



BELLEVILLE AREA CARES  
COALITION  
AODA PREVENTION  
NEWSLETTER  
MARCH 2022

## Ecstasy (MDMA)

3,4-methylenedioxy-methamphetamine (or MDMA) is a synthetic drug that alters mood and perception. It is chemically similar to both stimulants and hallucinogens, producing feelings of increased energy, pleasure, emotional warmth, and distorted sensory and time perception. MDMA was initially popular in the nightclub scene and at all-night dance parties (“raves”), but the drug now affects a broader range of people who more commonly call the drug Ecstasy or Molly.

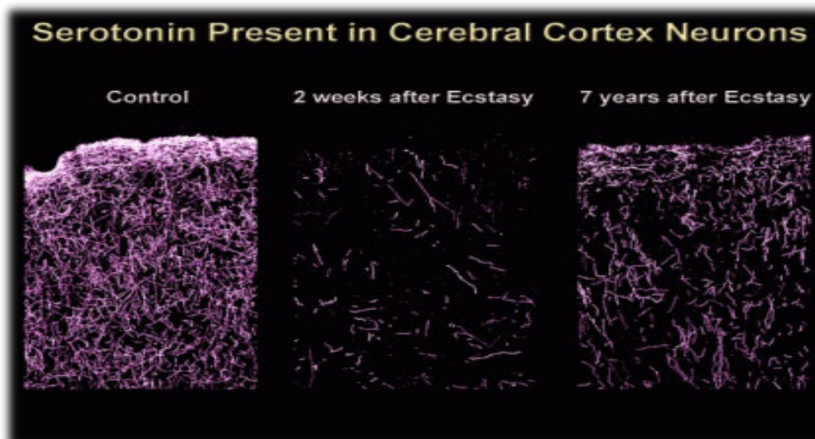


### How does MDMA affect the brain?

- Dopamine—produces increased energy/activity and acts in the reward system to reinforce behaviors
- Norepinephrine—increases heart rate and blood pressure, which are particularly risky for people with heart and blood vessel problems
- Serotonin—affects mood, appetite, sleep, and other functions. It also triggers hormones that affect sexual arousal and trust. The release of large amounts of serotonin likely causes the emotional closeness, elevated mood, and empathy felt by those who use MDMA

### How do people use MDMA?

MDMA usually is taken orally as a capsule or tablet and/or crushed and snorted.

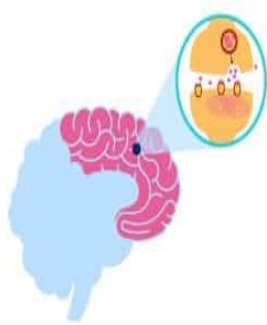
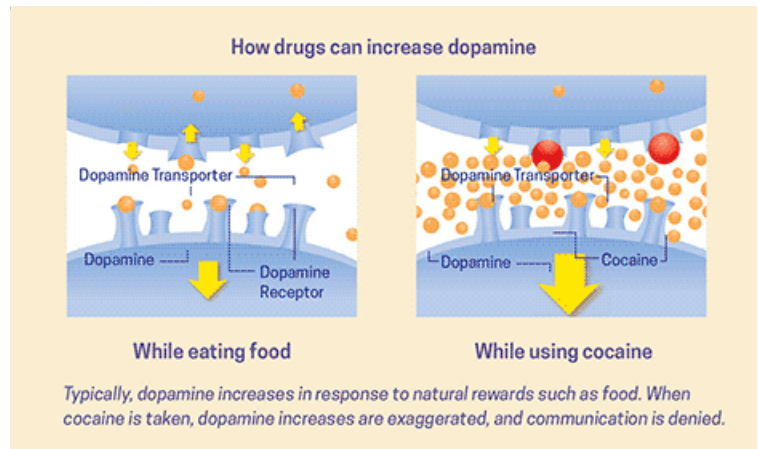


