Keeping Communities safe and Practitioners informed - Ketamine

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Ketamine: What is it?

- Ketamine is a dissociative drug that is used as an anaesthetic in both human and veterinary medicine.
- Ketamine is most usually purchased as a white, shard-like crystal. It is then crushed into a fine powder to be either snorted intranasally (the most common method), dissolved and injected intramuscularly, ‘bombed’ by wrapping powder in a small piece of paper and swallowing, or taken rectally in liquid form via a syringe (minus needle).
- Ketamine may be used alongside other substances such as Cannabis, Cocaine, LSD, MDMA and Nitrous Oxide. However, in Norfolk it is almost never used alongside alcohol, which is a depressant and a bladder irritant.
- It is currently a Class B substance.
- Effects begin after 5-15min, and can last for up to 2 hours, depending on the method used and how much is taken.
- NDAP are receiving reports through user voice of Ketamine supplies being contaminated with nitazenes and other harmful substances.

Unity & CGL Presentations (20min each)

Under 19's, parents and carer support: Unity (The Matthew Project) – Website: Ketamine | Young People

Over 18's, parents and carers, and affected others support: CGL – Website: Change Grow Live Norfolk | Drug and alcohol support

Unity and YouCan

Ketamine Support Under 19's Norfolk





What is Ketamine

Ketamine is a dissociative anaesthetic that has some hallucinogenic effects. It distorts perceptions of sight and sound and makes the user feel disconnected and not in control. It is an injectable, short-acting anaesthetic for use in humans and animals.

It is referred to as a “dissociative anaesthetic” because it makes patients feel detached from their pain and environment. Ketamine can induce a state of sedation (feeling calm and relaxed), immobility, relief from pain, and amnesia.

It is abused for its ability to produce dissociative sensations and hallucinations.

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Is Ketamine legal?

Ketamine is currently classified as a class B drug in the UK. In 2025, the government asked the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) to reassess the harms of ketamine, in response to concerns about increasing misuse.

The ACMD published its assessment in January 2026. It recommended that ketamine should remain classified as a class B drug under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. Ketamine was moved from class C to class B in 2014.

As ketamine has legitimate medical uses, it is in Schedule 2 of the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001 (MDR).

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Horse Tranquilizer?

Ketamine is used to sedate or anaesthetise a wide range of animals, including horses, but also humans. In fact, it's one of the most widely used drugs by medics worldwide, particularly in lower-income, disaster or emergency settings, because of its low cost and safety, and because it's injectable, rather than a gas.
Maybe 20-30 years ago some supplies were from thefts of vets supplies now the supply is mainly illicit production

Cost of Ketamine?

How does it compare to other drugs?

Independent Drug Expert Alliance
Inclusive Impartial Independent

IDEA Price Index 2025

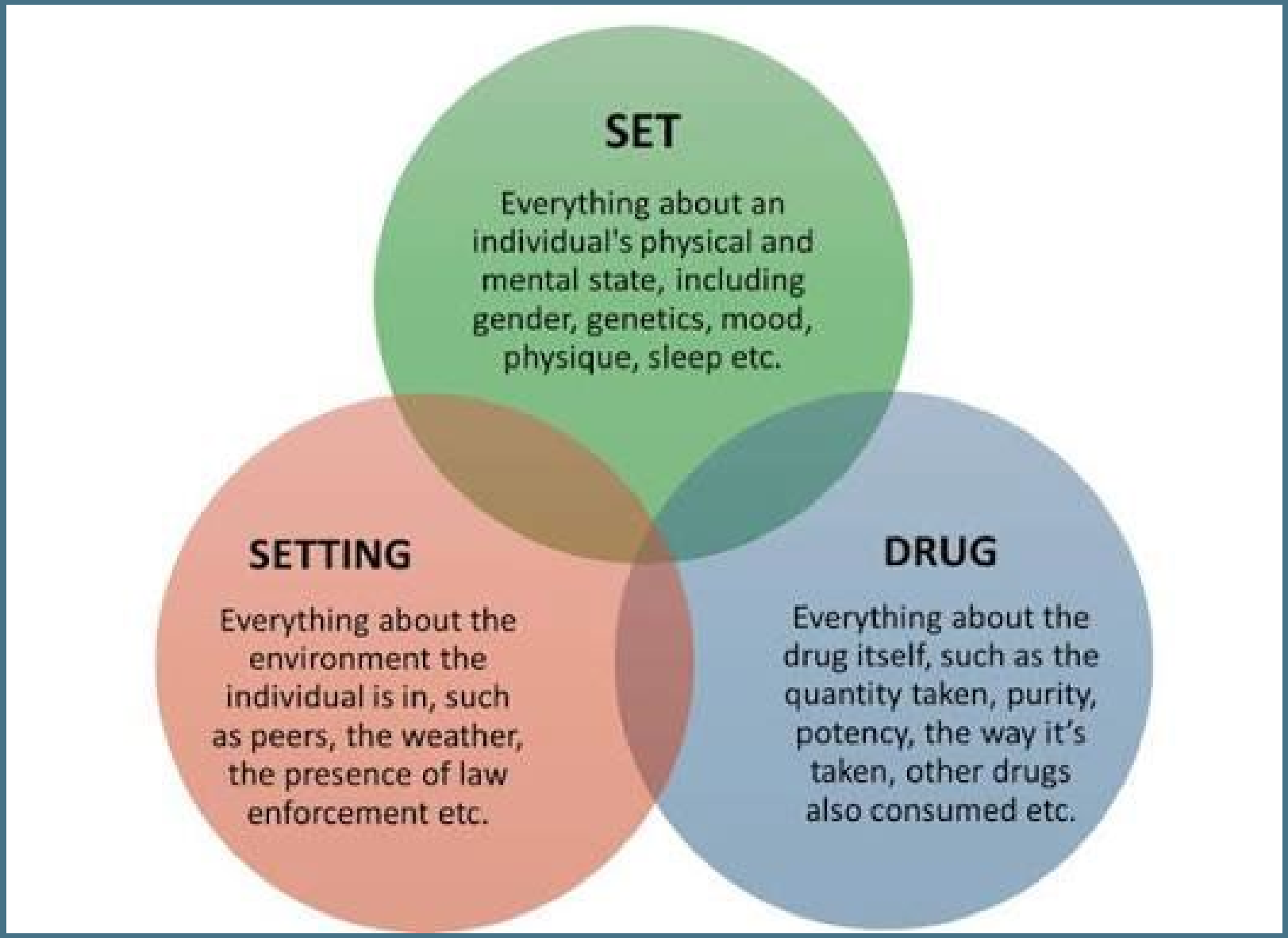
Commodity	0.1g	0.5g	1g	3.5g	7g	14g	28g	1kg
Amphetamine	N/A	-	£5 - £10	-	-	-	£60 - £80	£800 - £1.6k
Cannabis FFH (UK)	N/A	N/A	£10	£20 - £35	£40 - £60	£70 - £120	£130 - £250	£2.7k - £6k [1]
Cannabis FFH (US Import)	N/A	N/A	-	£30 - £60	£70 - £100	£130 - £160	£230 - £300 / £180 (x5)	-
Cannabis Resin and Herbal	N/A	N/A	£3 - £5	£10 - £20	£35	£60 - £100	£110 - £300	£700 - £1.2k
Cocaine (Adulterated)	£10	£20 - £30	£40 - £60	£100 - £150	-	-	£650 - £1k	-
Cocaine (Unadulterated)	£10	£40 - £50	£70 - £120	£190 - £350	-	£600 - £800	£700 - £1.8k	£16k - £28k
Crack Cocaine	£10	£30 - £40	£60 - £100	£150 - £300	£250 - £350	£500 - £700	£1k - £1.8k	-
Heroin	£10	£30 - £35	£40 - £80	£100 - £175	£250 - £350	-	£600 - £1.5k	£18k - £26k
Ketamine	N/A	N/A	£20 - £35	£40 - £80	-	£110 - £340	£180 - £500	£2k - £3.3k / £2.2k (x10)
MDMA (Powder/Crystal)	N/A	-	£20 - £40	£50 - £60	-	£180 - £200	£300 - £600	£2.4k - £3k
Commodity (Pills)	**1 pill**	**2 pills**	**3 pills**	**10 pills**	**12 pills**	**20 pills**	**30 pills**	**50 pills**
MDMA	£10 [2]	-	£20 - £35	£60	-	£100	-	£200
Diazepam (10mg)	-	£5	-	-	£25	-	£50	-

