

A

[Abstinence](#)

Refraining from drug use; being drug-free.

[Addiction](#)

Physical or psychological dependence on a drug. The term drug dependent is preferred. See also Drug dependence.

[Agonist](#)

A drug that mimics naturally occurring chemicals that stimulate particular receptors in the brain and central nervous system. Examples of agonists include opiates and nicotine. See also Antagonist.

[AIDS](#)

Acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) is caused by a human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which attacks and weakens the body's immune system, making it a target for infections and diseases. See also HIV.

[Alcohol](#)

A liquid produced by fermentation, which is the action of yeast on liquids containing sugars and starches. A depressant drug that slows down activity in the central nervous system.

[Alcohol abuse](#)

See: alcoholism

[Alcohol addiction](#)

See: alcoholism

[Alcohol policy](#)

The approach taken by governments towards alcoholic beverages. Alcohol policy covers a range of issues, including laws and regulations regarding the supply, distribution and consumption of alcohol.

[Alcoholism](#)

A clinical syndrome characterised by very heavy alcohol consumption and continued drinking despite severe negative social and physical consequences. See also Drug dependence.

[Alternative treatments](#)

Also called alternative medicine, alternative therapies or complementary medicine. A variety of therapeutic or preventive health care practices that do not follow accepted medical methods and may not have a scientific explanation for their effectiveness. Examples include acupuncture, homeopathy, chiropractic and naturopathy.

[Amphetamine](#)

A synthetic stimulant drug that affects the central nervous system and speeds up the messages going from the brain to the body. Also known as "speed".

[Amyl nitrate](#)

Sold by prescription in tablet form and taken under the tongue as a heart medication. These are not used recreationally and are not "poppers". See amyl nitrite for comparison.

[Amyl nitrite](#)

A substance belonging to a group of chemicals called "alkyl nitrites", sometimes used as an inhalant drug referred to as "poppers". Inhalants produce a depressant effect. See amyl nitrate for comparison.

[Anabolic steroids](#)

Synthetic substance derived from the male hormone, testosterone. Assist in the growth and repair of muscle. Some anabolic steroids are used to treat medical conditions and are sometimes misused to enhance athletic performance and appearance. See also Performance and image enhancing drug.

[Analgesics](#)

Painkilling drugs.

[Antagonist](#)

A substance that blocks the effects of another drug by binding with the receptor site for that drug in

the brain; for example, naltrexone is an antagonist for opioids. See also Agonist.

[Antidepressant](#)

A psychoactive drug used to treat depression and depressive disorders, for example, selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), such as Prozac and Zoloft.

[Anxiety disorders](#)

Disorders characterised by persistent and unpleasant feelings of fear or apprehension that significantly interfere with daily life. Examples of anxiety disorders include generalised anxiety disorder (GAD), panic disorder, agoraphobia, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

[AOD](#)

An acronym of alcohol and other drugs.

[Aspirin](#)

An over the counter painkilling drug which can also be used to reduce fever or inflammation.

[Assessment](#)

Specific evaluation methods and tests used in screening, identification, diagnosis and determining suitability for treatment.

[ATS](#)

An acronym for amphetamine-type substances. A group of drugs related to the chemical compound amphetamine, which are made in laboratories by mixing different chemical substances. These include amphetamine, methamphetamine, MDMA, MDA and PMA.

[AUDIT](#)

An acronym for Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test. The AUDIT is a 10-question test developed by the World Health Organization to determine if a person's alcohol consumption may be harmful.

B

[Benzodiazepines](#)

Sedatives that affect the central nervous system by slowing down the body physically, mentally and emotionally. Prescribed by doctors to treat anxiety, sleeping problems, epilepsy, alcohol withdrawal, and muscle spasms.

[Betel nut](#)

Also known as Areca nut is the seed of Areca catechu. It is a stimulant similar to nicotine and is chewed in a similar manner to chewing tobacco.

[Binge](#)

An episode of intense (concentrated) or excessive drug use over a short period of time or continuously over a number of days or weeks, usually with the intent of becoming intoxicated. See also: binge drinking.

