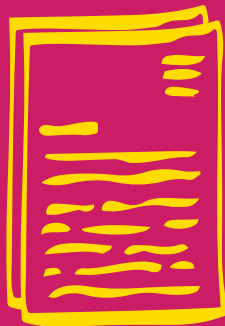
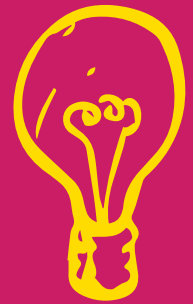






# Stories of Recovery

**A Discussion Guide to  
Drug Awareness Videos**



  KELY Support Group

   kelysupportgrp

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# Contents

About KELY

**4**

Introduction to the Series

**6**

Summary & Reflection Questions

**8**

Trends & General Information of the  
Common Drugs in Hong Kong

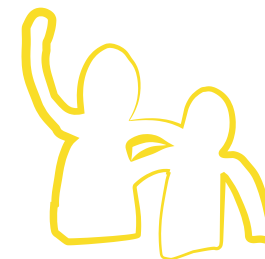
**14**

Tips for Peer Support

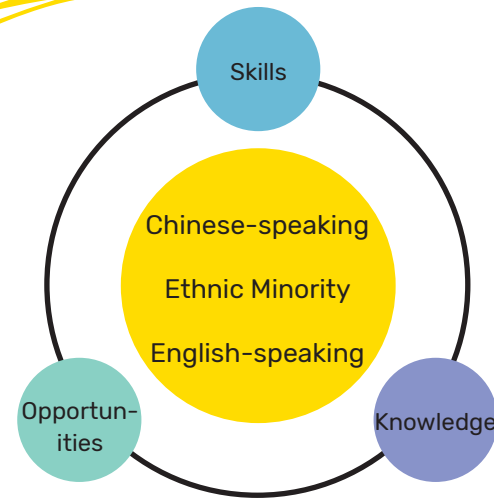
**22**

Resources

**30**



# About KELY



KELY Support Group (KELY) is a Hong Kong-based nonprofit organisation whose mission is to equip young people with the skills, knowledge, and opportunities needed to support themselves and each other. We envision a world where young people are empowered to reach their full potential.

We collaborate with schools and other partners to offer programmes to Chinese- and English-speaking youth between the ages of 14 and 24 around our three core focus areas: Drug and Alcohol Awareness, Mental Health and Well-Being, and Positive Youth Development.



# Introduction to the Series



KELY Support Group, with support from Beat Drugs Fund, brings you Stories of Recovery which shares 5 Hong Kong based, culturally relevant video stories of drug addiction and recovery. These videos challenge people to consider critically the risks and adverse consequences of commonly reported substances, for instance, marijuana, ecstasy, methamphetamine, ketamine and cocaine, through story-telling and infographics. The stories also highlight prevention strategies and reducing risks within families, personal decision making and help-seeking.

We would like to acknowledge and thank Derek Ma and Mehek Gidwani for their sharing of their journeys throughout videos 1 to 3, from how it began in the first place, to its development as a habit, their reasons for quitting drugs, the process of the rehabilitation and finally, their take-home message to the youth.



This booklet is designed to help schools, parents, other associated professionals, and non-Chinese Speaking (NCS) teenagers to engage in a discussion through the content of the videos.

There are five sections under Stories of Recovery:

- [Real-Life Part 1: The Beginning](#)
- [Real-Life Part 2: Moments of Conflict](#)
- [Real-Life Part 3: Moving Forward](#)
- [Drugs Info 1: Cannabis and Ketamine](#)
- [Drugs Info 2: Ecstasy, Cocaine and Methamphetamine](#)

We strongly recommend teachers and trusted adults to give guidance and instruction during discussion and debriefing to ensure that all participants can share and discuss different viewpoints under a secure and non-judgemental environment.

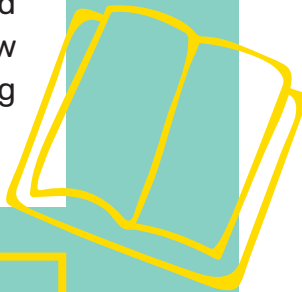
In the following sections of the booklet, you will find summary and reflection questions of each video as prompters to facilitate discussion. Trends and general information of the common drugs in Hong Kong have also been included. We have also provided tips for peer support, including KELY's NICE approach and a list of resources which should enable the participants to make informed choices and seek help when necessary.