### Other health effects include:

- Nausea
- Muscle cramping
- Involuntary teeth clenching
- Blurred vision
- Chills
- Sweating

# Substance Use and the Brain

Every substance has slightly different effects on the brain, but all addictive drugs, including alcohol, opioids, and cocaine, produce a pleasurable surge of the neurotransmitter dopamine. Dopamine is an organic chemical. This chemical acts as a messenger between brain cells. Dopamine is important for many of our daily behaviors. It plays a role in how we move, for instance, as well as what we eat, how we learn and even whether we become addicted to drugs. Drugs that can impact dopamine levels include, marijuana, heroin & other opioids, stimulants, ecstasy, and PCP. Another neurotransmitter located in the brain is serotonin, which is responsible for stabilizing moods and regulating emotions. Drugs that can impact serotonin levels include ecstasy and hallucinogens.



## Common Parts of the Brain Impacted

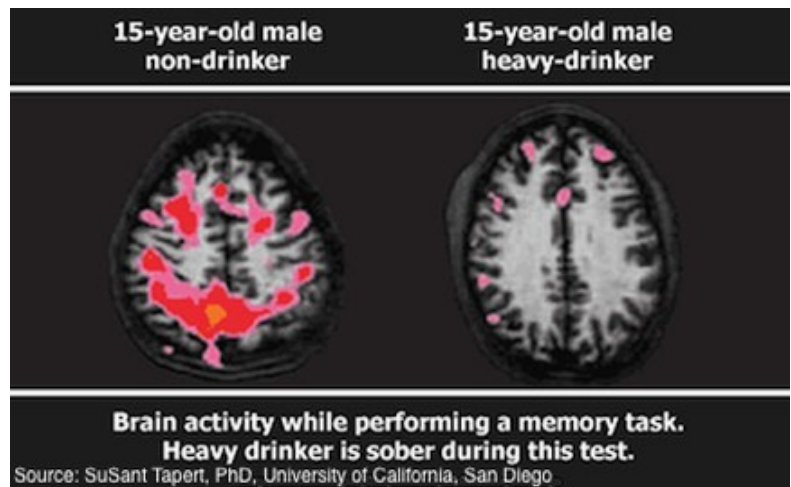
- Neurotransmitters
- Dopamine and serotonin production
- Prefrontal cortex

Gamma-aminobutyric acid (or GABA) and Norepinephrine are chemicals in the brain that can also be affected by drug use. GABA acts as a natural tranquilizer, lowering stress response and anxiety levels as well as slowing down functions of the central nervous system. Drugs like benzodiazepines can increase GABA in the brain, thus decreasing the amount of dopamine. Norepinephrine, which is similar to adrenaline, is often called the “stress hormone” as it speeds up the central nervous system in response to the “fight-or-flight”

response. It also hones focus and attention while increasing energy levels. Drugs like opioids and ecstasy will increase norepinephrine and similar to GABA it will decrease the amount of dopamine that is created.

## Prefrontal Lobe

You use your frontal lobe everyday to make decisions (such as what to eat or drink). It also is used for planning, judgment, impulse control and language. It is important to know that the prefrontal lobe doesn't stop developing until age 23-25. This is important because for teens who choose to underage drink, research has shown that their prefrontal lobe is smaller than teens who do not drink.



