. This is because addiction makes you paranoid, and you end up pushing people away who are trying to help. If you are desperate to buy more drugs or alcohol, you may even end up stealing money and lying, which will lose people's trust.

You may think you would never steal from your family or lie to your friends. But addiction is an extremely dangerous illness which can change the way you think and act.

The majority of patients we've treated have been nice people who felt the same thing and were ashamed of their behaviour when they realised what they did.

Drugs and alcohol can sometimes influence you to do things you would never normally consider doing...





Which of the following items would you expect a drug dealer to sell?



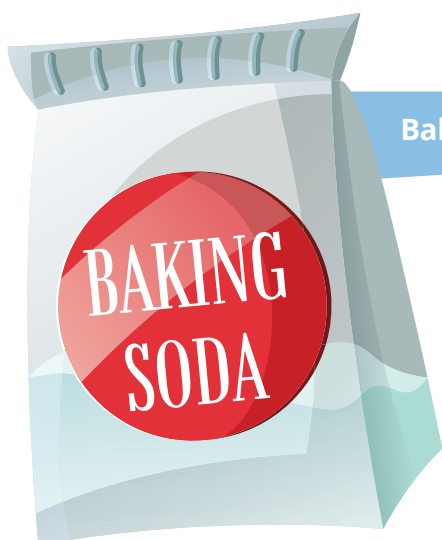


What is really in your drugs?

It may sound ridiculous, but because drugs aren't bought at a regular shop, there is no one checking what people put into them. Even if you think what you are taking is pure cocaine or pills, you could be putting disgusting and dangerous products into your body, like rat poison and laundry detergent.



Rat Poison.



Baking Soda.



Sugar.



Talcum Powder.



Laundry Detergent.





Substance abuse and your future

As well as putting your body and mind in danger, getting involved in drugs can also hinder your career plans. Let's imagine you decide to look for a job:



Of course, this may not happen to you. Even those that live with addiction can get great jobs and do well at work. But addiction is a severe disease which is difficult to manage and will eventually become so powerful that you will have no choice but get help from a rehab centre like us.



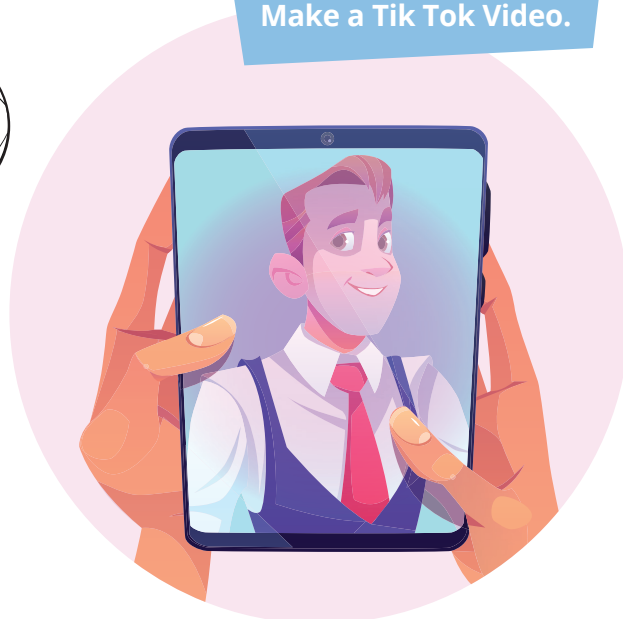
Drugs aren't the only way to have fun

So, you're out with your mates, and it's a boring day. Here are some fun things you can do instead of taking drugs:

Use the money you would have spent on drugs enjoying a sporting event, or perhaps some stand-up comedy.



Make a Tik Tok Video.



Do some exercise. Hitting the gym, doing a pilates class or playing football will increase your endorphin levels and improve your mood.



Listen to some relaxing music. This is a great way to unwind if you are stressed.



If you're still bored and want to experience the adrenaline rush you would get from taking drugs, without all the risks, try one of these instead.

Let your parents scroll through your phone's camera roll.

Pour a cold bucket of water over your head.



FANCY A DATE?

Call up your crush and ask them on a date.

Sit in a dark room alone at night and watch a horror film.



However bad you think the consequences are of this list. Trust us; it's better than the risk of falling into addiction.



Stay safe by saying NO

Trying drugs once may not cause you any harm. Or it could be the first step of a long and horrible road to addiction. If someone offers you drugs or pressures you into drinking, it's ok to say no. It doesn't mean you have to leave – there are plenty of other fun things you can do instead. True friends will understand if you're not interested and will respect your choice. They will also respect you more for being strong-minded and protecting them from the dangers that come with drugs, too.

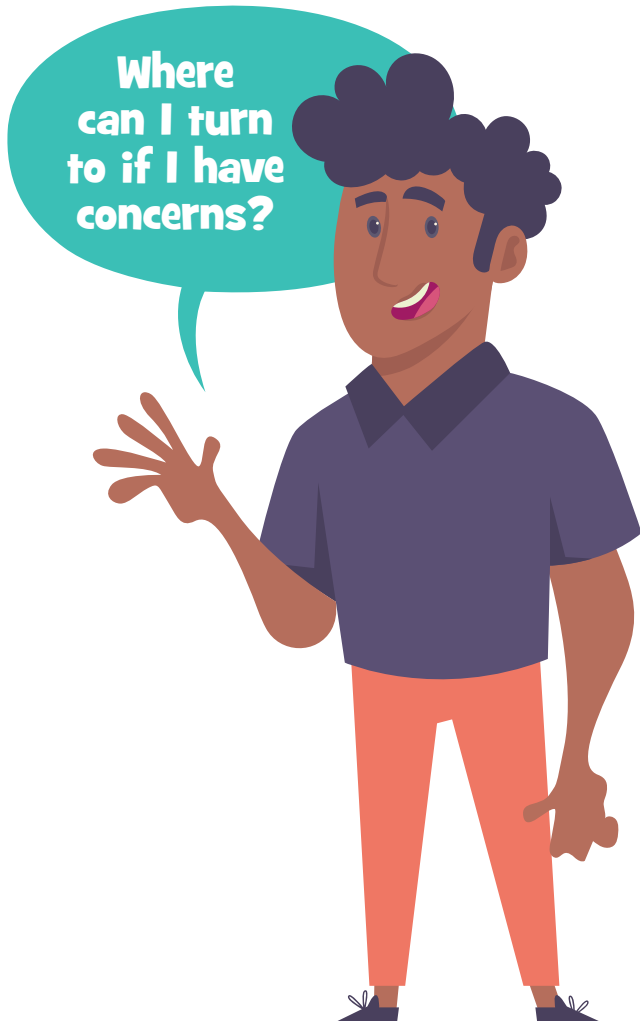
If someone suggests you “try something once”, remind them that you never know what can be in the drugs and one bad batch filled with poison is enough to put you in hospital or end your life. Remember, you can never end up addicted to drugs if you never try them.

As people who have been down that road ourselves, trust us – it's not worth the risk.

If you are struggling with addiction or are worried about someone else, please speak to your parents, friends or your Student Support Team for help. Alternatively call us on:

Tel: 0808 239 7550

If you have any other questions, we have a 24/7 confidential online chat platform you can reach us on. www.ukat.co.uk/v35/



**Where
can I turn
to if I have
concerns?**



UK
Addiction Treatment
Centres