# Summary & Reflection Questions



## The Beginning

Derek and Mehek started taking drugs due to academic stress, significant life changes and bullying during adolescence. They took a few drugs during their first attempt while partying or hanging out with friends.



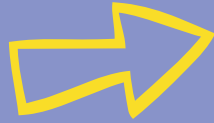
1. Name some reasons why students in Hong Kong would want to take drugs.
2. How do you think Hong Kong's culture influences young people's perception of themselves?
  - a. How does this phenomenon relate to drug-taking?



## Moments of Conflict

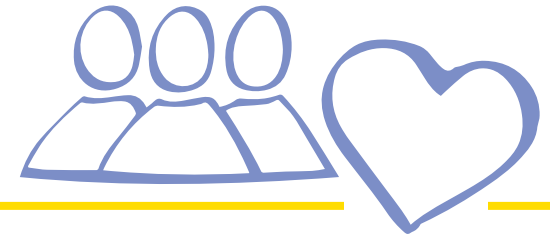
Soon after, Derek and Mehek took more drugs as an escape and for more feelings of "high", which resulted in a change of lifestyle. This continued to affect their physical and mental health, social life, school performance and relationships with family. They were, however, not conscious of the adverse consequences brought by using drugs.

1. How do drug users shift from experimentation towards habits?
2. What led to the rise of drug use in recent years?
3. How are drug users doing at school?
4. What do you think are some misconceptions about drugs?
5. What are some positive ways to communicate with your friends who are taking drugs?
6. Why do you think it can be challenging to have a conversation about drugs between parents and young people?
  - a. Is it necessary to involve parents in the process of recovery and why?
7. Do you think there is more awareness about drugs in society now? Why or why not?



## Moving Forward

Families of Derek and Mehek recognised that they were using drugs when the problem got serious. They helped Derek and Mehek throughout the process of quitting drugs. Derek and Mehek themselves also realised 'The Power of Choice' and grew through these negative experiences honestly and courageously.



1. How can we cultivate a supportive environment for those trying to quit drugs?
2. What needs to be done to teach society to be more considerate and open in helping those struggling in taking drugs or in trying to quit taking drugs?
3. How can we encourage 'The Power of Choice' in a society like Hong Kong?
  - a. How do you think this can make a difference in which path to take when taking drugs?
4. As a youth,
  - a. How can you promote drug and alcohol awareness?
  - b. How do you think you can make a difference in the lives of the people you encounter? To encourage harm reduction in and to empower youth?
  - c. If you were Mehek's or Derek's friends, what advice would you give them?

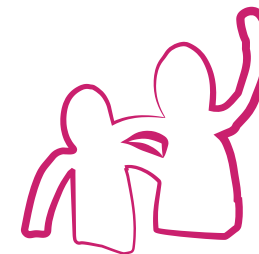


## Drug Info:



# 1 Cannabis & Ketamine

# 2 Cocaine, Ecstasy & Methamphetamine



These videos talk about the top 5 most common drugs in Hong Kong and how they can affect a person physically and psychologically. They try to give an idea of how our bodies react when these drugs enter the body and the various risks they can pose to a person's health.

They aim to raise awareness on certain facts about these drugs and to give an overview on their prevalence in Hong Kong and worldwide.

1. What are Hong Kong teenagers' views on drugs today?
2. Do you think the Hong Kong government has done enough to tackle the problem of drug use in Hong Kong?
  - a. What else could be done?
3. Why do some countries legalise the use of Cannabis?



