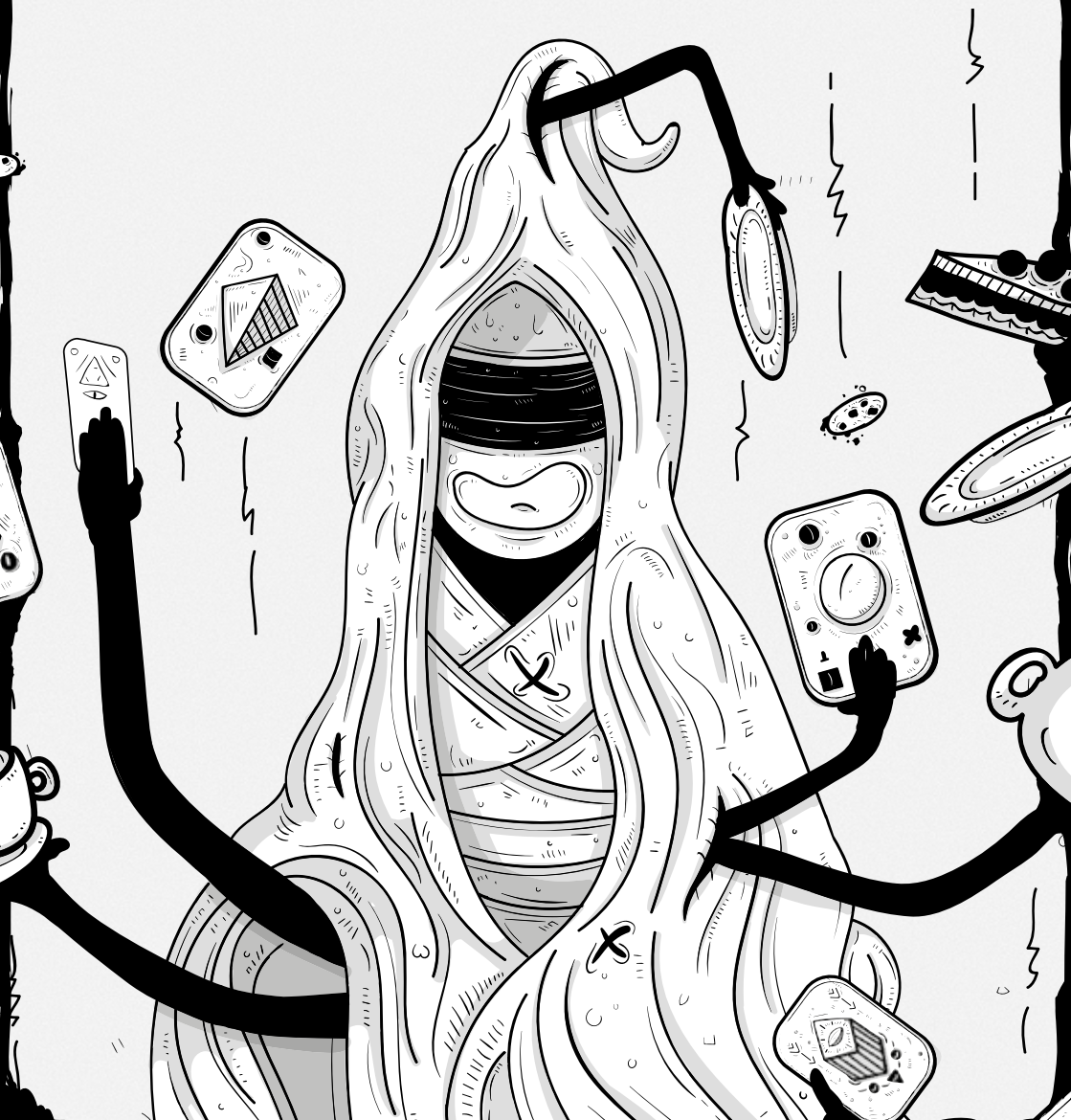


choices

YOUNG PERSON SUBSTANCE USE SUPPORT



choices

young person substance use support

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hello.

choices young person service is a place for 11-18 year olds (up to 25 years of age for older adults) to get support for drug and alcohol use.