# Alcohol and the Brain

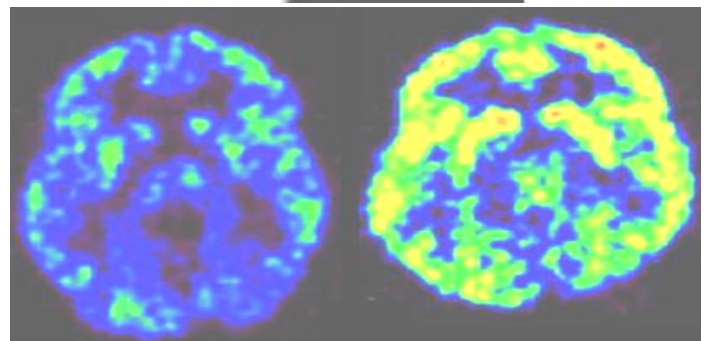
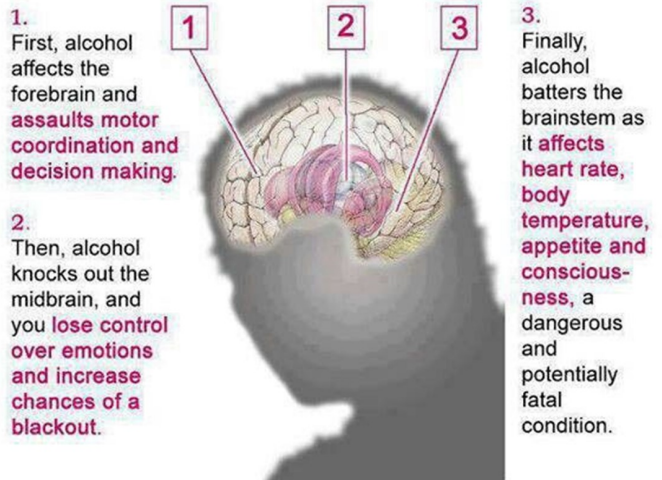
The hippocampus, which is a small organ in the temporal lobe that regulates emotions and is also associated with memory, in particular long-term memory. This small organ is uniquely sensitive to teen alcohol use and can actually destroy the nerve cells in the hippocampus. As a result, teens who drink can have difficulty creating new and lasting memories or recalling information.

So what happens to our brain when someone drinks alcohol:

- Difficulty walking
- Blurred Vision
- Slurred Speech
- Slowed Reaction Times
- Impaired Memory

## HOW ALCOHOL ATTACKS THE BRAIN

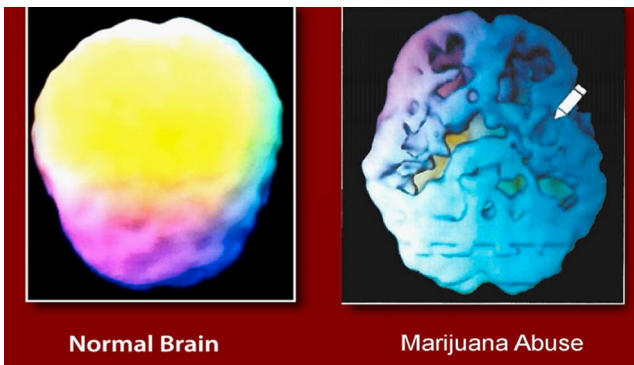
A guide to the sequential damage alcohol inflicts on neural tissue



**ALCOHOLIC BRAIN**  
Darker Coloring indicates depressed brain activity

**NORMAL BRAIN**  
Healthy levels of brain activity

# Marijuana and the Brain

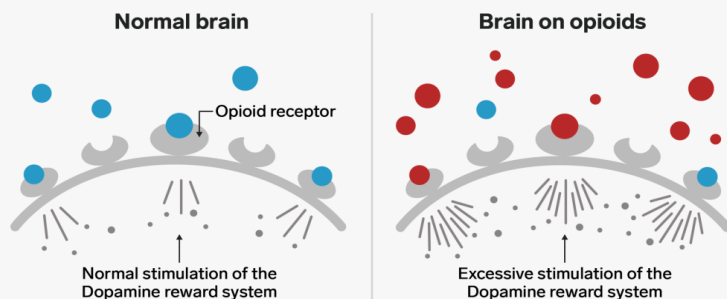


There has been a growing number of studies that show regular marijuana use (once a week or more) actually changes the structure of the teenage brain, specifically in areas dealing with memory and problem solving. A recent study found that teen brains are more vulnerable to the effects of marijuana than alcohol. In the study they discovered that young people who used marijuana frequently were more likely than nonusers to have slightly

lower scores on tests of memory, learning new information, and higher-level problem solving and information processing.