# Trends & General Information of the Common Drugs in Hong Kong



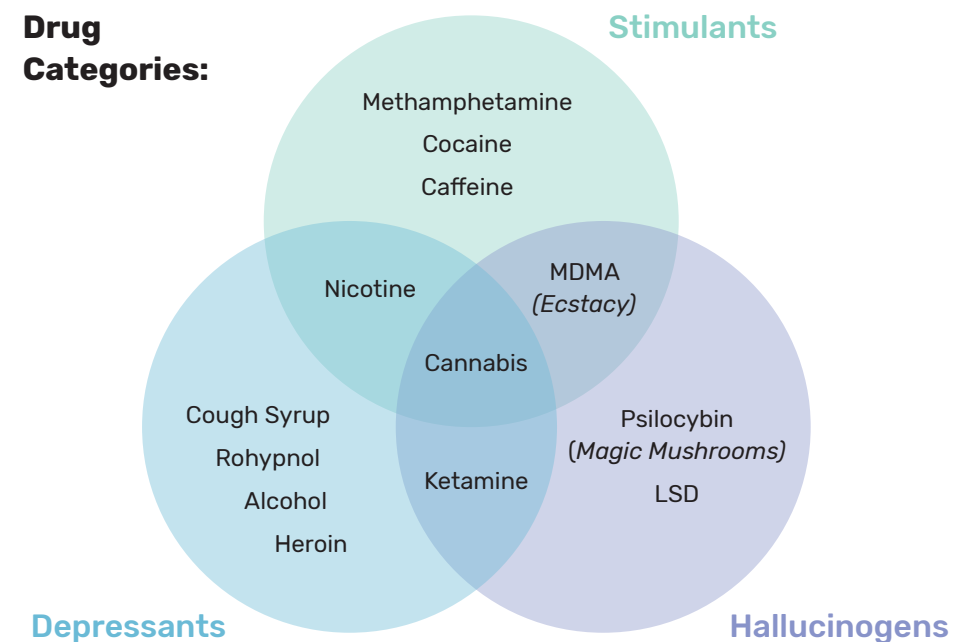
The 5 most commonly used drugs by secondary students in Hong Kong are Cannabis, Cocaine, Methamphetamine, Ketamine and Ecstasy.

According to the 2017/18 survey of drug use among students by the Narcotics Division, Cannabis has risen from 58% to 78% when compared to the 2014-2015 survey. (Narcotics Division, 2019)\*. It also tells us that the top reasons why young people take drugs in recent years were due to boredom, depression or stress, peer pressure and curiosity.

Drugs are classified chemically according to how they affect the brain and the body. Common classifications include stimulants, depressants and hallucinogens.

\*Narcotics Division, Security Bureau. (2019). *2017/18 Survey on drug use among students*. Retrieved from [https://www.nd.gov.hk/pdf/survey\\_drug\\_use/2017-2018/FullReport.pdf](https://www.nd.gov.hk/pdf/survey_drug_use/2017-2018/FullReport.pdf)

## Drug Categories:





**Stimulants** are sometimes called “uppers,” tend to temporarily speed up the activity of a person’s central nervous system including the brain. These drugs often result in the user feeling more alert and energetic. The short term effect of stimulants include exhaustion, apathy and depression- the “down” that follows the “up.”



There are both legal and illegal stimulants and both categories are commonly abused. Some of the most commonly abused illegal stimulants include cocaine and methamphetamine.

Prescription stimulants like Ritalin and Concerta are medicines generally used to treat attention- deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and narcolepsy-uncontrollable episodes of deep sleep.



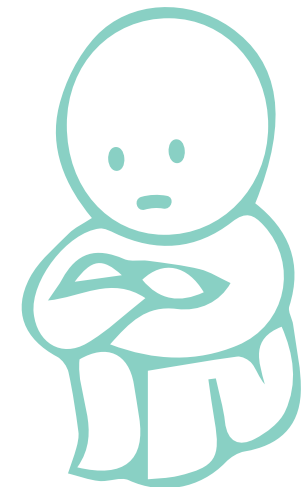
Stimulants can be addictive. Repeated high doses of some stimulants over a short period can lead to feelings of hostility or paranoia. Such doses may also result in dangerously high body temperatures and an irregular heartbeat.



**Depressants** sometimes called “downers,” reduce arousal and stimulation. They do not necessarily make a person feel depressed. They affect the central nervous system, slowing down the messages between the brain and the body.