Choices young persons service is a place for 11-18 year olds (and up to age 25 for older adults) to get support around drug and alcohol use. We understand it can be difficult to open up about what you are going through, especially to adults in your life. Sometimes even speaking with friends is hard. It's tough to find a place that feels safe and to speak to someone you can trust; Choices can be both.

[Read on to see how we can help.](#)

0330 363 9997 choices.cymru

choices provides 1 to 1 specialised substance use support for 11-18 year olds and 18 - 25 years olds via transition services in Dyfed. To learn more, call 0330 363 9997.

choices

charter

If you are having or want support from **choices**, you have the right to:

- Be treated with respect, dignity, and confidentiality.
- Your information will be kept confidential; whatever you tell us stays with us unless you are putting yourself or someone else at risk. If this happens, we will need to pass this information on but we will explain each step.
- An explanation of the **choices** services, so you know what drug/alcohol treatment options are available to you.
- Complain or comment about any part of the **choices** services. We like to know what is working well and what we can improve on. This helps us to make the service better for everyone.
- An appointment arranged within 10 working days of a referral being received.
- Full involvement in creating And reviewing your care plan
- Receive support and services that will meet your needs.
- Independent advocacy. This means speaking up for you to make sure your voice is heard.
- A female or male worker. You may want to change your worker, and we will do our best to do so.

choices

philosophy

- Provide a service and a safe environment for all genders, identities, sexualities and bodily ability and uphold the values of LGBTQ+ communities.
- Empower the right to individual goals and promote harm reduction (ways to reduce harm linked with substance use).
- Understand that there are lots of reasons why people use substances. some for enjoyment, some for self-medication and some for escapism.
- Protect vulnerable young people from harm, exploitation and abuse. When needed we will facilitate appropriate intervention from relevant services.
- Recognise mental health and support conversations around this eg. suicide and self-harm. We will then signpost to/involve services which can support you further to help improve your mental health..
- Be non-judgemental and create an arena of trust, honesty and confidentiality.

choices interventions

everything that **choices** provides

Assessment

- Initial Assessment
- Risk Assessment and Screening
- Complexity Index
- Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MoCA) for over 18's

Engagement and Prevention

- Awareness Training.
- Brief interventions to share life-saving harm reduction advice and correct information on the risks and effects of the substances you want to learn about.
- Targeted Education and Campaigns to address current substance use trends.
- Outreach in communities, schools, and colleges.
- Online support resources.
- Crisis Management.
- Onward Referral and Signposting for mental health, physical health, and housing support.
- Naloxone and Nyxoid training and provision.
- DBST & BBV Testing.

Diversiory Activities

- We run diversionary activities in groups but also provide unique one-to-one reward activities for when you have managed to reach your goals.

Complementary Therapy – Auricular Acupuncture

- This is five pins in each ear which helps to stimulate different pressure points to aid sleep, increase motivation, help with withdrawal symptoms and alleviate anxiety.

Group Work

- We offer group workshops on County Lines, Cannabis, Prescription Medication, Energy Drinks, Depressants, Stimulants, Alcohol Awareness, Overdose Awareness, and General Substance Use.

Recovery Relapse Prevention

This skills-based programme teaches coping skills to increase self-efficacy in refusing drugs and dealing with triggers of use in real-life.

- Service User Groups
- Peer Support and Mentoring
- Employment Training
- Resilience Building
- Mutual Aid

Aftercare

- If you achieve your goals and maintain them, you can then move onto aftercare support in which we can offer monthly check-up appointments to monitor the maintenance of your achievements.

Interventions

- Care planning for each individual and for all drugs and alcohol including new psychoactive substances. We assess every area of your life together and set targets to improve your quality of life.

Brief Solution Focused Therapy

- We will support you (the expert!) to find your own solutions and to set your own goals, using evidence-based techniques to empower you to create a clear vision of what you want for your future.

Behavioural Controlled Drinking Training

- This is not about telling you to stop drinking. Rather, it teaches you about alcohol intoxication and helps you to develop a range of techniques to enable you to control your drinking.

