

DRUGS & STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS



- There is no doubt that drugs alter your consciousness.
 - **PSYCHOACTIVE DRUGS**- a chemical substance that alters perceptions and mood.

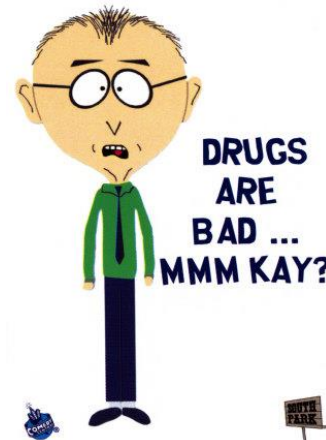
THREE TYPES OF PSYCHOACTIVE DRUGS:

- 1) **Depressants** (downers) that calm neural activity and slow body functions.
- 2) **Stimulants** (uppers) that temporarily excite neural activity and arouse body functions.
- 3) **Hallucinogens** distort perceptions and evoke sensory images in the absence of sensory input.

ALL THREE do their work in the brain's synapses.

DEPENDENCE & ADDICTION

- Continued use of a psychoactive drug produces a **TOLERANCE**: *the user experiences neuroadaptation (the brain's counteracting the disruption to its normal functioning)*
- Thus, the user requires larger and larger doses to experience the drug's effect. (Ex: Light drinker- tipsy after one drink BUT an experienced addict/user will not get tipsy until 5 or 6 drinks)
- If a user stops, they can suffer **WITHDRAWAL** as the body responds to the drug's absence. This can be VERY painful and hard for the user.



DEPRESSANTS

- 1) **Alcohol**- slow brain's activity including judgment, inhibitions, memory, processing of experiences, reduces self-awareness and decreases sexual inhibitions .
- 2) **Barbiturates (Tranquillizers)**- mimic the effects of alcohol. They depress the sympathetic nervous system activity. Can cause death in large doses.
- 3) **Opiates**- opium and its derivatives, **morphine and heroin**, also depress neural functioning. Pupils constrict, breathing slows, become lethargic. Lessens pain for immediate relief but does not last long and effects are worse. If too many opiates are used, your brain will stop producing it's own= ENDORPHINES. Can cause death and agony of severe withdrawal.
- 4) **Marijuana**- *Cannabis* is a depressant drug, which means it slows down messages travelling between your brain and body. When large doses of cannabis are taken, it may also produce hallucinogenic effects. The main active chemical in cannabis is **THC** (delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol).





STIMULANTS

■ The most widely used stimulants are:

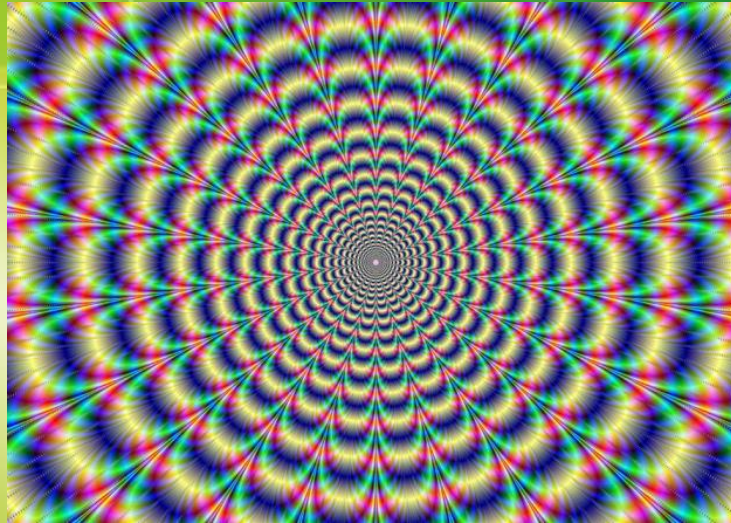
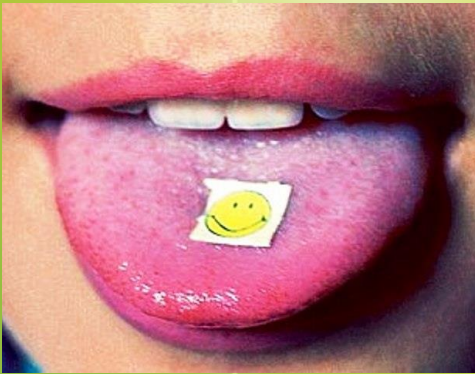
- 1) Caffeine
- 2) Nicotine
- 3) Amphetamines



Stimulants speed up body functions, hence the **nickname 'speed'** for amphetamines. Strong stimulants increase heart and breathing rates. Pupils dilate, appetite diminishes (because blood sugar increases) and energy and self-confidence rise.

Stimulants are mainly used to **stay awake, lose weight, or boost mood or athletic performance**. However...**THEY COME WITH A PRICE!** Like depressants, stimulants can be addictive and withdrawal symptoms are similar.

Hallucinogens



⊕ LSD (Lysergic Acid Diethylamide)

⊕ Acid

⊕ Psilocybin(4-phosphoryloxy-N,N-dimethyltryptamine)—
known as magic mushrooms, shrooms, boomers, or little
smoke

⊕ Peyote- cactus

⊕ Ketamine—also known as K, Special K, cat, or Valium

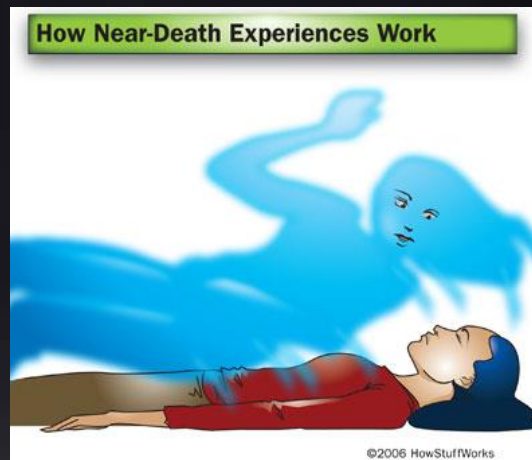
Near Death Experiences & States of Consciousness



➔ What is a Near-Death Experience?

- An altered state of consciousness reported after a close brush with death (such as through cardiac arrest); often similar to drug induced hallucinations.
- The controversy over interpreting near death experiences raises a basic mind-body issue:
 - Is the mind immaterial? Can it exist separate from the body?
 - **DUALISTS** answer YES.
 - **MONISTS** answer NO.

HUH?



- **DUALISM**- the presumption that mind and body are two distinct entities that interact. They believe that the mind is immaterial and it can exist separate from the body as energy. They interpret these experiences as evidence of human immortality.

MONISM- the presumption that mind and body are different aspects of the same thing. They believe there is no separation of mind and body and that the mind is what the brain does. They point out that reports of NDE's closely parallel reports of hallucinations and may be products of a brain under stress.

TO SUM UP...

» *"Psychology must discard all reference to consciousness."*

- Behaviourist John B. Watson (1913)

States of Consciousness is a slippery slope with a lot of interpretation and controversy. However, psychologists are now studying more and more of the brain and are slowly coming up with more concrete theories.