Some drugs in this category such as Prozac or Ritalin, are known as major “tranquilizers” as they are supposed to reduce the symptoms of mental illness. However, repeated misuse can cause adverse effects, affecting a person physically and mentally.

Chronic use of depressants can lead to continued tiredness, insomnia and breathing problems. These could also result in mental health issues in the long run. In some cases, withdrawal symptoms can also be present and life-threatening.



**Hallucinogens** are a class of drugs that cause intense distortions in a person's perception of reality, causing hallucinations and difficulty in distinguishing between fantasy and reality.

Commonly used by secondary school students in Hong Kong, Cannabis and Ecstasy tend to alter ordinary forms of consciousness. These types of drugs fall under more than one drug category.

MDMA, commonly known as ecstasy, is a synthetic drug that has stimulant effects and hallucinogenic properties. It can produce feelings of euphoria and distorted perception. Usually adulterated, this can become extremely dangerous to users, leading them at high risk for harmful health effects.

Cannabis falls under all three drug categories and these effects vary from person to person, which can be unpredictable. The way a person's body responds to cannabis depends on many factors such as genetics, the amount of THC in the drug, dosage and method of intaking it into one's body.

## The top reasons why young people take drugs in recent years were due to...



**boredom or  
depression/stress**



**peer pressure**



**curiosity**



## Chronic Drug Use and Mental Health

Young people that are under the age of 25 are particularly susceptible to mental health disorders due to chronic drug use. This is because their brains are still developing and this can cause their stress responses and overall mental stability to be significantly altered.

From skin issues to delusional behaviors, chronic drug use can affect a person's character and behavior. This is because drugs can influence the way the brain works and constantly change its structure. Due to these changes, a person's daily functioning can be affected. Ultimately, addiction can begin to manifest.



For instance, as a person's body gets used to a particular drug, they need the drug to sustain the 'high' they feel. Inability to acquire it for a long period of time can lead to multiple problems such as financial issues and relationship conflicts.

With all of these, it is vital that people of all ages of society recognise the importance of early prevention education on topics like drugs and alcohol. Talking to children at a younger age will help to equip them with the information and skills to think critically when they are first confronted with it.

Drug prevention education that is tailored to the right age group can be an extremely powerful tool and KELLY Support Group along with our partners are committed to continue using this tool to empower young people to make healthy and responsible life choices.

# Tips for Peer Support



What should you do when you're at a house party, a friend hands you some white powder and you feel uncomfortable but feel pressured to take that? What if they judge you for not wanting it? Here are some tips for you and your friends.

TIP 1

## NICE Approach

At KELY, we share a strategy called NICE strategy for these pressure filled situations. It doesn't necessarily mean being 'NICE' to those people pressuring you but it means that drugs can be resisted in a non-aggressive way.

**N** "NO"  
**I** "I" Statements  
**C** Change the topic  
**E** EXIT

NICE is an acronym that stands for different strategies.

### 1. N stands for 'No'

It sounds simple but it is important to start out by saying a firm 'No' with conviction. As you could imagine, if someone ambivalent, that is leaving wiggle room to pressure further. Even though it might be difficult when we are around our friends, it is crucial to say NO when we are sure that is wrong.

### 2. 'I', means using an 'I statement'

'I' statements allow us an opportunity to defend ourselves. For example, 'I don't like the smell' or 'I have a really important game tomorrow and I think this will affect my performance'. By doing this, we express ourselves in a less confrontational way.

### 3. 'C' refers to 'Change the topic'

By using this strategy, we can steer the conversation elsewhere using our environment. For example, try to say something funny.

### 4. 'E' for 'Exit'

Always remember that we have the option to leave the situation whenever we feel pressured. We may just come up with an excuse to exit in a smooth way, for example needing to use the washroom, or having someone on speed dial who can help get you out.



# TIP 2

## Scenarios

In the next section, we will give you two situations related to the temptation of drugs. Read through them and identify what some of the risks are. Then, think about how you could prevent or minimize these risks before, during and after anticipating the event. Also, we have included suggestions when facing an emergency.