Transitional Arrangements

- We will support you in transitioning to DDAS, the adult drug and alcohol service when you are aged 18-25 and the time is right.

Safeguarding

Consultancy

Motivational Interviewing

- We believe that if you are motivated to change – and are given the space to achieve personal, valued goals - change will follow!

Item Mapping

ORS/SRS

- The outcome rating scale (ORS) helps to give us more of an understanding of where you see yourself that day, if there is a need for signposting or referrals, ongoing support, or safeguarding concerns.
- The session rating scale (SRS) asks you for honest feedback on how the session went; if there was anything we could improve on, do better or did well.

Concerned Other Support

If you are affected by someone else's substance use, we can offer support for you to understand dependency, triggers and enabling behaviour, signs and symptoms, and conflict management. We aim to help you to look after yourself while supporting the substance user, learn communication skills and improve your quality of life.

This includes:

PACT (Parent and Carers Training)
Structured support
Telephone advice & support
Peer group support
Mutual aid

Young Persons' Needle Exchange

Choices West offers Needle Exchange Services in all bases across Dyfed (over 18's only in Llanelli). You can attend anytime in our office hours to return used works or bins and resupply while you are here. You can also access naloxone and nixoid training and harm reduction advice. Everyone is welcome and we do not judge.

If you cannot attend for Needle Exchange, please visit: spikeonabike.cymru (18+)

drugs.

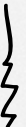
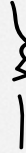
substance use is all about making choices. like a deck of cards, you never quite know what you'll pick next or know the effects. learn to choose carefully and when to call it quits.

Whether it's your first time using a substance or you have used before, it's always worth knowing any risks. Use in small amounts, take it slow and wait for the effects. That's a choice you can always make for yourself.

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benzodiazepines.

harm reduction information **(how to stay safe when using substances)**

If you've been prescribed benzodiazepines, take them exactly how you've been advised to by your doctor.

Avoid mixing with other drugs, especially alcohol. This increases risk of overdose.

The best way to stay safe from 'street benzos' is to avoid them completely.

You might not always know that the benzos you are taking are fake. If you got your benzos from the dark web, social media, or from a friend, be CAREFUL when taking them. Have them tested through wedinos!

Try not to take benzodiazepines for more than 4 weeks unless you have been advised to by a doctor.

Don't stop taking them suddenly. This can cause some nasty withdrawal symptoms and can even be dangerous. If you want to stop or reduce, it's important to seek support from a medical professional.

Benzos can cause drowsiness and sleepiness. So if using, it's best to avoid driving or doing any activities while you are using them. You could really hurt yourself or someone else.

stimulants.

harm reduction information **(how to stay safe when using substances)**

Go low and slow, consider just a $\frac{1}{4}$ of a pill, or a small dab of powder. Wait at least 1 hour before taking any more. Many pills in circulation contain a large amount of MDMA – sometimes up to 3x an average adult dose. Pills that look the same, even from the same batch, may have different contents.

Crush. dab. Wait. Crush the pill up into a fine powder, lick your fingertip and dab the powder onto gums, then wait 1-2 hours for the effects of that dose before considering taking another.

Sip water, aim to drink around $\frac{1}{2}$ pints per hour. MDMA makes it difficult to pee and makes you feel thirsty. This means it's easy to drink too much. If you don't urinate enough this can cause overhydration which is dangerous. Drink slowly and replenish these e.g Sports drinks are a good choice because they contain electrolytes.

Do not mix, mixing drugs increases risk – be aware of any interactions between drugs including alcohol and prescription medications including antidepressants. Mixing with stimulants like cocaine and MDMA increases the risk to your heart.

Ask for help when needed, things to look out for: Excessive sweating, disorientation, agitation, people who are hot to touch or so hot they have stopped sweating. Pace yourself, know your limits and look after yourself and those around you. Call 999 when needed.

depressants.

harm reduction information **(how to stay safe when using substances)**

Start with a small amount as doses can vary. It's important to start with a small test amount first.

Avoid mixing with other drugs as this increases the risk of overdose/ death.

Depressants can affect your ability to drive safely, making you feel drowsy and affecting your reaction time.

