

DENISE (45):

"I don't get as many customers when I'm not using. Coke makes me more attractive to men: I look more self-assured and relaxed."

The use of alcohol and other drugs can temporarily push your emotions to the background. They can make you bolder, make your inhibitions disappear, and keep you going longer.

Sometimes customers pay more if you're willing to use together. But substance use can also lead to unsafe sex. Or offering services you wouldn't perform when sober.

This leaflet provides neutral information on drugs, their possible effects on sex-work and how to reduce risks.

Circumstances and effects

The action and effects of various substances depend on a range of factors. Firstly on the type of substance and the grade (purity). Next, the physical and mental state of the user (sex, weight, mood, and emotional stability) influence the effects. The setting in which you use plays an important role too. And lastly, the effects depend on how much and how often you use (tolerance).

FELICIA (28):

"I take only speed when I'm working behind the windows. This way I don't get tired, so I can work double shifts. But afterwards I'm devastated."

Types of substance and effects

Substances are roughly divided in three groups: downers, uppers and trippers (hallucinogens). Psychedelic trips are used the least, as they can be so intense that they reduce the desire for sex.

DOWNERS:

Downers (alcohol, heroin, GHB, GBL, also cannabis and ketamine) are narcotics and produce a mellow, euphoric and relaxing effect. Downers lower blood pressure, heart rhythm and body temperature and make your breathing more superficial. Downers can also make you drowsy, less aware of your surroundings and suppress negative feelings and fears. Sexually, they can increase your desire for sex, lessen your restraints and relax your muscles. Depending on the substance, it can become problematic to get or keep a hard-on. Reaching an orgasm can also be harder, especially when using frequently or daily. Customers can get frustrated about this and, hence, aggressive.

UPPERS:

Uppers (XTC, MDMA, speed, cocaine, crystal meth) are stimulants. The effects of uppers are the opposite to those of downers: they excite, arouse and make you more alert. Uppers heighten blood pressure and body temperature and speed up heart rhythm and breathing. They also lessen the need for sleep and suppress hunger and thirst. Uppers boost your energy, give way to sexual arousal and can make you cuddly. Get clear what your customer wants, and decide beforehand if you want to go along with this. Getting (and keeping) an erection and reaching an orgasm can be more tricky.

Cannabis, ketamine, XTC and MDMA can cause trippy effects as well, besides their respective narcotic and stimulating effects.

ANIKI (28):

"When I'm working, I take alcohol and coke. The alcohol makes me feel relaxed and coke keeps me alert."

Combining substances

Some combinations might seem to diminish each other effects. For example, by taking an upper (speed or coke) you might notice less effects of any downers you might have taken, such as alcohol. Actually, combining substances can add up like 1+1=3. The effects of the two substances combined will be more intense than when taken separately. This causes extra strain on your body and is potentially dangerous. For instance, when you combine alcohol and cocaine. Your liver creates a third substance, coca-ethylene, which stresses your heart and veins even more than the effects of coke and alcohol by themselves. Further coca-ethylene seem to hamper the breakdown of toxic chemicals.

This means it's important to know beforehand what effects a certain combination might have. Stories of others hold no guarantee your mind and body will experience the same. It is advisable to choose a safe surrounding when experimenting with combinations of substances. Only try substances you know by experience, only take small doses and wait for the effect of one substance to kick in before taking the next.

Do's and don'ts

- Decide what you want do and do not want to do with a customer beforehand, when you're still sober. Personal boundaries can become blurry when you're under the influence.
- Get your drugs tested. You can do this for free and anonymously. Check www.drugs-test.nl for addresses.
- Never share shooting gear (water, filters, syringes or stericups) with others. Sharing gear increases the risks of getting infected with HIV or hepatitis C.
- Don't share straws or banknotes used for snorting with other people. The drugs can cause small wounds in the mucous tissue of your nose, which can transmit hepatitis C.
- Start with small doses if you're not familiar with a substance. Build it up slowly if you want to use more.

When you're on coke, speed or crystal meth sex tends to be longer, harder and more aggressive. At the same time these substances will make the mucous tissue of your vagina (or anus) dry out. This enhances the risk of torn condoms and small wounds and, hence, infections with STD's. Therefore, change condoms every 15 minutes and apply lubricant abundantly (water based).

- Safety first: don't accept customers that clearly have had too much to drink, and might become aggressive.
- Agree with the customer upfront not only on which service you'll perform and communicate a time limit on the service. When under the influence, the customer might have trouble coming and demand to go on. If he wants to continue, make sure he pays for the extra time.
- Most substances suppress hunger. Make sure you eat something before you go to work and before you use. Eat something small in between, like a banana or some nuts, so you don't feel as drained afterwards. After a long shift, make sure you charge your batteries by getting enough sleep and some health food.
- Tryptophan (a protein that can be found in eggs, codfish, cheese, bananas and soybeans) can ease an XTC-hangover. Antioxidants taken before, during and after substance use can diminish brain damage and hangovers also. These can be found in vegetables like broccoli, peppers or Brussels sprouts or fruits like plums, raisins or blueberries.
- Certain medication (like HIV-inhibitors, sleeping meds or anti-depressants) can enhance or dampen the effects of alcohol or drugs (and vice versa). Talk openly to your practitioner. They are under the cath of secrecy and can give you more information
- Some customers will pay more to use together. This may sound attractive, but make sure you know where you draw the line.
- Get yourself tested on STDs on a regular basis. This is free for sex workers and anonymous if you go to the municipal health services (GGD). Check www.ggd.nl for your local address.

More information

► prostitutie.nl ► spot46.nl ► mainline.nl

Colophon

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MAINline



GETTING
HIGH