[Binge drinking](#)

A colloquial term for the excessive consumption of alcohol over a short period of time with the intended effect of becoming intoxicated. There is no scientific term for binge drinking, as the amount of alcohol consumed before intoxication occurs varies depending on the consumer's age, sex, body mass and prior experience with alcohol. See also: binge

[Bipolar disorders](#)

Mental disorders characterised by recurring and extreme swings in mood and behaviour, from depression and sadness, to elation and excitement. There are several types of bipolar disorder.

[Blood alcohol content](#)

Measure of the amount of alcohol in a person's blood. Generally, the more alcohol a person drinks, the higher their blood alcohol content (BAC). See also Alcohol.

[Blood borne virus](#)

A virus that is carried in the blood. Blood borne viruses (BBVs) can be transmitted sexually or by direct exposure to infected blood, such as through sharing drug injecting equipment. BBVs include hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV.

[Bong](#)

A type of water pipe used for smoking cannabis. See also Cannabis.

[Brief intervention](#)

A treatment strategy involving short, structured therapy, which primarily aims to assist an individual to stop or reduce their drug use.

[Buprenorphine](#)

A synthetic agonist/antagonist that can be used in substitution treatment for heroin dependence. It has been used for the short-term treatment of moderate to severe pain. Withdrawal from buprenorphine is milder and the overdose risk is lower than with other opioid agonists.

Buprenorphine is sold as Subutex®.

C

[Caffeine](#)

A stimulant that acts on the central nervous system to speed up the messages to and from the brain. It is a substance found in the leaves, seeds or fruit of a number of plant species, such as coffee and tea plants.

[Cannabis](#)

A depressant that comes from the hemp plant, Cannabis sativa. When taken at high doses it can have hallucinogenic properties. Marijuana, hashish and hashish oil come from this plant. The active chemical in cannabis is THC (delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol).

[Chroming](#)

The practice of inhaling vapours from volatile substances. Modes of administration include huffing (saturated material is held against the mouth and/or nose) and bagging (vapours are inhaled from a plastic or paper bag held over the nose and/or mouth). See also Inhalant.

[Cocaine](#)

A powerful central nervous system stimulant used to produce euphoria. Most commonly comes in the form of a white, odourless powder called "cocaine hydrochloride". The powder is obtained from the leaves of the coca bush.

[Codeine](#)

Extracted from morphine and sold commercially to treat mild to moderate pain. See also Morphine.

[Cognitive behavioural therapy](#)

Short-term psychotherapy that seeks to replace poor or counterproductive coping skills with positive skills. Has direct relevance to drug dependence treatment as it claims to identify and neutralise triggers for relapse. Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is the favoured treatment method in the drug treatment field. See also Treatment.

[Come-down](#)

The gradual wearing off of the effects of a drug after a "high".

[Community mobilisation](#)

Community mobilisation is the process of engaging communities to identify community priorities, resources, needs and solutions in such a way as to promote representative participation, good governance, accountability and peaceful change.

[Comorbidity](#)

See dual diagnosis.

[Cone](#)

The section of a bong or pipe into which cannabis is packed. See also Bong, Cannabis.

[Controlled substance](#)

A substance that is subject to government controls on its manufacture, sale or distribution.

[Court diversion](#)

An initiative to divert some people who use drugs away from courts and the criminal justice system into treatment or education programs.

[Crack](#)

A very pure form of cocaine obtained by heating cocaine powder combined with baking soda (freebasing) and sold in the form of small crystals or rocks. See also Cocaine.

[Crash](#)

The "down" that typically follows a period of concentrated use of a stimulant drug, such as amphetamine or cocaine, over a period of several days. The "crash" begins when use is discontinued. See also Come-down.

[Crystal meth](#)

A slang name for crystalline methamphetamine. See also Ice and Methamphetamine.

[Cut](#)

To adulterate or dilute drugs with other substances.

D

[Decriminalisation](#)

Drug policy where possession of a drug for personal use is treated as a misdemeanour rather than a criminal offence. Often applied to substances considered to be less likely to cause dependence.