Tolerance can also build up quickly resulting in you needing more to get desired effect. This increases the risk of overdose and dependency.

Withdrawal symptoms can happen even if you have only used for a short period. Avoid using every day and take regular breaks from using.

opiates.

harm reduction information **(how to stay safe when using substances)**

How much you use is very easy to get wrong and the biggest risk of using opiates is overdosing. Start low and go slow!

If possible, keep Prenoxad with you; this will temporarily reverse the effects of an opiate overdose (but does not make them safe to use!)

Do not mix with other central nervous system depressants, or 'downers', such as alcohol and benzodiazepines.

Opiates can make you less aware of dangers so make sure you are in a safe place with people you trust.

Drugs are often not what you think they are. Only take medicines that are prescribed to you, never take other peoples.

hallucinogens.

harm reduction information **(how to stay safe when using substances)**

Surrounding, Environment, Head space. Hallucinogens can alter the way you see, feel, hear and experience the world.

Make your space as safe and comfortable as possible. Your experience can be affected by your current mood.

You are more likely to experience a 'bad trip' if you are in a negative head space.

Having a designated 'Trip sitter' can help if the experience becomes too intense and can give support.

solvents.

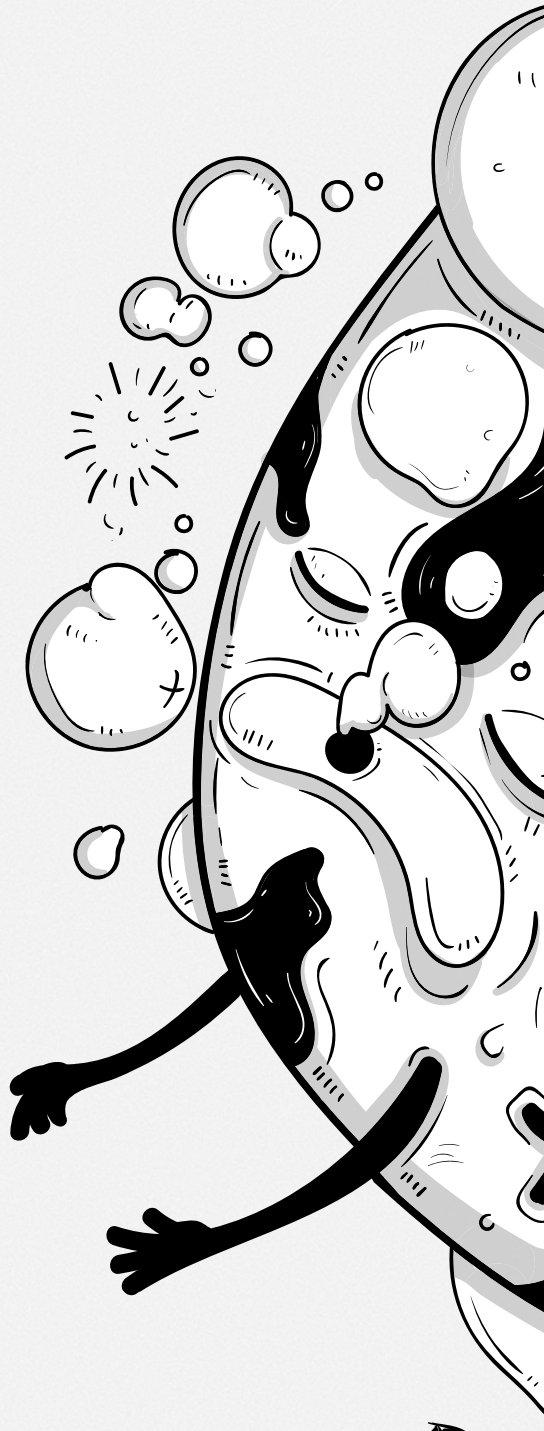
harm reduction information **(how to stay safe when using substances)**

Solvents are a type of depressant drug, typically including glues, gases and aerosols that contain volatile substances, which people inhale to get high.