“Underpinning all these selling points is a simple one: ketamine remains cheap, at £20 a gram or less, enough for a mind-bending session for a few friends at less than the price of a round of beers. In a sense it has become the alcohol of drug culture: ubiquitous and multi-purpose, both social and antisocial. Like alcohol, the balance of its health consequences is undoubtedly negative, but it’s not hard to understand its appeal as a holiday from reality, an accompaniment to a wide range of pleasures, or a palliative for what ails you. “

How Britain fell into the K-hole
19th June 2025

Young people's voices




SET
Everything about an individual's physical and mental state, including gender, genetics, mood, physique, sleep etc.
SETTING
Everything about the environment the individual is in, such as peers, the weather, the presence of law enforcement etc.
DRUG
Everything about the drug itself, such as the quantity taken, purity, potency, the way it's taken, other drugs also consumed etc.

Unity and YouCan



Commissioned by PH Norfolk



MDT, experienced staff



Part of The Matthew Project long established Norfolk Charity



County wide

YouCan

Referral Criteria:

- Aged under 19 (up to 24 SEND) and living in Norfolk
- Affected by a family members drug/alcohol use - current or historical use
- Consent from the young person or parent/carer if under 12



Unity

Referral Criteria:

- Aged under 19 and living in Norfolk.
- Using drugs/alcohol.
- Consent from the young person.



Our Support



Tailored 1-2-1 support with a worker to meet the child/young person needs.



Meeting face to face where the child or young person feels safe and comfortable.



Being flexible with how we contact a child or young person.



Working closely with other agencies like Children's Services to build support.

Our Support



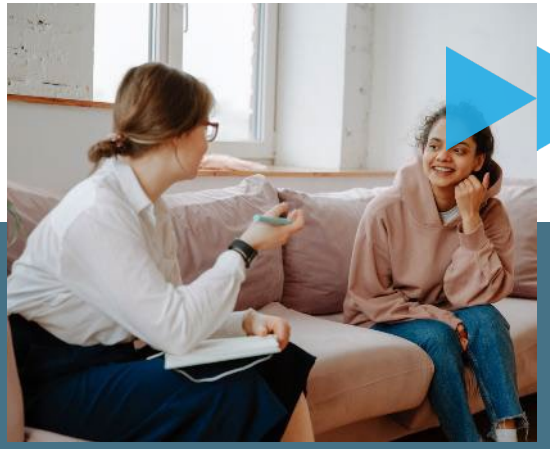
Motivational techniques to facilitate reduction or abstinence.



Education around substances and their impact



Harm reduction techniques & Relapse Prevention



Sexual health advice, C-Card services & BBV + Hep B Screening

Parents

Support offered:

- Practical and emotional support for parents/carers with young people under 19(or up to 24 for SEND) that are using substances and/or Alcohol.
- 1:1 support on the phone, online or face to face at our Norwich Hub.
- Group support: A Parents group that meet once a month on a Thursday evening 7-9 at our Norwich Hub there is an option to join this group online.



If you had to describe ketamine as a dangerous creature, what would it be and why?