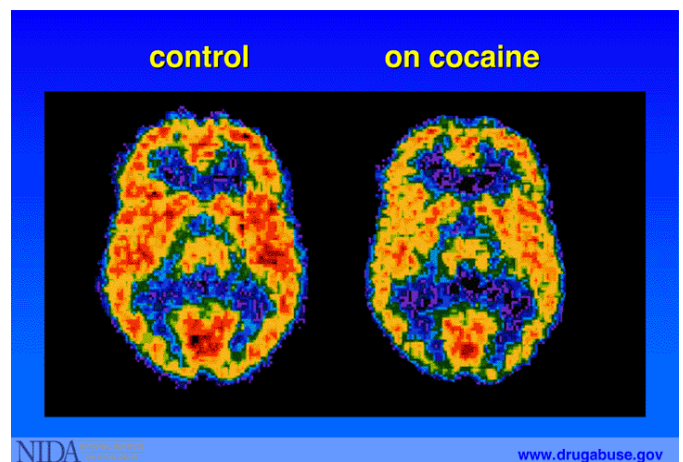
## How opioids affect the brain

● Endorphin ● Opioid



Source: Alkermes, Inc.

BUSINESS INSIDER



NIDA

www.drugabuse.gov

# Peer Pressure

## What is Peer Pressure?

a feeling that one must do the same things as other people of one's age and social group in order to be liked or respected by them

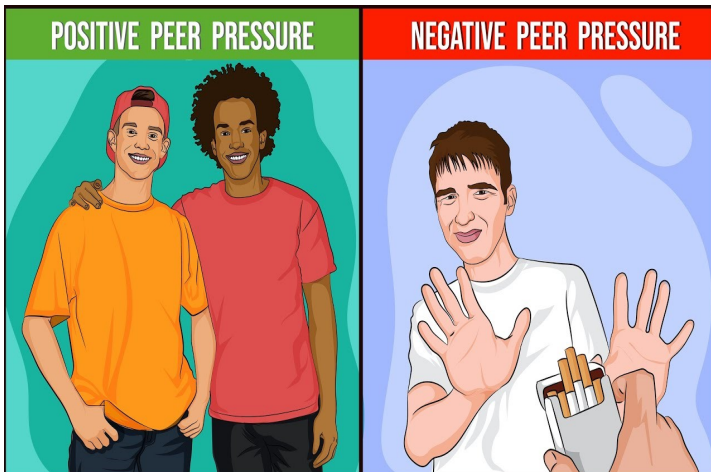
Peer Pressure doesn't necessarily have to be negative, the term "pressure" implies that the process influences people to do things that may be resistant to, or might not otherwise choose to do.

An example of positive peer pressure could be influencing someone to join a sports teams. This could lead



to exposure to healthy lifestyles and role models, and eventually leading the person to become a positive role model themselves.

Negative peer pressure can also occur amongst friend groups. Negative peer pressure can be pressuring someone to do something that is considered dangerous or damaging to themselves or others. It can be convincing a friend to skip school, encouraging peers to fight or bully someone and/or pressuring a friend to drink or try drugs.



## Peer Pressure and Alcohol Consumption

Peer Pressure to consume alcohol and/or illicit drugs can be both direct and indirect. A peer could directly hand their friend a drink or directly encouraging them to drink. This may happen through the friend refilling the drink without them asking, buying another drink or giving them a hard time if they are not drinking. Indirect peer pressure could be all the popular kids drinking alcohol and other strive to be in this same light and try some alcohol to fit in. Social Media could also play an influence, according to a study, three-quarters of teens between the ages of 12 and 17 who saw their peers "partying" on social media were more likely to then do the same. Advertising and marketing can also influence perceptions and show drinking in a more favorable light that can encourage underage drinking.



# How to Avoid Peer Pressure

- Be Firm When Saying No to Peer Pressure and Drugs

- Finding a way to say “no” can be tricky, especially if the other person is being very persuasive. You’ll need to stand your ground, even if your internal resolve feels a bit shaky. Use a firm voice and look them in the eye when speaking:

- “This is bad for my health.”
- “This could ruin my life.”
- “I am trying my best to stay clean.”
- “I don’t use anymore, so please stop asking.”
- “If I am caught, I will lose my housing.”

- Avoid Situations Where You Might Be Tempted

- Bring Along a Sober Buddy

- Choose a trusted friend or confidant who can back you up if things get rough. Ideally, this will be a person who doesn’t use, as that way, they won’t be tempted either.

- Offer to Be the Designated Driver

- If you’ll be heading out with a group of people, one way to prevent them from offering you drugs is to be the designated driver. Instead of trying to make you feel bad for not using, they’ll really appreciate this gesture.

I said 'NO!'



you also can

Developed at National Institute for Research in Reproductive Health (ICMR), Mumbai

## Handling Negative Peer Pressure

- Having a direct conversation with the person or people who you feel are pressuring you is another way to stop peer pressure.
- Becoming Assertive not aggressive.
- Sometimes humour is a good strategy.
- Seeking support. Getting help from others, whether they be friends, family or a teacher.

- Choose the right friends: It is important to choose friends wisely. As noted previously, peer pressure can be positive, so having the right group of friends can help you make good choices
- Keep a bottled drink like a soda or iced tea with you to drink at parties. People will be less likely to pressure you to drink alcohol if you’re already drinking something. If they still offer you something, just say, “I’m covered.”
- Find something to do so that you look busy. Get up and dance. Offer to DJ.
- Suggest a different activity to steer the conversation away from the unwanted topic.

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|            |             |             |                  |         |
|------------|-------------|-------------|------------------|---------|
| Active     | Dancing     | Lucky       | Pure             | Warm    |
| Aries      | Daylight    | Madness     | Rain Boots       | Weather |
| Basketball | Emerald     | March       | Rain             | Wet     |
| Blooming   | Flowers     | Melting     | Rainbow          | Windy   |
| Breeze     | Gold        | Nature      | Snow             | Wish    |
| Budding    | Grass       | Nest        | St Patrick's Day | Worm    |
| Bunny      | Grasshopper | New Leaves  | Tadpoles         |         |
| Celtic     | Green       | Outdoors    | Thaw             |         |
| Chirp      | Jig         | PI Day      | Treasure         |         |
| Clover     | Lamb        | Pot of Gold | Tulip            |         |
| Coins      | Leprechaun  | Puddles     | Umbrella         |         |



Belleville is a small community southwest of Madison in Dane and Green Counties. Belleville is a special place to visit because of its natural beauty, recreational activities and friendly people and atmosphere. Belleville is a great community for families seeking a solid educational system along with the natural amenities of the community.

The Belleville Area Cares Coalition came into existence following a town hall meeting in April of 2014.



**We are comprised of local representatives from schools, businesses, churches, village administration as well as parents, and youth—all working together to promote healthy lifestyles**

**More information can be found at : <https://www.bellevillewicare.org/>**

**BACC meetings are held on the 4th Tuesday of each month at 4:45 pm in the Belleville Village Hall.**

#### **BACC Mission Statement**

***“The mission of Belleville's Area Cares Coalition is to promote a healthy community for youth and young adults, free of alcohol and other drug abuse.”***

*The Belleville Area Cares Coalition works to develop, implement and support environmental strategies to reduce substance abuse.*

*We believe by working together, we can nurture social and environmental changes to make the Belleville area a safer and healthier place, brightening the future of our children, youth and families.*

#### **HOW CAN YOU HELP?**

The BAAC asks you to give the gift of time. Make a difference in the lives of our youth and our community by

1. Working with us in providing support for planning, project management and awareness campaigns
2. Helping with coalition events, conferences, workshops, and fairs held throughout the year.
3. Being a voice for change in our community, it is time to come together and be that force for change in the Belleville area.