Solvents in themselves are typically not illegal and are often household objects. This can include glues, aerosols, paints, petrol, cleaning fluids, surgical spirit or gases

People use solvents with the aim of feeling intoxicated or reducing anxiety. In larger quantities people may experience a distortion of time and hallucinations.

Solvents are linked with Sudden Sniffing Death Syndrome (SSDS). Inhalation of aerosols can cause instant death due to its impact on the heart.





overdose.

what is it?

Any suspected overdoses should be treated with medical urgency, particularly where seizures, fits and respiratory failure are displayed. An ambulance should be called in this case with medical support and first aid accessed immediately if possible (if in a public place there may be medically trained

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depressants.

Key signs of an overdose from depressants include the following symptoms.

- Confusion, slurring of words or unable to speak.
- Loss of motor coordination.
- Vomiting
- Headaches
- Pale or blue tinged skin
- Slow or irregular breathing
- Seizures or fits.
- Loss of consciousness

If someone is experiencing seizures, fits or loss of consciousness then the recovery position should be used and an ambulance called. .

opiates.

Key signs of an opiates overdose include the following symptoms.

- Snoring/gurgling noises
- Not able to wake
- Turning blue
- No pulse
- Pin point pupils
- Difficulty & shallow breathing

If an overdose of opioids is suspected, naloxone or nyooid can be administered to the buttocks, thigh or upper arm and an ambulance should always be called. If the person becomes conscious after naloxone is administered, try to keep them in the same place until an ambulance arrives. If they decide to leave the location then be aware of what direction they take so you can advise paramedics of this. Keep the naloxone kit with you to pass onto paramedics so that they know what dosage has been given.

hallucinogens.

Key signs of an overdose on hallucinogens include the following symptoms

- Illogical speech, impaired motor skills, speech impairment.
- Rapid breathing, seizures.
- Dilated pupils, blurred vision.
- Memory loss.
- Respiratory failure, hypothermia, hyperthermia, inability to feel pain.

solvents.

Solvent use is less likely to present as overdose and more likely to cause instant death due to the risk of Sudden Sniffing Death Syndrome (SSDS).

This is a form of fatal heart attack linked with a sudden rush of adrenaline & irregular heart beat.

If you suspect someone has used solvents and they are not responsive you should call an ambulance immediately.

stimulants.

Key signs of an overdose on stimulants include the following symptoms.

- Dizziness, tremor, irritability, confusion.
- Hostility, hallucinations, panic, headache.
- Skin flushing, chest pain, palpitations, hypertension.
- Vomiting, cramps, excessive sweating.
- Overheating of internal organs while externally feeling cold.