Pufferfish - Small and slow... until it suddenly inflates into a spiky ball. The transformation is unpredictable, and its toxins are extremely potent.



What do you wish you had known when you discovered that your child was using Ketamine?



Resource's

The Unity ketamine poster, webpage and QR code sticker were developed in response to feedback from young people receiving support that they knew other young people who were using ketamine but were not wanting support from services.

What Young People Said

Snapshot survey:

- Young people felt there should be more information available about the dangers of Ketamine and other drugs being contaminated.
- A recurring concern was that young people often use drugs without knowledge of potential contamination or associated risks.
- Some suggested showing the physical effects of ketamine, such as damage to the bladder and nose.

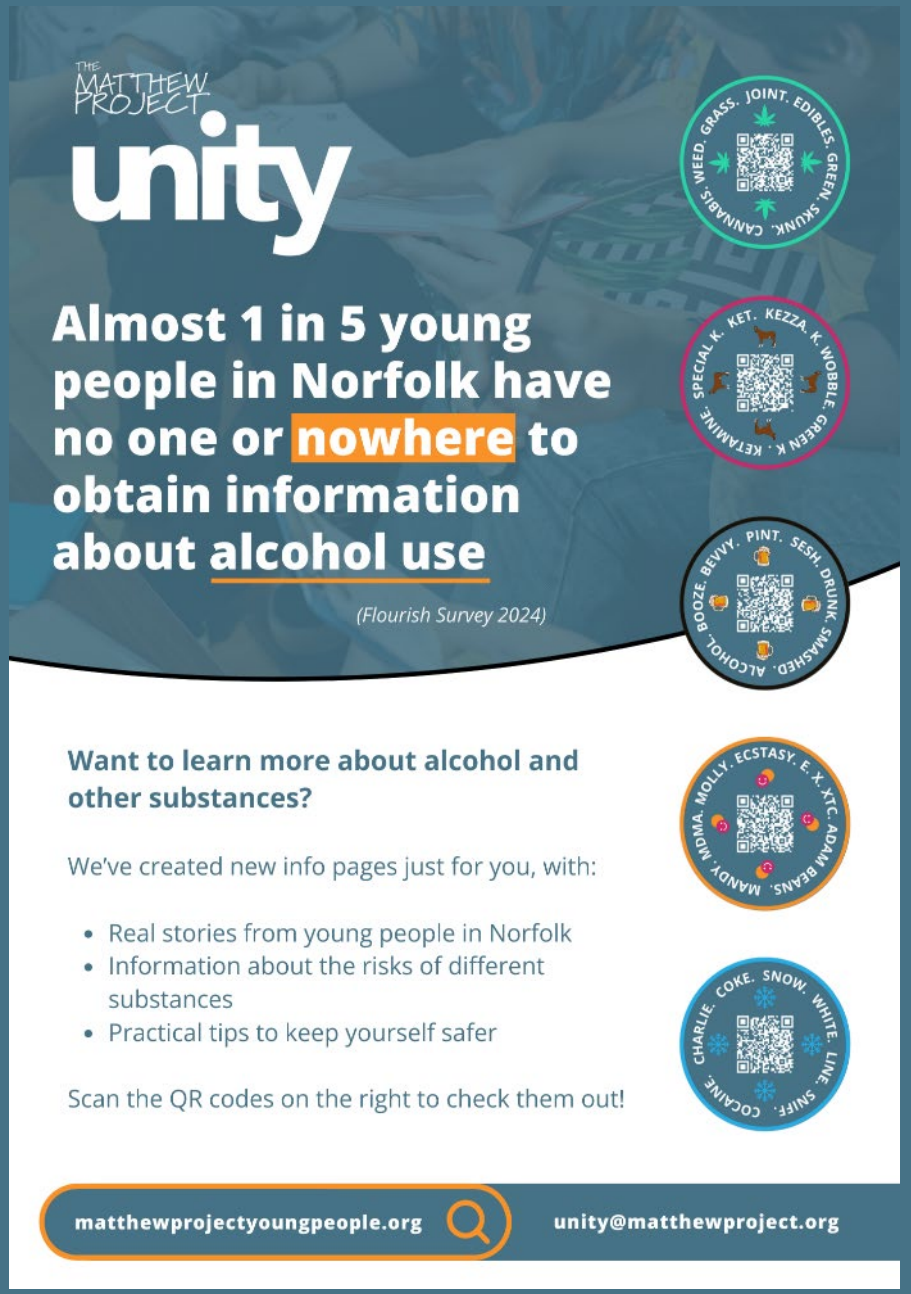
Other Feedback:

- When developing a webpage: break up or shorten text. Avoid technical terms.
- Poster: display these somewhere private where young people can either scan or write down the website address if phones are banned in schools.