[Delusion](#)

A delusion is a psychotic symptom of particular types of mental illness, such as schizophrenia. A delusion is a firmly held belief not held by others. People who experience delusions may give bizarre explanations for experiences or circumstances. For example, they may believe they are being spied upon, followed or poisoned.

[Demand reduction](#)

Policies or programs that aim to reduce consumer demand for controlled substances. See also Harm minimisation, Harm reduction and Supply reduction.

[Depressant](#)

A drug that causes the body to slow down and relax. Depressant drugs can also cause drowsiness, and slowed breathing and heart rate.

[Depressive disorders](#)

A group of illnesses characterised by a depressed mood, low self-esteem and a reduced interest or pleasure in regular activities, over a prolonged period of time, which affects a person's everyday life.

[Designer drug](#)

Designer drugs are synthetic analogues of illicit drugs, developed to circumvent drug laws.

[Detoxification](#)

The process of removing drugs from the body by allowing them to metabolise over time. Often the initial stage of drug treatment. See also Treatment.

[Dopamine](#)

A brain chemical produced naturally by certain brain cells. Specific drugs may block specific effects of dopamine, act like dopamine at specific receptor sites or increase the availability of dopamine.

[Drink spiking](#)

The practice of adding alcohol or another substance to a drink without the knowledge of the person who will be consuming it. The effects depend on the type and quantity of the additive used and can include vomiting, loss of consciousness, respiratory difficulties and loss of control. Drink spiking is illegal in Australia.

[Drug](#)

Any substance taken to change the way the body and/or mind function.

[Drug dependence](#)

Occurs when a drug is central to a person's life, they have trouble cutting down their use and experience symptoms of withdrawal when trying to cut down. Can be physical or psychological, or both. When a person's body has adapted to a drug and is used to functioning with the drug present, the person is said to be physically dependent upon that drug. When a person feels compelled to use a drug in order to function effectively or to achieve emotional satisfaction, the person is said to be psychologically dependent upon that drug. See also Tolerance.

[Drug diversion](#)

Diversion of people who use drugs from the criminal justice system into drug treatment. See also Court diversion, Treatment.

[Drug induced psychosis](#)

A disorder of the mind that occurs as a result of substance misuse. Drug induced psychosis is characterised by a range of symptoms, including hallucinations (most commonly auditory), paranoia or feelings of being persecuted, physical agitation or stupor, and intense emotions such as fear, ecstasy or depression. Substances that can induce psychotic symptoms include alcohol, amphetamines (such as crystal methamphetamine), hallucinogens (such as LSD and psilocybin), cannabis, cocaine and ketamine.

[Drug misuse](#)

The use of any drug for purposes not consistent with legal regulations or medical guidelines. This includes risky alcohol consumption, the hazardous or non-medical use of prescription or over-the-counter medications, and illicit drug use.

[Drug prevention](#)

Programs, services or other measures designed to prevent harmful drug use. There are three levels of drug prevention: primary prevention (preventing uptake of drug use), secondary prevention (preventing problematic and/or increased drug use) and tertiary prevention (reducing use and harms associated with drug use).

[Drug testing](#)

The analysis of body fluids (such as blood, urine or saliva), hair or other tissue for the presence of one or more psychoactive substances.

[Drug use/abuse](#)

See: drug misuse

[DSM](#)

An acronym for the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. The DSM is the diagnostic manual of the American Psychiatric Association. It is used in medical and treatment settings to define mental disorders, including disorders associated with drug dependence and abuse.

[Dual diagnosis](#)

Refers to a person diagnosed as having an alcohol or other drug misuse problem in addition to some other diagnosis, usually psychiatric, for example, a depression or schizophrenia. Also known as comorbidity.

E

[Early intervention](#)

A proactive therapeutic strategy that combines early detection of hazardous or harmful behaviour (such as substance abuse) and treatment of those involved. Treatment is offered or provided before the person might present of their own preference and in many cases before they are aware that their behaviour might cause problems. See also Treatment.