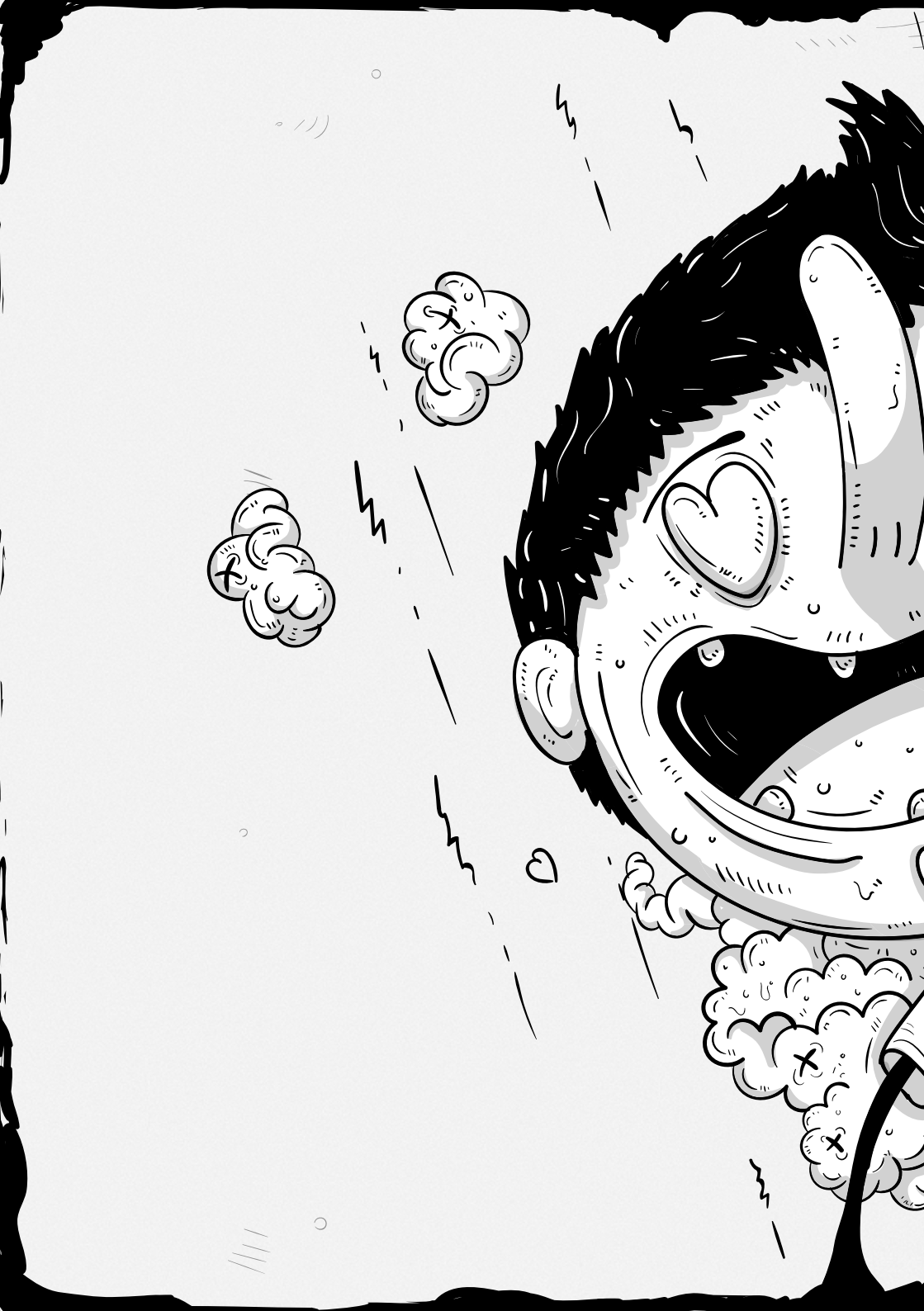
benzos.