Resources Created



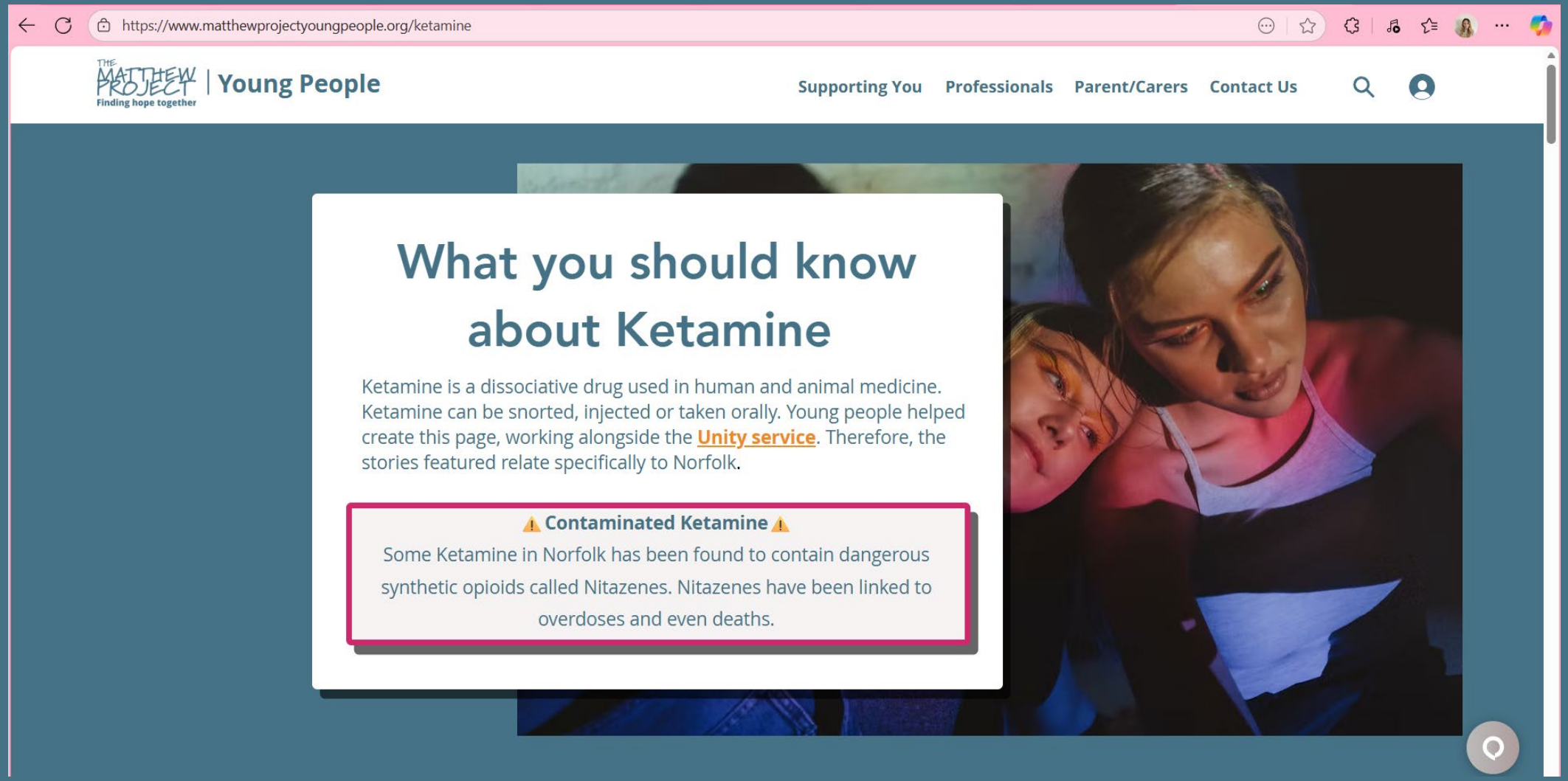
QR Code Sticker



Poster

Webpage

matthewprojectyoungpeople.org/ketamine



Ketamine

THE MATTHEW PROJECT
Finding hope together



Stay safe tips

If you decide to use ketamine, it's important to know there are always risks. The only way to completely avoid these risks is to not use Ketamine. But if you do decide to use it, keep these tips in mind:

Low and Slow: Trying something new? Go low and slow. Start with just a quarter of a hit until you know how it affects you. Remember every batch will be different, even if you get it from the same supplier.

Never Use Alone: Always have someone you trust nearby. It may be helpful to carry a Naloxone kit - just in case. Naloxone will not reverse the effects of ketamine; however, if your ketamine has been cut with an opioid substance, it can reverse those effects. You need to be prepared to call an ambulance if needed.

Test First: If you're with friends, only one person should try a small amount of the drug first to check how it feels before anyone else does. It may be a lot stronger than what you usually use.

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Stay safe tips

Don’t Mix: Combining drugs, especially with alcohol, seriously increases your risk of overdose. Stick to one thing at a time.

Look Out for Mates: Watch for overdose signs, like if someone:

- Won’t wake up or respond when you shake them or call their name.
- Has shallow breathing, loud snoring, or gasping sounds.
- Has blue lips or fingertips.

Be Ready to Help: If someone overdoses:

1. Call 999 straight away and ask for an ambulance.
2. Use Naloxone if you suspect opiates may be involved. You might need more than one dose. It usually works within 2–3 minutes, but if the person doesn’t respond, give them another dose and wait another 2–3 minutes.

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Unity 1-1 Support covers areas including:

Positive goal-based approach

Solution focused

Support to change Peer/Friendship group

Encourage understanding of dependence / tolerance

Reflect about the impact on Mental Health

Considering family history

Supporting gradual reduction leading to abstinence if appropriate

Awareness of ongoing potential challenges

Learning strategies that can be adapted to new situations

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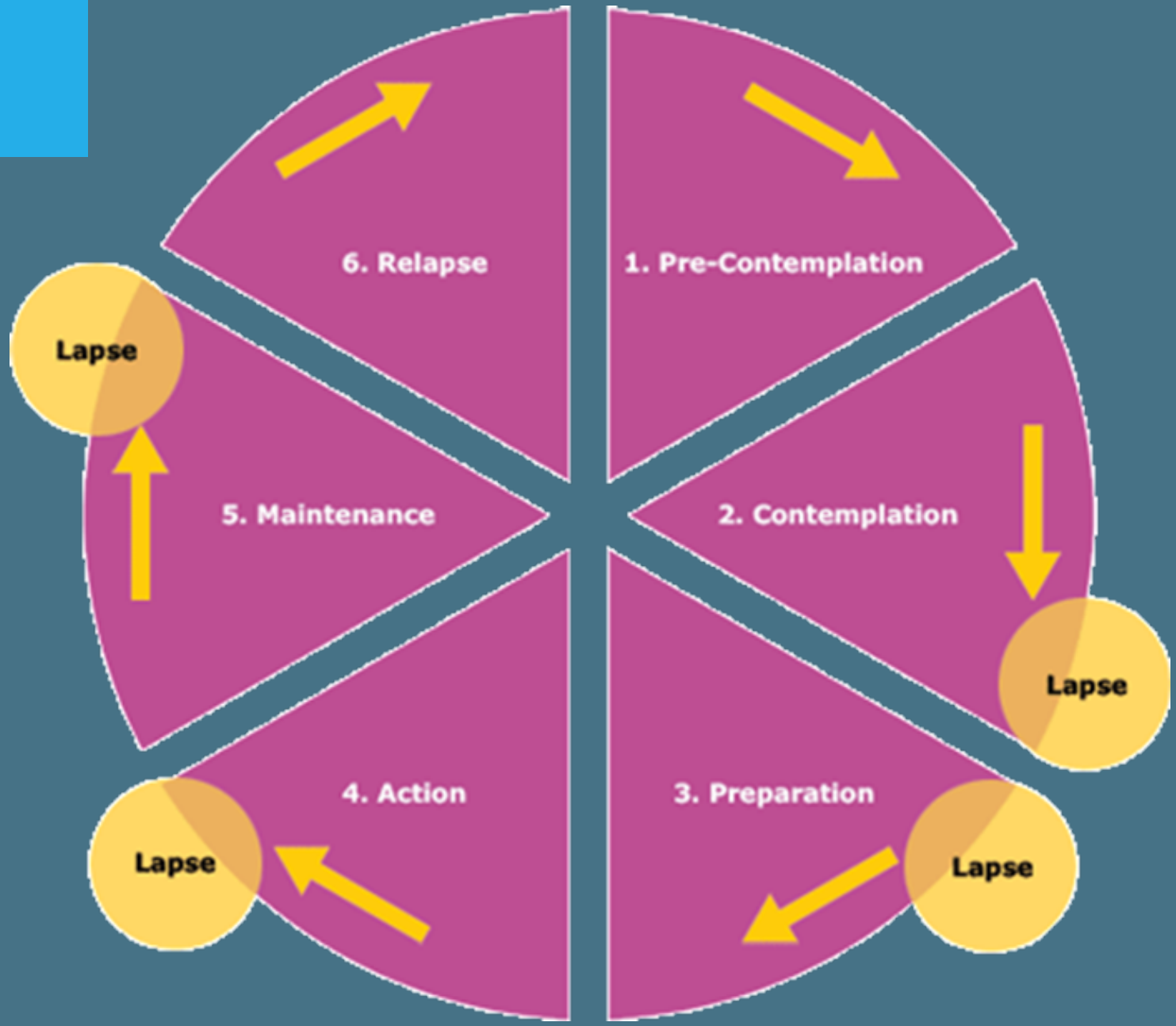
Cycle of Change

Decisional balance=Pros and cons of change. This explores ambivalence and readiness to change

Self efficacy=The belief in ability to action goals to make change



Contact Us

Advice line:
0800 970 4866 9:00 - 17:00,
Mon - Thur 9:00 - 16:30 (Fri)

youcan@matthewproject.org
unity@matthewproject.org

matthewprojectyoungpeople.org

@TMPyoungpeople



The Matthew Project unity


Change
Grow
Live



Norfolk Change Grow Live
The Ketamine Pathway

Change Grow Live

Our vision

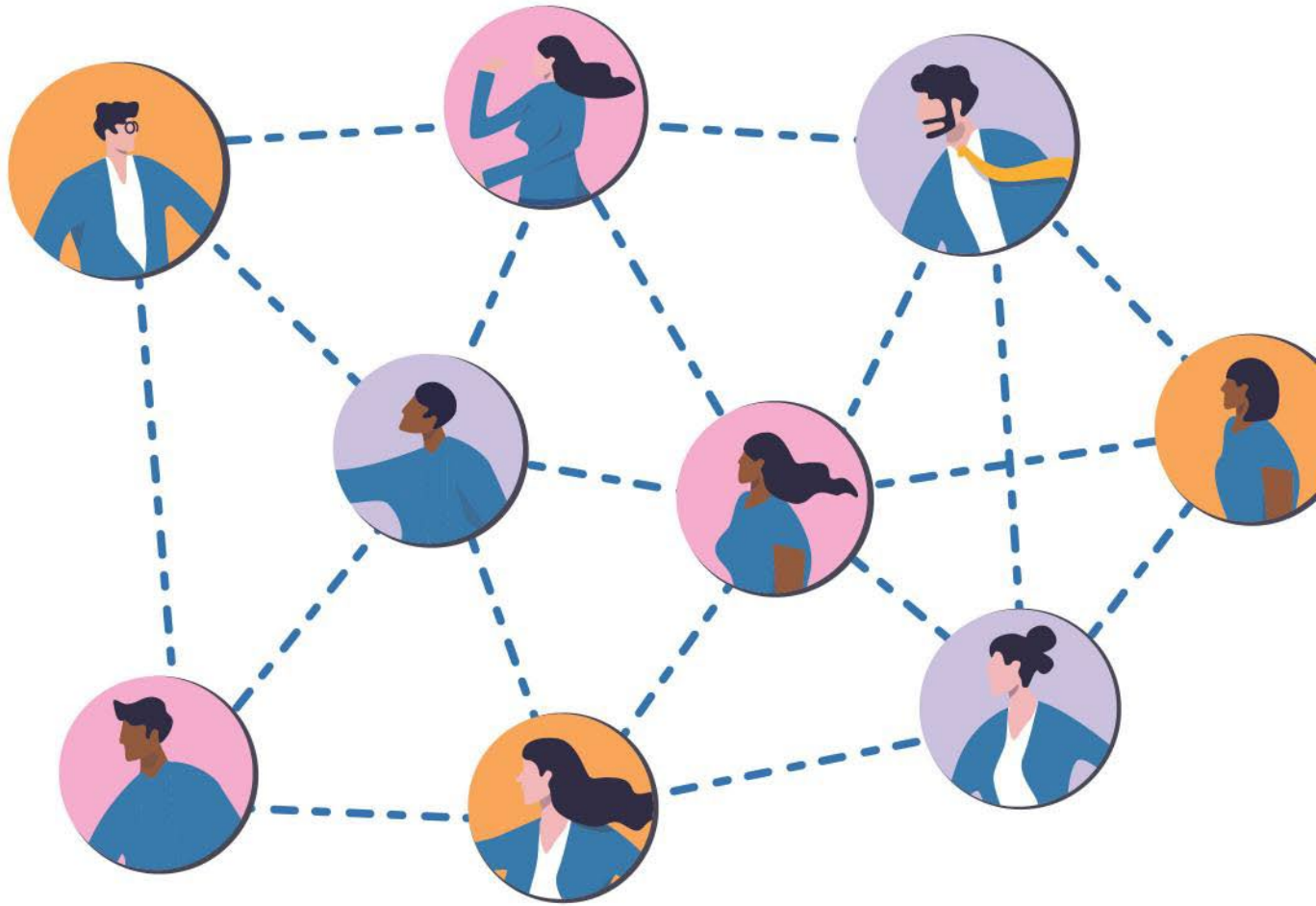
is a world where people are not judged for their problems but seen for their potential.

