

DRUG ABUSE MOTIVATIONS

WHY DO PEOPLE ABUSE DRUGS?

Drug abuse motivations can be divided into two main categories: **self-focused** and **others-focused**.

Self-Focused Motivations

aim to serve the drug abusers. These involve abusing drugs to enhance mood, performance, or sensory experiences.

1 Coping

Escape from negative emotions or cope with threats to self-esteem.

This occurs when someone feels something bad and wishes to forget or numb themselves from it. Often, many drug abusers share that they abuse drugs out of stress, anxiety or sadness.



2 Enhancement

Enhance enjoyment or energy for school or work. Broadly refers to abusing drugs to “do better” at something.

Drug abusers who engage in this behavior often claim that they abuse drugs to enhance their focus, energy, or motivation in order to do better in school or at work.



3 Expansion

Experience beyond normal sensory abilities.

Drug abusers may abuse drugs to heighten or alter their sensory experiences, seeking intense sensations, emotional euphoria, or a break from reality.



Others-Focused Motivations

are driven by social influences, with individuals abuse drugs to bond with others or fit in with a peer group.

1 Socialisation

Bond with others or improve social interactions.

This group of drug abusers often abuse drugs to be more “sociable” or to “make social gatherings more fun.”



2 Conformity

Avoid social disapproval or to gain others’ approval.

This often manifest in abusing drugs to fit in with a group of drug-abusing friends, to “look cool” or to avoid being ostracised.



There may be multiple motivations for drug abuse. For example, abusing drugs at a club to enjoy oneself and make more friends can be seen as both enhancement and socialisation.

Motivations are not always consistent and can change over time. A drug abuser may initially abuse drugs to conform with friends, but later may continue abusing them alone to cope with stress.

While drug abusers may abuse drugs out of curiosity, this is generally not considered a motivation for drug abuse as it only explains why they chose to abuse drugs the first time.

Hence, a drug abuser may try methamphetamine out of curiosity but continue doing so due to enhancement such as to have more energy to focus on work.