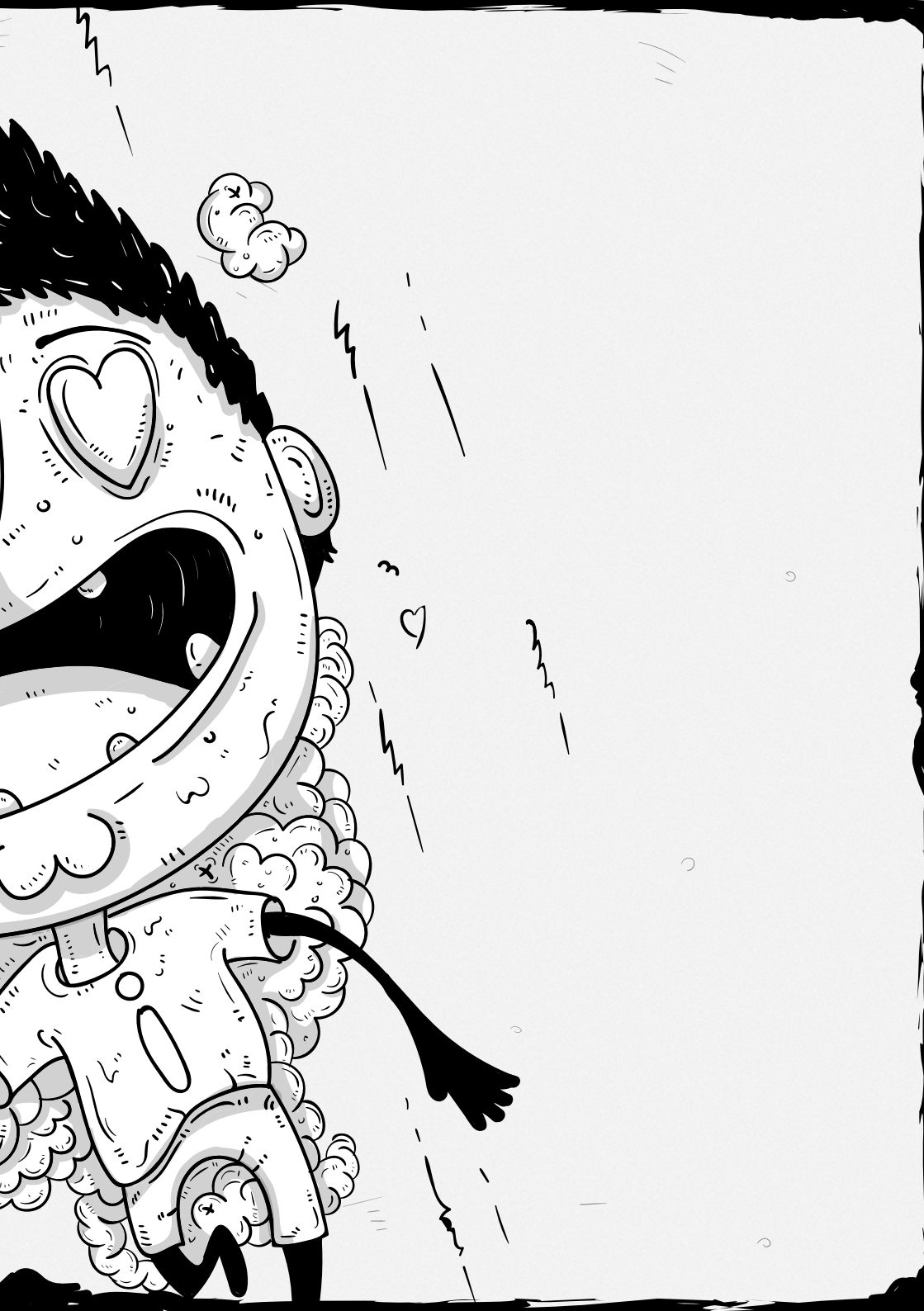
Key signs of an overdose from benzodiazepines include the following symptoms.

- Difficulty with or inability to breath
- Bluish tinge to nails and lips
- Confusion and disorientation
- Dizziness
- Blurred vision or double vision
- Weakness
- Uncoordinated muscle movements & tremors









peer pressure

what is it?

“Feeling like you have to do something because the people around you want or expect you to. This may make someone else or the group happy. If this makes you uncomfortable then this is peer pressure.”

how to spot it.

Someone experiencing peer pressure may be:

- Avoiding school & other social situation
- Being very image conscious where not before
- Changes in behavior (or displaying risky or criminal behavior where not before)
- Expressing feeling they don't fit in and making social comparisons
- Low moods

ure.

how to avoid it.

Find friends who share similar values, it is normal for this to change throughout your life and within new situations.

If you don't feel comfortable with what your friends are doing, you can suggest something else instead or can leave the situation if it doesn't improve.

Avoid situations where you may be pressured to do something you don't want to do. E.g. if you don't want to drink alcohol then don't go to the pub with your friends, maybe suggest meeting them before or elsewhere.

manage it.

It is okay to say no to things if you are uncomfortable or don't feel safe, you don't owe an explanation for this and have a right to make your own choices and to set your own boundaries.

Be confident in your decision and be assertive in voicing it.

If someone is a friend then they should accept this decision and not question it.

Have a planned reason to use to leave a situation if you think you may be pressured into doing something you don't want to do, maybe share this with a trusted friend or parent/guardian who can back you up if you need to use it.

aftercare.

what is it?.

“when you reach a goal in your support, you might want to learn how to maintain it (keep it going and stick to it). aftercare is what we call this process; it looks at urges, cravings, triggers and all sorts of interesting topics”

what is covered?.

Tolerance

Diversionary Activities

Relapse & Lapse

Triggers, Urges & Cravings

tolerance.

what is it?

“Tolerance to drugs involves a decrease in the effectiveness of a drug after repeated use over time. This means that the person would have to increase the amount of the drug used to experience the same effect.”