Our mission

is to transform lives by providing services built on evidence and compassion, rooted in the communities we serve.

Our values

to be bold, open and compassionate.



Introduction



Neave Watson

Detox Coordinator

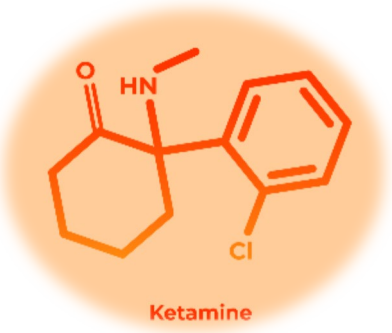
- We recognised our traditional pathways were not effective for people using Ketamine
- We started our development of the Ketamine pathway in 2022 when we started seeing an increase in people accessing treatment for their Ketamine use.
- We have continued to develop this resulting in partnership working with UROKET and bespoke psychosocial interventions

Why is Ketamine so prevalent in Norfolk?

In 2022 we had a few service users accessing treatment for Ketamine use.

Today Ketamine service users make up 30% of our non-dependent caseload.

- Cost
- Availability
- Low quantity = large effects
- Misinformation
- Multi-faceted effects
- “Ketamine communities”
- Limited hangover symptoms
- Poor mental health
- Neurodiversity
- Spiritual connection
- Lower legal risk



Ketamine Screening Tool

We recognised that there was a physical health need we had to consider due to the physical impact of Ketamine.

With the guidance from the staff at NNUH we created a screening tool to identify if somebody may need intervention from UROKET.

Once this is complete, we send this to the GP to request that they make the referral if appropriate.

This also acts as a consent form for us to share information with UROKET in our monthly MDT meetings.

Change Grow Live | Alcohol & Drug Behaviour Change Service Norfolk

Ketamine Screening and consent Questions

Do you have pain, pressure, or discomfort in your lower abdomen/ bladder? **(Y/N)**

Do you feel like you need to pee right away (urgency), often (frequency), or both? **(Y/N)**

Do you ever leak urine? **(Y/N)**

Are you experiencing incontinence? **(Y/N)**

Are you experiencing blood or a jelly-like substance in your urine or ejaculate? **(Y/N)**

Are you working with the ketamine clinic at the hospital/can we have consent to discuss your case with them if required? **(Y/N)**

I _____ give my consent for CGL to liaise with the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital Urology-Ketamine Clinic regarding my recovery.

