Drug Harm Minimisation

There is always a risk when taking drugs... How can you stay safe if you decide to try them???
Harm minimisation is an overarching strategy that aims to prevent and reduce the myriad harms associated with the use of psychoactive drugs (licit and illicit) in the community.

Harm minimisation comprises three major strategies:

- Supply reduction
- Demand reduction
- Harm reduction
You’ve already learnt about...

- ACID (LSD)
- ALCOHOL
- ICE/Crystal Meth (methamphetamine)
- ECSTACY (MDMA and amphetamines, plus a mixture of other horrible stuff!)
What other drugs do people use?

- Marijuana (weed)
- Cocaine/Crack Cocaine
- Heroin
- Bath Salts
- Methadone
Marijuana (depressant)

- Marijuana affects your body function and alters your perception of reality and the way you think.
- Marijuana dependence can lead to mild withdrawal symptoms, such as irritability, sleep difficulties, restlessness, physical discomfort and decreased appetite.
- Long-term use of marijuana has been found to decrease the volume of grey matter in the brain, which affects IQ.
- The use of marijuana can trigger mental health issues such as depression, anxiety and schizophrenia.
Marijuana

- Obviously we discourage anyone from smoking marijuana, but how can you be safe if you decide to try it??

- Never smoke if your drunk...these drugs do not mix and will make you sick!
- Make sure you are with people you trust and feel comfortable with.
- Never smoke if you are in a bad headspace....it will only make the experience negative and scary.
- Never smoke because someone else is pressuring you to do so...make your own decisions.
- Try to avoid eating it...as this will make you 'body stoned' and the affects last a lot longer and are much more enhanced. You might feel like you cannot move and your body is really heavy, plus you cannot stop the feeling if you don't like it....not good!
Cocaine (stimulant)

- Cocaine, or coke as it is commonly known, is a stimulant and has a similar effect to amphetamines like speed and ice, but produces a more intense effect and shorter 'high' depending upon dosage.
- Cocaine is a white crystalline powder with a bitter numbing taste.
- It is either taken orally or snorted through the nose.
- It is often used as a party drug for the fact that it gives you lots of energy and keeps you high. The effects don't often last long however and so people want more and more and this is how they become addicted.
Cocaine

What are the short-term effects of cocaine?

- Cocaine causes a short-lived, intense high that is immediately followed by the opposite—intense depression, edginess and a craving for more of the drug. People who use it often don't eat or sleep properly. They can experience greatly increased heart rate, muscle spasms and convulsions. The drug can make people feel paranoid, angry, hostile and anxious—even when they aren’t high.

- Regardless of how much of the drug is used or how frequently, cocaine increases the risk that the user will experience a heart attack, stroke, seizure or respiratory (breathing) failure, any of which can result in sudden death.

- Snorting cocaine can cause problems with your nasal cavity
Crack Cocaine

- Crack generally comes in the form of crystals ranging in colour from white or creamy to transparent with a pink or yellow tinge. It is smoked.

- Crack has similar affects to the body as regular cocaine however....

- Smoking crack further presents a series of health risks. Crack is often mixed with other substances that create toxic fumes when burned. As crack smoke does not remain potent for long, crack pipes are generally very short. This often causes cracked and blistered lips, known as “crack lip,” from users having a very hot pipe pressed against their lips.

- In addition to the usual risks associated with cocaine use, crack users may experience severe respiratory problems, including coughing, shortness of breath, lung damage and bleeding.
Heroin (depressant)

- Heroin (like opium and morphine) is made from the resin of poppy plants. Milky, sap-like opium is first removed from the pod of the poppy flower. This opium is refined to make morphine, then further refined into different forms of heroin.

- Most heroin is injected, creating additional risks for the user, who faces the danger of AIDS or other infection on top of the pain of addiction.

- Street heroin is sometimes “cut” with poisons. The various additives do not fully dissolve, and when they are injected into the body, can clog the blood vessels that lead to the lungs, kidneys or brain. This itself can lead to infection or destruction of vital organs.

- It is highly addictive and if users try to stop using, they will go through withdrawal symptoms.

- People use heroin as a pain killer and for it’s euphoric effects on the body.
Short-term effects of Heroin

- Central
  - Euphoria
  - Alternately alert and drowsy state

- Mouth
  - Dryness

- Skin
  - Warm flushing

- Respiratory
  - Slowed breathing

- Muscular
  - Weakness

Long-term effects of Heroin

- Central
  - Addiction
  - Tolerance
  - Dependence

- Circulatory
  - Collapsed veins

- Heart
  - Infection of heart lining and valves

- Respiratory
  - Pneumonia

- Liver
  - Decreased function

- Systemic
  - Abscesses
Bath Salts (stimulant)

Bath salts are a stimulant drug and can be swallowed, snorted through the nose, inhaled, or injected with a needle. Snorting or injecting is the most harmful.

It is a synthetic (human-made) drug chemically related to cathinone, a stimulant found in the khat plant. The man-made cathinones in bath salts can produce feelings of joy, increased social interaction, and feeling of a ‘high’ as well as nervousness, paranoia, hallucinations, and panic attacks.

People who take bath salts can experience nosebleeds, sweating, nausea and heart problems (such as racing heart, high blood pressure, and chest pains).
Methadone (Depressant and prescription drug)

- **Methadone** is an opioid medication. It reduces withdrawal symptoms in people addicted to heroin or other narcotic drugs without causing the "high" associated with the drug addiction.

- Methadone can come as a small pill that is intended to be swallowed or dissolved, or as a liquid to be drunk, diluted or injected.

- Methadone is not expected to cause the same initial euphoric rush as heroin and other drugs, but the person who is abusing methadone is probably still going to feel high when they first start abusing it. As they develop a tolerance, if they don't increase their dosage, they will probably just feel numb and drugged without the high.

- Because of this lack of euphoria, a person new to abusing methadone may take more and more of it in an attempt to achieve the rush. They may manage to overdose by doing so, which can result in death.
Now that you know the dangers of these drugs to your health........
JUST DON’T RISK IT!!!
How can you be safe if you MUST try drugs?

- Only take a very small amount and wait for the affects to take place before wanting to take more. Lots of young people overdo it by not being patient and taking too much too soon. This can cause overdose!

- Don’t mix drugs. This is very dangerous for your body and can overload it. Especially when you mix alcohol with other drugs. A lot of young people only feel confident to try drugs when they are drunk but this is not a good idea.

- Make sure there are sober people around to look after you in case something goes wrong. And look out for your friends...if they seem to be unwell or acting strangely, then try to help them by getting them to sit down and drink water. If things turn bad, call an ambulance. Their life is more important than anything else!

- If you are unsure....don’t do it! Make your own choices and don’t be afraid to stand up for yourself.
Rank the drugs....

- Rank the drugs from 1-10 from most harmful to least harmful in your book….explain in a couple sentences why you have chosen your number 1 pick and number 10 pick.

- Marijuana
- Alcohol
- Ice
- Ecstasy
- Acid
- Cocaine
- Crack Cocaine
- Heroin
- Bath Salts
- Methadone