Think of a river, its free flowing at first, but if a dam is introduced there needs to be a larger amount of water to get over the dam.

It's the same with drugs. Free flowing at first and hits you quickly with smaller amounts, but the more you use the more a barrier is built in your body so you'll need more of the drug to feel the effects.

“The higher the tolerance the more of the substance you will need. This means more money spent and higher risk of becoming dependent on the drug.”

aftercare.

diversionary activities.

what is it?.

“These are activities that can attract your attention away from something you may want to do or are thinking about. Diversionary activities are something that can be used as an alternative to using substances.”

By adding extra alternative enjoyable activities to your life you have less time for taking substances and they can make you feel good but in a more wholesome and healthy way. Diversionary activities add to your life and open up new pathways and opportunities.

By adding lots of diversionary activities to your “life cup” it doesn’t feel like you are making a sacrifice when you reduce your substance use, you just fill your “cup” with lots of different things that make life enjoyable and full of new skills and connections to likeminded people.

New activities and hobbies can distract your attention from intrusive thoughts feelings and cravings. While working with your Choices caseworker you will be encouraged to look at the things you enjoy, perhaps the things you used to enjoy before substances came into your life. These things are very personal to each individual and can vary massively depending on your unique personality.

lapse & relapse.

what is it?

“A relapse happens when a person stops maintaining his or her goal of reducing or avoiding use of alcohol or other drugs and returns to previous levels of use.”

when it might happen.

Emotional Relapse can include: Mood swings, Isolation, Poor sleep schedule, Unhealthy eating habits, Poor self-care.

Mental Relapse can include: Experiencing cravings, Fantasizing about using, Bargaining times it would be “okay” to use, Planning physical relapse, Glamorizing drug or alcohol use.

Physical Relapse is when someone is actively using a substances

It's important to remember that relapsing does not mean they have failed, just that the individual needs to re-evaluate their coping methods and behaviors.

how to deal with it.

Educating yourself with local support services. Be supportive. Don't approach the situation with judgement. Instead approach with love, empathy and compassion to get the best results.

Avoid Enabling behavior. This can be when you make excuses, take the blame or give money. By doing this you not allowing them to experience the negative repercussions of their use.

aftercare.

triggers/cravings.

what is it?.

“A trigger causes something to happen or causes a person to do something. In this case, a trigger causes an urge or craving to use substances, normally because it prompts feelings or memories associated with the person’s substance of choice.”

when it might happen.

Triggers can be both internal and external. Internal triggers could be feelings of loneliness, boredom, sadness, anger, or anxiety, and external triggers could be certain smells, tastes, music, TV shows, people, places, certain days or times of the day, parties, or arguments. For example, if a person tends to use Cannabis at 4pm every day when they return home, feeling low after a day at school, they are likely to crave Cannabis each time they return home from school; the time of day, place, and emotion being their triggers.

how to deal with it.

what is it?

To get ahead of your personal triggers, it can help to take time, after a craving has passed, to make a note of what you think might have triggered it so that you can be better prepared next time or avoid the trigger all together.

When triggered by certain situations, your body can learn to expect the drug, and then prepares itself to tolerate the effects of the drug. This is why, the higher your tolerance, and the longer you have used the drug, the stronger your cravings will be.

Cravings tend to last for about 30 minutes at a time, so don't react to a craving straight away. Try to keep yourself distracted for this time and notice how you feel when it has passed.

It can help to make a plan in advance of what activities you will do to distract yourself. Try to choose enjoyable activities that will match the energy of your craving and keep your mind occupied. For example, cooking dinner, doing a workout, playing Tetris; or if relaxation is better suited to you, journaling, deep breathing, or reading may help fill this time.

Something else to think about in advance is why you decided to cut down or stop originally. Weigh up the pros and cons of your drug use and note down your motivations for change, whether that is the impact your drug use is having on your family, friends, finances, mental health, physical health, or anything that is personal to your experience. Having this noted down means, when you're experiencing cravings and all you can think about are the good things about using, you will have a list of reasons to challenge these thoughts.