Signed: _____

Psychosocial Interventions

Urology clinic

- Offering psychosocial interventions to our own clients alongside the clinic

- Offering easy access to our service for those not known to us



Psychosocial Interventions

Ketamine Group

Weekly group
Location: REST Hub
Norwich

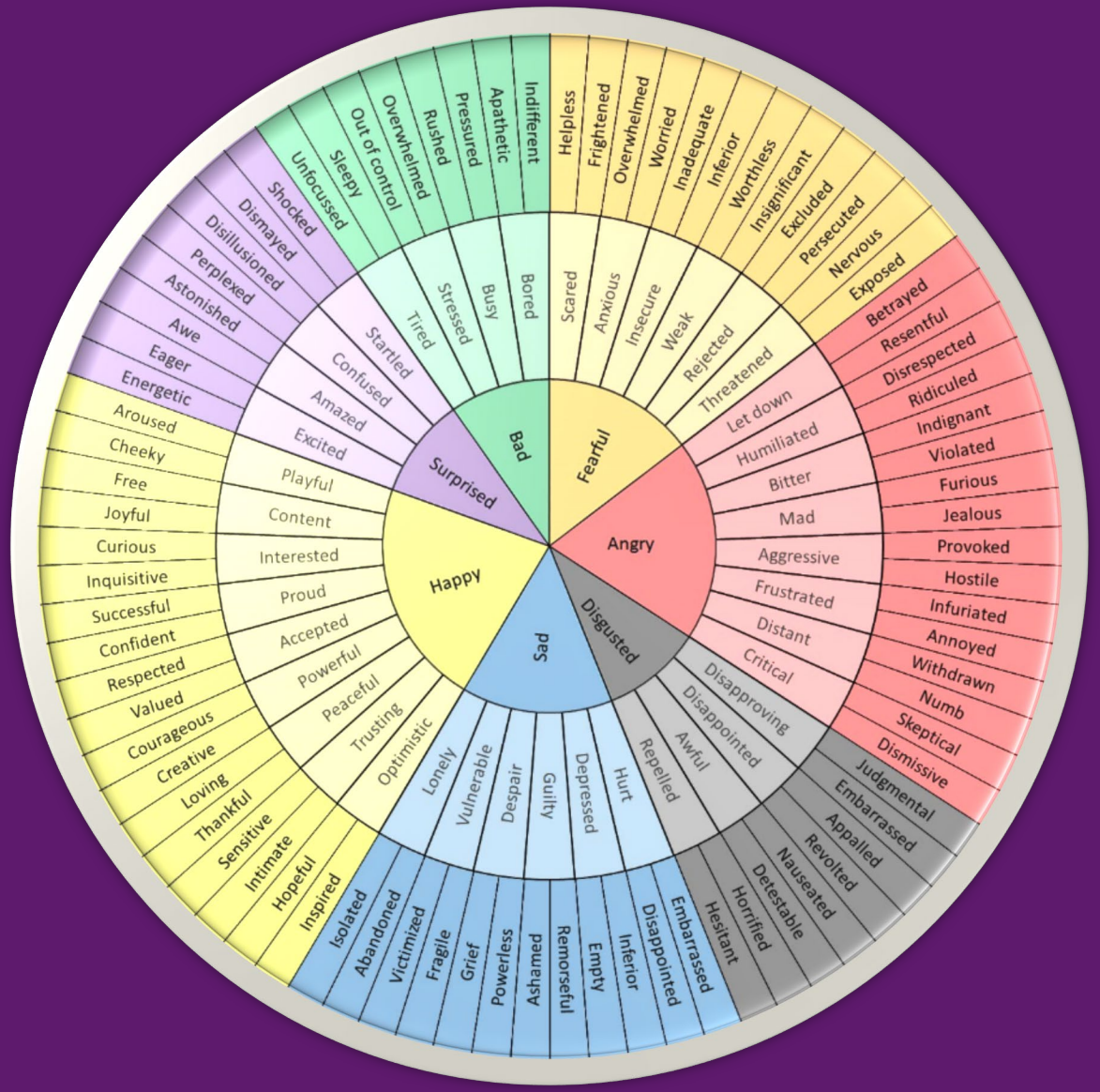
What are the benefits?

Topics we cover:

- Practicing mindfulness
- Auricular Acupuncture
- Identifying triggers
- Managing cravings
- Working on building life foundations
- Stress management
- Connecting with values
- Peer support

Intervention tools

- Motivational Interviewing
- Worksheets and Mapping
- Referrals internal and external agencies
- Goal setting



Emotions Wheel



Psychosocial Interventions

Detox & Rehab

- Increased clinical need
- Tried all community interventions
- Showed motivation and preparation for change

Success rate and reflecting on why this is not an instant intervention…

Our barriers and what we are doing to overcome them:

- **NDTMS** – ketamine = no data
- **Funding & resources**
- **Lack of research** - awareness & knowledge
- **No national pathway** - limited national guidance
- **Stigma**
- **Safeguarding** – driving, children, LADO

Advice For Other Professionals

Red flags for potential Ketamine use:

- Repeated prescriptions of antibiotics
- Benzodiazepine and strong analgesic prescriptions
- Reports of repeated UTI's
- Reports of stomach cramping
- Reported dissociation & increased mental health problems
- Reports of frequent urination and/or reports of blood in urine
- Reports of use of frequent use of over-the-counter medication such Buscopan or pain killers
- Repeated A&E presentations
- Reported memory loss
- Frequent referrals to iCASH due to reported symptoms with negative STI screenings

"The symptoms you have described are like what someone using ketamine would experience, do you mind me asking if you are currently using Ketamine?"



What our service users want you to know…

“It is as addictive as heroin”

“My symptoms are individual”

“Taking Ketamine becomes a ritualistic process very quickly”

“There is no quick fix – it can take us years”

“Relapses are catastrophic, I may as well seek oblivion”

“My physical health issues hold back my recovery”

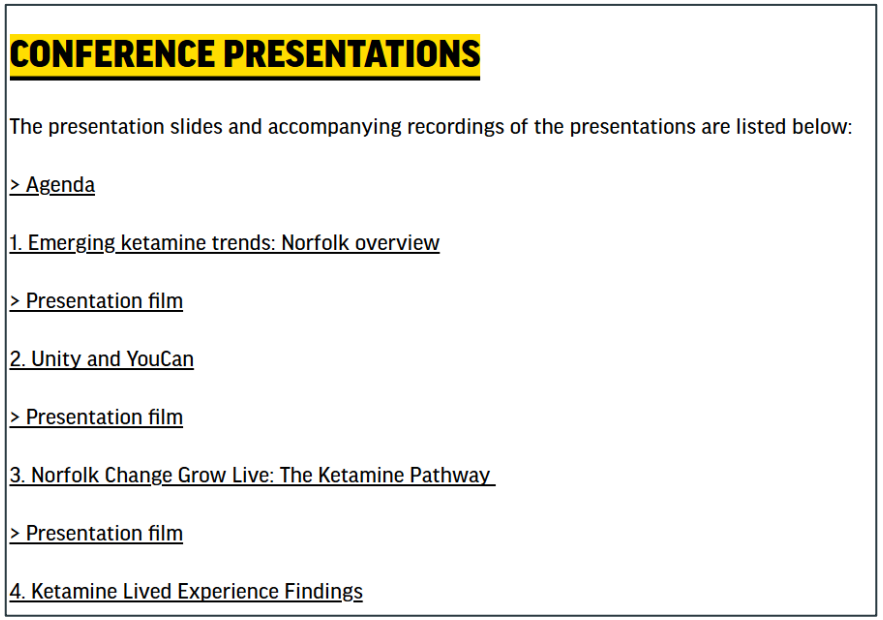


Make a difference

Norfolk's Ketamine Action Plan

	Activities
Tier 1: Prevention	- Identification of key agencies for training / awareness raising - Develop training sessions for professionals - Scope current local and national awareness resources – for users, affected others and professionals
Tier 2: Engagement	- Develop local awareness raising campaign - Identify local referral pathways (including A&E, Maternity, Urology and hepatology) - Work with Lived Experience to gain insight into service pathways/provision
Tier 3: Treatment	- Identify current treatment offer (psychosocial and clinical interventions) any areas for development - Develop screening tools, professional guidance
Tier 4: Recovery	- Referral Routes into Specialist In patient provision - Referral pathway into Mental Health Services - Development of Peer Support programmes for Ketamine Users