### SCENARIO

#### 1

- Someone at the concert offered pills to our group.
- My friend was curious and decided to take one.
- It was their first time so they felt they should take less, but soon after, everyone had another one.
- I noticed my friend looked a bit nervous but I didn't say anything about it.
- They soon started sweating heaps and their pupils became huge and they suddenly collapsed on the floor.
- They're still in the hospital, I'm worried.



### Suggested Answer

**RISKS:** Unpredictable effects of possible unknown drug, mixing with alcohol, risk of overdose, severe physical/mental/emotional reaction, possession and consumption of illegal drugs.

#### BEFORE

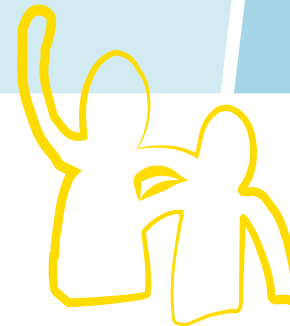
- Surround yourself with reliable people who will look out for you.
- Have a game plan to leave just in case. If you are curious, find out more information on the risks and effects beforehand.

#### DURING

- If something makes you nervous, try to say no.
- If you see your friend being pressured, step in and say something.
- If you see your friend isn't doing well, get help immediately, especially if illegal substances are involved.

#### AFTER

- Go to hospital or find a way to check in on them.
- Talk to the people that may have encouraged them about how to respond better next time.
- If you want to talk to someone about what happened and how it made you feel, seek support.



SCENARIO

2

- Someone suggested playing a drinking game.
- There was some alcohol and a white powder like substance being offered.
- I tried to leave but felt pressured into staying and drinking.
- I ended up throwing up and saw that people took photos and shared them with everyone.
- I feel embarrassed, and too ill to go for training.



**Suggested Answer**

RISKS: Different levels of tolerance, potential risk of using a substance, skewed decision making, embarrassment from photos being shared, parents/teachers might see them, feeling sick, not being able to go to training.

**BEFORE**

- Make sure you are hanging out with people you trust.
- Have a game plan in case you want to leave.

**DURING**

- Use a resistance strategy to avoid participating in something you don't feel comfortable with.
- If things are getting too intense, leave.
- Find someone you can be real with so they can have your back.

**AFTER**

- Have lots of water.
- Talk to friends about deleting pictures and share they made you feel.

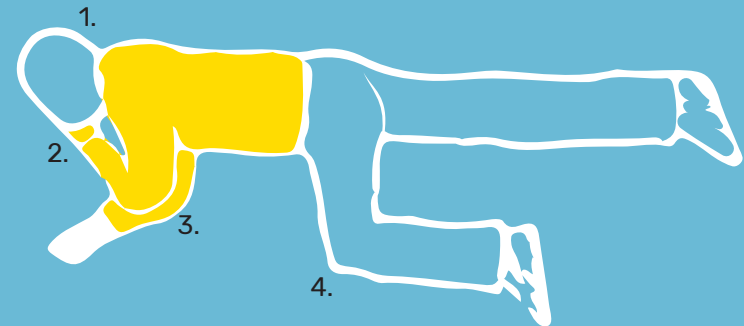


**Emergency?**



- Stay with them.
- Keep them awake.
- Reassure them.
- Unconscious? Call an ambulance.
- Put them in the recovery position (it helps open up the airway and prevent being choked by one's vomit).

**Recovery Position**



- 1. Head tilted well back
- 2. Hand supporting head
- 3. Bent arm gives stability
- 4. Bent leg props the body up and prevents the casualty rolling forward

# TIP 3

## Positive Mental Health

Living in a fast-paced city like Hong Kong, there can be multiple factors and issues that one has to pay attention to, on top of our responsibilities at home, at work, in school, etc. Sometimes, however, these can pile up and leave us with pressure and emotions that can weigh us down.

In light of this, drug use has also been associated with mental health issues. In fact, according to the National Institutes of Health of the United States (2017)\*, long-term use of drugs can cause a number of mental health disorders. They state that certain drugs such as cocaine, ketamine and marijuana can cause one to hallucinate, develop paranoia and anxiety, which are symptoms of potential mental health issues. They can affect a person’s daily functioning, thus, putting a person’s health further at risk.