[Ecstasy](#)

Ecstasy is a street term for a range of drugs that are similar in structure to the synthetic stimulant MDMA (methylenedioxymethamphetamine). The chemical structure of MDMA is related to stimulants (amphetamines) and some hallucinogens. Drugs sold as "ecstasy" often contain a range of drugs such as amphetamine, amphetamine derivatives, caffeine, aspirin, paracetamol, ketamine, in addition to, or in place of MDMA. See also MDMA.

[Euphoria](#)

Sense of elation and commonly sought by people who use drugs.

[Evaluation research](#)

Evaluation research is research undertaken to see whether a program or activity is meeting or has met the objectives set for it.

[Experimental drug use](#)

Experimental drug use is when a person tries a drug once or twice out of curiosity.

F

[Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder](#)

An umbrella term used to describe a range of birth defects and child developmental disorders that may occur from exposure of the foetus to alcohol. Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) includes fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS).

[Flashback](#)

The recurrence of an hallucinogenic experience without recent use of an hallucinogen. See also Hallucinogen.

[Freebase](#)

Slang term for the base form of cocaine, as opposed to the salt form of cocaine hydrochloride. It is extracted from cocaine and can be smoked. See also Cocaine.

G

[GHB](#)

Gammahydroxybutyrate (GHB) is a drug that has a depressant effect on the brain and central nervous system. It was originally developed as an anaesthetic but was withdrawn due to unwanted side effects. GHB is used as a "party drug" and has been used to facilitate sexual assault.

H

[Habit-forming](#)

A drug tending to cause addiction, through physiological or physical dependence.

[Half-life](#)

The duration of action of a drug is known as its half life. This is the period of time required for the concentration or amount of drug in the body to be reduced by one-half.

[Hallucinogen](#)

A drug or chemical that changes perception, affecting all senses and sometimes causing hallucinations. A hallucination is a false perception through one of the senses that makes a person see, hear or feel something that is not there. See also Psychoactive substance.

[Harm minimisation](#)

A form of drug prevention that works to reduce or minimise the harms to the individual and the community relating to drug use. Harm minimisation acknowledges that abstinence is the most effective way to avoid harms related to drug use but that this is not always possible in individual circumstances. It operates through three approaches: demand reduction, harm reduction and supply reduction. See also Demand reduction, Harm reduction and Supply reduction.

[Harm reduction](#)

Aims to reduce the impact of drug-related harm within society, at an individual and community level. It includes reducing the physical and social harms associated with drug use, encompassing the prevention of disease, death, incarceration and isolation, without necessarily reducing the underlying drug use. See also Demand reduction, Harm minimisation and Supply reduction.

[Harmful use](#)

A pattern of psychoactive substance use that is causing damage to health.

[Hash oil](#)

A thick, oily liquid extracted from the cannabis plant using a solvent, such as acetone or methanol. See also Cannabis.

[Hashish](#)

A type of cannabis that comes from the resin of the plant. The resin is dried and pressed into a solid lump. Hash is added to tobacco and smoked, or baked and eaten in foods. See also Cannabis.

[Health promotion](#)

Process involving social and environmental interventions aimed at enabling better control over and

improvement in people's health.

[Hepatitis](#)

Inflammation of the liver caused by viruses A, B, C, D and E.

[Heroin](#)

One of a group of drugs called opiates, which are derived from the opium poppy. A depressant that affects the brain by slowing down the activity of the central nervous system and messages going to and from the brain. See also Opiate.

[HIV](#)

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is the blood borne virus that causes AIDS. HIV can be contracted by having vaginal or anal intercourse with an infected person without using a condom, or by sharing needles and other equipment for injecting drugs with an infected person. Transmission can be prevented by practising safe sex (such as using condoms or dams), and not sharing needles or injecting equipment. See also AIDS.

[Hypnotic](#)

A depressant drug that acts on the central nervous system and can induce hypnosis or sleep. See also Sedative.

I

[Ice](#)

Street name for crystalline methamphetamine. It is a powerful, synthetic stimulant drug that is more potent than other forms of amphetamines. It is more pure than the powder form of methamphetamine ("speed"). See also Methamphetamine.

[Illicit drug](#)

An illegal drug. See also Licit drug.

[Inhalant](#)

One of a range of products, which when vaporised and inhaled, may cause a person to feel intoxicated or "high".

[Injecting equipment](#)

Includes needles and syringes, spoons, filters, swabs, water and tourniquets.

[Intoxication](#)

A condition that follows the administration of a sufficient amount of a psychoactive substance and which results in behavioural and/or physical changes. The capacity to think and act within a normal range of ability diminishes.

[Intravenous](#)

Within a vein.

K

[Kava](#)

A drink prepared from the roots of the shrub *Piper methysticum*, widely used in the South Pacific both ceremonially and socially. It produces mild euphoria and sedation.

[Ketamine](#)

An hallucinogenic dissociative anaesthetic that is used in surgery and veterinary medicine. It causes amnesia (memory loss) and analgesia (pain-relief). Low doses produce stimulant effects; medium to high doses produce possible out-of-body or near death experiences.

[Khat](#)

A stimulant derived from the leaves and buds of an East African plant, *Catha edulis*, which are chewed or brewed as a beverage. The active components of khat are cathinone and cathine.

[Kronic](#)

A brand of synthetic cannabis. See also Synthetic cannabis.

L

[Legal high](#)

A general term for substances designed to mimic or produce similar effects to common illicit drugs, such as cocaine, ecstasy and cannabis. They may also be known as NEDs (new and emerging drugs) or NPSs (new psychoactive substances).

[Legalisation](#)

Legal actions that make legal what was previously a criminalised behaviour, product, or condition. See also Decriminalisation.

[Licit drug](#)

A legal drug. See also Illicit drug.

[Liquid ecstasy](#)

Another name for GHB.

[LSD](#)

Lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) is a hallucinogenic drug, which is synthesised from ergot, a fungus that grows on rye and various other grains.

M

[Magic mushrooms](#)

Fungi that contain psychedelic substances, such as the hallucinogen psilocybin.

[Marijuana](#)

The dried greenish-brown leaves or flowers of the plant *Cannabis sativa*. The most common form of cannabis. Smoked in hand-rolled cigarettes (joints) or in a pipe (a bong). See also Cannabis.

[MDA](#)

Methylenedioxyamphetamine (MDA) is an amphetamine similar to ecstasy. It is more hallucinogenic than MDMA and its effects last almost twice as long.

[MDMA](#)

Methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA), also known as "ecstasy", is a synthetic stimulant and has hallucinogenic properties.

[Medical cannabis](#)

The use of cannabis or cannabinoids to treat disease or alleviate symptoms. Cannabis can be prescribed in a number of forms and administered in a variety of ways. It can be taken in herbal form, pills, oils or in vaporisers. Cannabis prescribed for medical purposes can be taken orally or topically; it can also be inhaled or absorbed through the mucosa of the mouth (sublingual administration). See also: cannabis.

[Mental disorder](#)

A clinically diagnosable cognitive, emotional or behavioural disorder that interferes with the way a person thinks, feels and behaves. Examples of mental disorders include depression, anxiety, bipolar disorders and schizophrenia.

[Mental health](#)

A mental state of wellbeing in which a person can cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively, and make a contribution to their community.

[Mental illness](#)

A clinically diagnosable cognitive, emotional or behavioural disorder that interferes with the way a person thinks, feels and behaves. Examples of mental illness include depression, anxiety, bipolar disorders and schizophrenia.

[Mephedrone](#)

A powerful stimulant drug which affects mood, it is also known as 'miaow miaow', 4-methylmethcathinone or 4-MMC.

[Methadone](#)

A synthetic opiate often used to treat heroin dependence. When given in an adequate dose to opioid dependent individuals, methadone tends to reduce desire to use heroin and other opiates, eliminates opioid withdrawal, and blocks the euphoric effects of the other opioid drugs. See also Heroin, Opiate.

[Methamphetamine](#)

A stimulant drug, also called speed or amphetamine. Most commonly it is found as a colourless crystalline solid, sold under a variety of names, such as crystal meth, crystal or "ice". See also Amphetamine, Ice.

[MMT](#)

An acronym for methadone maintenance therapy or methadone maintenance treatment. Treatment of opioid dependence by prescription of a substitute drug (methadone) for which cross-dependence and cross-tolerance exist. The goals of maintenance therapy are to eliminate or reduce use of a particular substance, especially if it's illegal, or to reduce harm from a particular method of use.

[Morphine](#)

Major sedative and pain-relieving drug produced from opium. See also Opium.

[Motivational interviewing](#)

A counselling and assessment technique. It uses a non-confrontational approach to questioning people about difficult issues like alcohol and other drug use and helping them to make positive decisions to reduce or stop their drug use.

N

[Naloxone](#)

A narcotic antagonist that reverses the respiratory, sedative and hypotensive effects of heroin overdose. It can be injected intramuscularly, intravenously or subcutaneously. Sold in Australia under the trade name Narcan. See also Antagonist.

[Naltrexone](#)

A drug that antagonises the effects of opioid drugs. Its effects are similar to those of naloxone, but it is more potent and has a longer duration of action. It is prescribed to help people maintain abstinence after they have withdrawn (detoxified) from heroin or other opioids. See also Antagonist, Opioid.

[Narcotic drug](#)

A chemical agent that can induce stupor, coma, or insensibility to pain. The term usually refers to opiates or opioids, which are sometimes referred to as narcotic analgesics.

[Needle exchange](#)

Supply of needles to people who use drugs intravenously. Needle and syringe exchange programs aim to reduce the transmission of infectious diseases by the repeated use and sharing of needles.

[New psychoactive substances](#)

New psychoactive substances (NPS) are a range of drugs that have been designed to mimic established illicit drugs, such as cannabis, cocaine, ecstasy and LSD.

[Nicotine](#)

The main psychoactive substance in tobacco. People who use tobacco can develop tolerance for and become physically dependent on nicotine.

[NSP](#)

An acronym for needle and syringe program. A public health measure, consistent with the principles of harm minimisation, to reduce the spread of infections, such as HIV and hepatitis C, among people who inject drugs. NSPs provide sterile injecting equipment, education on reducing drug use, health information, and referral to drug treatment, medical care and legal and social services. Programs do not supply drugs or allow people to inject drugs on the premises.

O

[Obsessive-compulsive disorder](#)

An anxiety disorder characterised by unwanted recurring thoughts, urges or images (obsessions) or repetitive behaviours (compulsions) that interfere with daily life.

[Opiate](#)

One of a group of alkaloids derived from the opium poppy (*Papaver somniferum*) with the ability to induce analgesia, euphoria, and, in higher doses, stupor, coma, and respiratory depression. The

term opiate excludes synthetic opioids such as heroin and methadone.

[Opioid](#)

The term applied to alkaloids derived from the opium poppy (*Papaver somniferum*) and synthetic drugs that interact with the same specific receptors in the brain. These substances have the capacity to relieve pain, and produce a sense of well-being (euphoria). Heroin, methadone, codeine, morphine and opium are opioids.

[Opium](#)

The coagulated juice of the opium poppy (*Papaver somniferum*). Contains a number of alkaloids, such as morphine, codeine, and papaverine.

[Outreach](#)

Engagement with individuals or groups not effectively reached through existing services or traditional health education channels, with the overall aim of improving health and reducing risk or harm.

[Over-the-counter drug](#)

Drug that can be sold or administered without a prescription.

[Overdose](#)

When the amount of a drug taken exceeds the body's ability to cope with the drug. Results in acute adverse physical or psychological effects, including stupor, coma, respiratory depression or death.

[Oxycodone](#)

A prescription only opioid painkilling drug used to treat moderate to severe pain.

P

[Panic disorder](#)

A disorder characterised by unpredictable but recurring attacks of intense fear or discomfort (panic).

[PCP](#)

Phencyclidine (PCP) is a drug that has both hallucinogenic and dissociative properties. The dissociative effects of PCP leaves users feeling removed from their body and their environment. This effect produces a trance-like state. It also has strong anaesthetic effects, which produces amnesia (memory loss) and analgesia (pain-relief). Also known as "angel dust".

[Peer education](#)

Programs that involve training same-age or same-background people to educate a target group about issues relating to a particular topic, such as alcohol and other drug use, or mental illness.

[Peer support](#)

A system of giving and receiving help or treatment from same-age or same-background people that focuses on developing communication skills, self-confidence and self-esteem.

[Performance and image enhancing drug](#)

A drug, such as an anabolic steroid, growth hormone, reproductive hormone or peptide, that can increase muscle strength, increase endurance, influence body shape and psychologically improve self-esteem and confidence. See also Steroid.

[Pharmaceutical drug](#)

An over-the-counter or prescription drug available through a pharmacy. See also Over-the-counter drug.

[Pharmacotherapy](#)

Therapy to treat drug dependence by prescribing a substitute drug, such as methadone or buprenorphine, that is similar to the drug of dependence.

[PMA](#)

Paramethoxyamphetamine (PMA or PMMA) is a particularly toxic substance from the amphetamine family, often sold as ecstasy. See also Amphetamine.

[Poly drug use](#)

Using two or more drugs at the same time.

[Potentiation](#)

Interaction between 2 or more drugs where the effect is greater than the responses to the individual

substances' effects combined.

[Prevention](#)

A health management strategy that aims to prevent disease or other health issues in a population by inhibiting their onset. Prevention can be divided into three subgroups: primary prevention, secondary prevention and tertiary prevention. Primary prevention involves measures taken to prevent the acquisition of a disease or health problem. It involves actions intended to reduce risk factors. Secondary prevention involves measures taken to identify and treat persons who are at risk of a health issue or who are showing symptoms. Tertiary prevention involves measures taken to inhibit the progression of an existing health issue in persons already affected. Prevention can also be classified by target group as universal, selective or indicated. Universal prevention is preventative action that applies to the whole population. Selective prevention is action applied to people who are at risk of harm or showing symptoms. Indicated prevention is action applied to those with a serious condition or disease.

[Protective factor](#)

A protective factor refers to anything that prevents or reduces vulnerability for the development of a disorder such as drug misuse.

[Psychedelic substance](#)

See Hallucinogen.

[Psychoactive substance](#)

A drug that affect a person's central nervous system. Psychoactive substances alter brain activity, and can change the way a person thinks, feels or behaves. See also Hallucinogen.

[Psychosis](#)

Any significant mental disorder distinguished by a loss of contact with reality. Prominent hallucinations and delusions may be associated with psychosis.

[Psychostimulant](#)

A drug that affects the central nervous system and can produce euphoria, a sense of wellbeing, wakefulness and alertness. Prolonged use or high levels of use can cause behavioural disturbances.

[PWID](#)

An acronym for person who injects drugs.

R

[RBT](#)

An acronym for random breath test or roadside breath test. In Australia, drivers may be stopped at any point along any road by a police officer for an RBT.

[Receptor](#)

Cell in the brain that is sensitive to a particular substance or drug. For example, the effects of heroin are experienced when the drug attaches itself to the opioid receptor in the brain.

[Relapse](#)

A recurrence of harmful drug use after a period of abstinence or stability in treatment. Relapse is common among people who are drug-dependent when they are attempting to stop drug use. See also Drug dependence, Treatment.

[Residential treatment](#)

Live-in rehabilitation or detoxification care, or a combination of both. Residential rehabilitation care varies depending on the service, but does not usually provide withdrawal medication. Residential detoxification involves a short stay in a community residential drug withdrawal unit or hospital where clinical staff provide 24-hour support.

[Risk reduction](#)

Policies or programs (including treatment) that focus on reducing the risk of harms associated with drug use.

[Rohypnol](#)

A powerful benzodiazepine that induces sleep. See also Benzodiazepine.

S

[Schizophrenia](#)

A mental illness characterised by psychotic symptoms (delusions, hallucinations), as well thinking difficulties and reduced motivation and emotional expression.

[Screening](#)

Testing a person to determine for example their use of drugs.

[Sedative](#)

Depressant drug that acts on the central nervous system to lessen anxiety and induce calmness and sleep. See also Hypnotic.

[Self-help group](#)

A voluntary group dedicated to recovery from drug dependence through cooperative counselling.

[Serotonin](#)

A neurotransmitter that has a prominent role in sleep regulation and mood. It is affected by a number of psychoactive substances. Its synaptic concentration is increased by stimulants, for example, ecstasy (MDMA) and its release is inhibited by opioid receptors. See also Opioid, Receptor.

[Snorting](#)

Ingesting powdered drugs through the nose.

[Solvent](#)

A volatile substance, such as petrol, glue and aerosols.

[Speed](#)

Another name for amphetamine or methamphetamine.

[Stages of change](#)

Model developed by Prochaska and DiClemente to describe the stages involved in changing a behaviour or problem.

[Standard drink](#)

A drink that contains 10 grams of ethanol (pure alcohol). See also Alcohol.

[Steroid](#)

One of a group of naturally occurring or synthetic hormones that affect the chemical processes in the body, growth and sexual and other physiological functions. Anabolic steroids are misused by athletes with the aim of increasing strength and performance.

[Stimulant](#)

A drug that acts to stimulate certain chemicals in the brain. Stimulants increase alertness, heart rate, blood pressure, and breathing rate. Examples of stimulants include caffeine, amphetamines and nicotine.

[Substance abuse](#)

Consumption of a substance despite persistent or recurrent social or interpersonal problems caused or exacerbated by the effects of the substance. See also Drug abuse.

[Substance use disorders](#)

A group of cognitive, behavioural and physiological symptoms that indicate continued use of a drug despite significant problems.

[Supply reduction](#)

Policies or programs, usually involving law enforcement agencies, designed to reduce the manufacture and/or distribution of illicit drugs. See also Demand reduction, Harm minimisation and Harm reduction.

[Synthetic cannabis](#)

Manufactured chemicals that aim to mimic the effects of delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the active ingredient in cannabis. Synthetic cannabinoids are usually sold combined with herbs. Brands of synthetic cannabis include Spice and Kronic.

[Synthetic drugs](#)

See: new psychoactive substances.

T

[THC](#)

Delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) is the primary psychoactive agent in cannabis. See also Cannabis.

[Therapeutic community](#)

A residential environment where a person with a drug-related problem undergoes rehabilitation through abstinence and community participation. Therapeutic communities are often specifically designed for people who are drug-dependent; they operate under strict rules, are run mainly by people who have recovered from dependence, and are often geographically isolated. See also Drug dependence.

[Tobacco](#)

Any preparation of the dried leaves of *Nicotiana tabacum* or *Nicotiana rustica*. The main psychoactive ingredient is nicotine. See also Nicotine.

[Tolerance](#)

Where a person's body becomes used to a drug being present and more of the drug is needed to cause the same effect felt previously with smaller amounts. See also Drug dependence.

[Tranquilliser](#)

A prescription-only medicine used in the treatment of anxiety. Common tranquillisers include Valium®, Mogadon®, Temazepam® and Xanax®.

[Twelve-step program](#)

A widely used method of treatment, originally implemented by Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) in the 1930s. The 12 steps are to be approached sequentially as a way to stop addictive or dysfunctional behaviours.

U

[Urinalysis](#)

Testing of urine for the presence of drugs or drug metabolites.

V

[Volatile substance](#)

A substance that vaporizes at ambient temperatures. Some volatile substances are inhaled for psychoactive effects (also called inhalants). See also Inhalants.

W

[Withdrawal](#)

Stopping or reducing heavy or lengthy drug use. Usually accompanied by a set of symptoms ranging from mild to severe, which depend on the person and the drug they are withdrawing from.

Z

[Zero tolerance](#)

A term commonly associated with strict policing measures, based on the belief that activities associated with illegal drugs should not be tolerated at any level. This approach emphasises the law as the main method of dealing with drugs and drug issues.