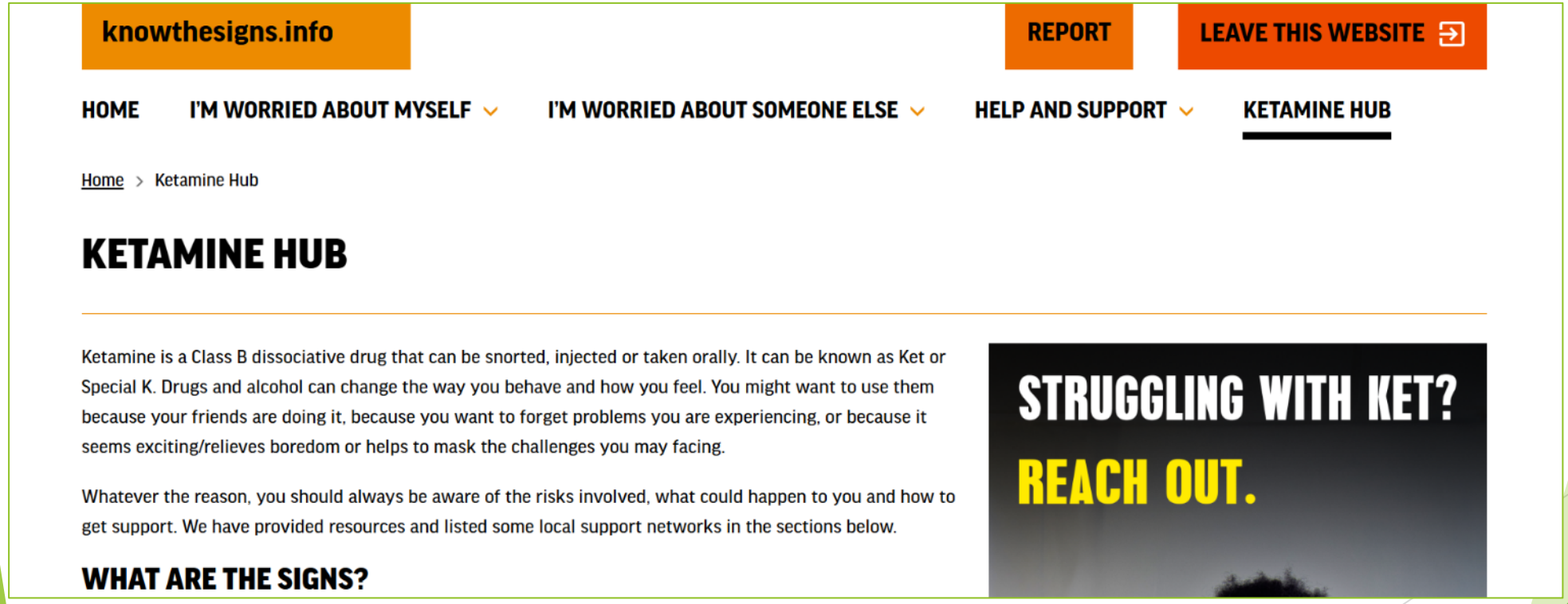
Ketamine Conference Resources

- Ketamine and synthetic opioids conference 2026

- Comprehensive repository of slides, recorded video from the day and links to a variety of resources
- Focus on Ketamine prevalence, data, support and treatment, the voice of Lived Experience, and the launch of the NDAP Ketamine Awareness Campaign with Spintop Media
- Sessions on the emerging risk of synthetic opioids and the synthetic response plan for Norfolk

Online Ketamine Resources - NDAP

Ketamine Hub | Know the Signs (www.knowthesigns.info/ketamine)



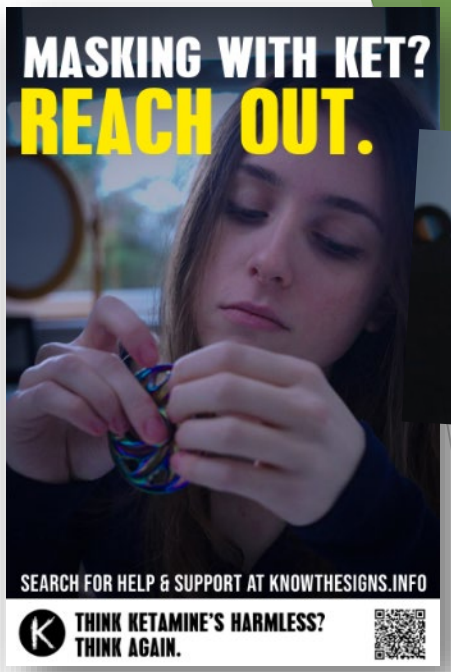
Awareness Campaign Films & Posters

Designed and created by students (operating as Spintop Media), part of the Media Learning Company at City College Norwich

15-18 years old









Neurodiverse audience

Over-18s







Parents and carers



Thank you for listening!

Contact:

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Rachael.cooper@norfolk.police.uk

Norfolk County Council

NDAP Norfolk Drug & Alcohol Partnership

