

POLY-

SUBSTANCE

USE

7 facts everyone must know about PSU.

01 PSU CAUSES 63% OF OVERDOSE DEATHS

Polysubstance use played a role in almost two-thirds of overdose deaths in the past years. And the numbers are rising. These overdose deaths often happen by accident when illicit substances are laced with fentanyl.

02 PSU OFTEN HAPPENS UNINTENTIONALLY

People sometimes don't know that they are using different substances at the same time. The reason is that almost all fake pills and street drugs are laced with potentially lethal doses of fentanyl or xylazine (tranq).

03 PSU MAKES OVERDOSES MORE LIKELY

Using several substances at the same time makes their effects stronger and more unpredictable. This increases the risks of an overdose and death.

04 OVERDOSE REVERSAL IS MORE DIFFICULT

While naloxone, aka Narcan®, can reverse an opioid overdose, it doesn't work for other drugs. However, you should always have it with you and use it when you see an overdose.

05 MIXING UPPERS AND DOWNERS DOESN'T CANCEL THEM OUT

Stimulants (uppers) like cocaine, ecstasy, and meth have the opposite effect from depressants (downers) like alcohol, opioids, and benzodiazepines. But that doesn't mean they cancel each other out. In fact, mixing substances from both groups leads to serious overdose risks.

06 COMBINING DOWNERS CAN BE LETHAL

Depressants decrease heart rate and breathing. When different downers like alcohol, opioids, and benzos are taken together, the effects multiply and can lead to coma and death.

07 DRINKING ALCOHOL WHILE USING DRUGS

Alcohol is a depressant. Drinking while using other drugs makes overdoses more likely and can damage the brain, heart, and other organs.



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Mixing drugs is a deadly gamble.

Polysubstance Use (PSU) means taking more than one substance, either at a time or over a period of time. Whether on purpose or by accident, combining different drugs is always a dangerous gamble. And it doesn't make a difference if it's prescription drugs or illicit substances.

EASY ACCESS MATTERS

- + Effects can become unpredictable
- + Reactions can be stronger than expected
- + Overdose risk is much higher
- + PSU can happen by accident when fake pills or street drugs are laced with fentanyl or xylazine (tranq).

FENTANYL: THE HIDDEN THREAT

Virtually all street drugs, including fake pills, are laced with fentanyl these days. That makes accidental polysubstance use a big problem. People think they are taking one substance, but they're really taking a drug cocktail containing potentially lethal doses of fentanyl.

Always be prepared for an overdose situation and carry naloxone to save lives.



POLYSUBSTANCE

USE BY THE NUMBERS

Here are some stunning stats that show how dangerous combining substances really is.

UP TO 90%

of people seeking opioid treatment report they're using more than one substance.

77%

of cocaine users drink alcohol simultaneously.

85%

of drug-related deaths involving pharmaceuticals, also involved PSU.

25%

of people struggling with Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) have at least two other Substance Use Disorders (SUD).

OVER 50%

of people seeking opioid treatment report they're using more than one substance.



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