KELY echoes the importance of promoting positive mental health and we hope to help people struggling with drugs and alcohol use by providing a platform where they can express and feel heard in times of their struggles and difficulties. As part of society, we all have a responsibility to help and encourage one another to live a more positive life and uphold a supportive environment.

With that, we also encourage youth peer support. Youth peer support is a way where youth can be empowered in sharing

\*National Institutes of Health of the United States. (2017). *Mental health effects*. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/health-consequences-drug-misuse/mental-health-effects>



with peers they can fully trust. Young people, nowadays, are more likely to confide in their friends than adults. Through this approach, we hope that they can find a supportive environment where they feel safe and secure, and hopefully, encourage positive sense of mental health and well-being.

Let’s find out below what we can do to put **PEER SUPPORT** forward!

- |   |                                      |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| <b>P</b> ower of positivity                                   | <b>S</b> upport and give information |
| <b>E</b> mpower one another                                   | <b>U</b> nderstand each other        |
| <b>E</b> ncourage and motivate                                | <b>P</b> ractice self-care           |
| <b>R</b> eflective listening and non-judgmental communication | <b>P</b> rivacy and confidentiality  |
|   | <b>O</b> bserve, approach and assist |
|   | <b>R</b> espect your peers           |
|   | <b>T</b> alk to a professional       |

Notice someone feeling down? Reach out and talk it out! They will appreciate it.



# Resources



## Drugs and Alcohol Addiction Individual/Group Counselling Services

### Alcoholics Anonymous Hong Kong

Tel: 90736922  
aahelp@aa-hk.org  
www.aa-hk.org

### Caritas Lok Heep Club

Tel: (HK Centre) 2893 8060  
(Kowloon Centre) 2382 0267  
www.caritaslokheepclub.org.hk/en

### Narcotics Anonymous Hong Kong

Tel: 55032468  
contact@nahongkong.org  
www.nahongkong.org

### St. John's Counselling Services

Tel: 2525 7207  
Email: info@sjcshk.com  
www.sjcshk.com

### The Cabin

Tel: 2959 2339  
www.thecabinhongkong.com.hk

### The Hong Kong Christian Service - PS33 Counselling Service

Tel: 2368 8269  
dtsr@hkcs.org  
hkcs.hosting33.com/en/services/  
ps33

### Tung Wah Group of Hospitals - Integrated Centre on Addiction Prevention and Treatment

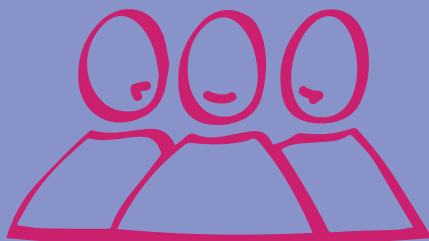
Tel: 28271000  
icapt@tungwah.org.hk  
icapt.tungwahcsd.org/

### Tung Wah Group of Hospitals - CROSS Centre

csdcross@tungwah.org.hk  
crosscentre.tungwahcsd.org/v3/  
index.php

### Tung Wah Groups of Hospitals - Alcohol Abuse Prevention and Treatment Services

Tel: 2884 9876  
cc-atp@tungwah.org.hk  
atp.tungwahcsd.org/index.php/  
Engli/contactus.html



## Mental Health Counselling Services

### Hotline/Face-to-Face Services

#### Joyful (Mental Health) Foundation

Tel: 2301 2303  
joyful@jmhf.org  
www.jmhf.org

#### The Samaritan Befrienders Hong Kong

Tel: 2319 2688  
sbhkinfo@sbhk.org.hk  
www.sbhk.org.hk

#### St. John's Counselling Services

Tel: 2525 7207  
info@sjcshk.com  
www.sjcshk.com



### Other Online Peer Support Services

#### Round-the-clock counselling

(Accessible 24/7)  
SMS: 9101 2012  
www.openup.hk

#### St.James' Settlement Youth Service - Six Degree Hubs

Whatsapp: 5933 3711  
Instagram: @sixdegreehubs







Organiser:



Funder:

