

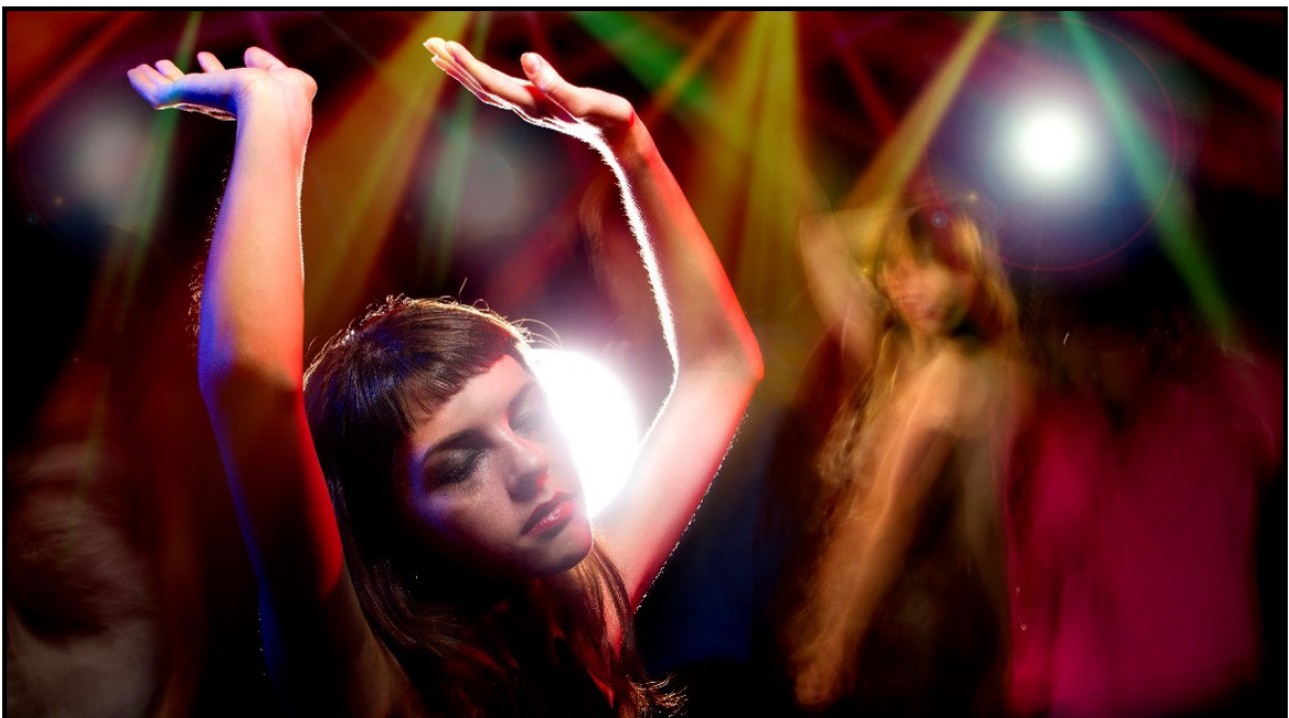
**ECSTASY/MDMA AND MUSIC FESTIVALS****SKILL DEVELOPMENT: PLANNING, EVALUATING CONSEQUENCES, ASSERTIVENESS AND REFUSAL SKILLS, HELP-SEEKING, IDENTIFYING RISKS AND DECISION-MAKING**

*Jacqui and her friends were all in Year 11. A couple of them had used MDMA before but Jacqui and Hannah had always remained pretty strongly against drugs so they had chosen not to do it. They were all going to a music festival and the two young women didn't want to be left out and so Jacqui bought two caps of MDMA from a guy she knew from her part-time job. They were going to try the drug for the first time.*

*Before they left for the festival they all met up to have a few drinks and get in the mood. Someone had told them that there may be drug detection dogs outside the entrance of the festival so when they were in the taxi on their way there all of them, including Jacqui and Hannah, took their cap of MDMA.*

*By the time they got there it was early afternoon and it was starting to get very hot. Jacqui started to feel the effects of the drug as she was walking in and began to feel quite nauseous. Her friends told her that this would pass and then she would end up feeling great, but the effects were overwhelming and she began to panic. Her friends started to get upset with her - Hannah had taken exactly the same thing and she was fine. She was spoiling their fun and attracting unwanted attention. There were lots of security staff around, as well as police, and so in an attempt to hide her from view they took her behind one of the tents and left her and Hannah there and went off to dance.*

*Jacqui was now very hot, sweating profusely and was not making any sense when she spoke. Hannah wanted to get medical help but was not only unsure where the medical tent was, but also frightened that she would get into trouble because she had also taken MDMA.*



## STRENGTH-BASED APPROACH:

### SCENARIO: ACTIVITIES

#### ACTIVITY 1: WHAT DO STUDENTS KNOW (OR THINK THEY KNOW)?

Jacqui and Hannah made a decision to use MDMA for the first time with their friends at a music festival. MDMA is the substance people want when they take ecstasy. What do you know about ecstasy/MDMA?

**Give students 2-3 minutes to write down at least 5 things they know about ecstasy/MDMA.**

*Ensure that students know that it is okay if they do not know much about e-cigarettes and vaping. If they do not feel confident sharing their ideas with others, ask them to wait quietly while others complete the short task*

*Of those students who do know something about the topic, teachers could use the following prompts to assist them in putting together their list – ‘What is it?’, ‘How is it used?’, ‘Does it have other names?’, ‘How dangerous is it?’*

Each item should be written onto a separate post-it note and once completed, these should be put onto a board. Once all have been collected, discuss what has been written and challenge misinformation where appropriate.

Some basic information and key messages that could be discussed include the following:

- **MDMA is the substance users want when they use ecstasy**
- **MDMA/ecstasy can come in different forms – pills, capsules, powder or rock**
- **MDMA/ecstasy can cause harm and has caused deaths**
- **death can be caused due to drug adulteration, i.e., users inadvertently consume a particularly dangerous substance other than MDMA that may be sold as ecstasy**
- **MDMA is not a ‘safe’ drug and can cause harm, including death**
- **some people appear to be predisposed to ecstasy-related harm, including death, even after taking relatively small amounts of the drug**
- **we can’t always explain why a group of people take exactly the same drug but only one of them becomes unwell or dies**
- **different people can have completely different responses to exactly the same substance**

## STRENGTH-BASED APPROACH:

### SCENARIO: ACTIVITIES

#### ACTIVITY 2: IDENTIFYING RISKS AND MAKING DECISIONS

**This group of friends had made a number of decisions that had led them to a situation where Jacqui was now very unwell and needed urgent medical attention and Hannah was too scared to seek help.**

After some general information about ecstasy/MDMA has been discussed, ask the students to identify and list some of the issues the group of friends were facing in the scenario. These would include the following:

- **they had all taken MDMA and were all drug-affected**
- **they had all drunk alcohol before they had taken MDMA, increasing the risk of dehydration**
- **Jacqui bought her MDMA caps from a friend of a friend**
- **this was Jacqui and Hannah's first time trying the drug**
- **they all took an illegal drug in a taxi with the taxi driver in the cab**
- **there were drug detection dogs at the event**
- **it was a very hot day**
- **they took Jacqui behind a tent where she could not easily be seen**
- **they did not know where the medical tent was**
- **Hannah was frightened of getting into trouble if she got help because she had taken a drug**

Using a 'think pair share activity' (i.e., think to themselves, pair up and talk about it with one other person and then share together), ask students to consider the following questions:

What decisions could Jacqui have made to keep herself and others safer?

- **is there anything Jacqui and Hannah could have done to ensure their night was 'risk-free' and that they were completely safe?**
- **what decisions could they have made that would have removed one or more of the most potentially dangerous risks of the evening?**
- **if you were Hannah, what would you have done? Why?**

If you are working with students who are used to this type of higher order activity, ask them to rank these decisions in order from removing all risks, (e.g., Jacqui chose not to go to the music festival and didn't take MDMA), through to limiting some of the inherent risks (e.g., the group of friends should have located the medical tent as soon as they got to the festival so they knew where it was should something go wrong).

## STRENGTH-BASED APPROACH:

### SCENARIO: ACTIVITIES

#### ACTIVITY 3: WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?

**Jacqui and Hannah had made a number of decisions that led them to a point where they had both tried MDMA for the first time, leaving one of them extremely unwell and needing medical assistance and the other terrified of getting help in case she got into trouble.**

Students are asked to select 5 points in the scenario where Jacqui and/or her friends made a choice, e.g., Jacqui decided to buy a cap from a guy she knew from work. Once these have been chosen, students should then develop at least two 'What Could Have Happened Instead?' possibilities for each, e.g., instead of buying from her work colleague she got one from one of her friends who she was going with, or she chose not to buy a cap at all.

Ask students to share with the class the points in the scenario that they identified. Which decisions does the class believe were the most dangerous? Why?

Hand out Activity Sheet 1 and discuss how the scenario ends. Ask the students what they believe could have happened next. Stress that you are not asking them for the end of the story, just the next thing that happened. This could involve Jacqui, Hannah or more of their friends who had left them to go dancing. Students should share their ideas with the class and, using one of them, they should identify what appropriate help-seeking behaviour needs to take place to ensure as safe an outcome as possible.

Ask them to complete the remainder of the Activity Sheet by identifying appropriate help-seeking behaviour for the two options provided (possible suggestions are listed below):

**'What Happened Next?'** Jacqui appears to slip into unconsciousness and then begins to fit

**Appropriate help-seeking behaviour:**

*Hannah immediately informs security staff or a police officer and lets them know what has happened and she is transported to the medical tent for assessment. This is a medical emergency.*

*Hannah calls her parents to tell them what is happening. They tell her to call 000 immediately and let security staff know what is going on. Her parents tell her that they are on their way to help her.*

*Hannah calls 000 and asks for an ambulance.*

*Hannah texts her friends and tells them that Jacqui is getting worse and needs their help. They bring a security guard with them and the medical team is called and Jacqui is taken to the medical tent.*

**'What Happened Next?'** Jacqui starts to feel a little better and even though she is still not feeling the best she tells Hannah that she is now able to get up and walk around

**Appropriate help-seeking behaviour:**

*Hannah takes her to speak to the staff at the medical tent. Even though she is now a little better it is important to take her somewhere safe where she will be looked after by medical professionals. The police are not involved when someone seeks medical assistance at a music festival.*

*Even though they are now both feeling better, Jacqui and Hannah have been through a traumatic experience and both of them need to talk about it with someone they trust.*

Ensure that at the end of this lesson it is made clear that the safest option would have been for Jacqui and her friends not to have taken MDMA, i.e., no use is the only way to ensure no harm. There is no safe way of using MDMA/ecstasy. There may be some ways of removing some of the risk, but it is not 'risk-free' or 'harmless'.

## STRENGTH-BASED APPROACH:

### SCENARIO: ACTIVITIES

#### ACTIVITY 4: BARRIERS TO SEEKING HELP

**Jacqui and Hannah had both taken an illegal drug – MDMA. When things started to go wrong and Jacqui became unwell, they should have called for help, but they were too scared to do so.**

Some of the symptoms that could suggest that a person needs medical assistance after taking MDMA include the following:

- **very high body temperature**
- **profuse sweating**
- **muscle cramps**
- **seizures**
- **inability to cool down; a fast pulse rate and heartbeat when resting**
- **confusion and being unable to answer simple questions**

**If any of the above signs are visible, 000 should be called immediately.**

In small groups ask the students to identify all the reasons why someone in Hannah's situation could be reluctant to seek help, i.e., what are the barriers to help-seeking behaviour for teenagers? There may be others, but essentially there are typically four reasons identified:

- **they are frightened the police will get involved**
- **they are scared their parents will find out**
- **they are worried what their friends will think**
- **they are unsure of what it is that they should do**

Once these have been identified, take some time to 'unpack' these reasons, i.e., what do they fear could actually happen if they did seek help under these headings? Here is an example of how these could be unpacked:

#### **Fear of the police getting involved**

- **their friend has used an illegal drug, will they get arrested for that?**
- **if they have taken the drug themselves, can they get into trouble?**
- **worried that the police will want to know where they got the drug from**
- **how will their friends react to them calling the police?**
- **will the police contact their parents and what will happen if they do?**

If someone is unwell after using alcohol or other drugs, including MDMA, it is important to get medical assistance as quickly as possible. Most large-scale events, including music festivals, have medical tents with trained health professionals on hand to assist with medical emergencies. If someone becomes unwell for any reason, whether it is drug-related or not, it is a health matter and is treated as such. The police are not involved in most cases.

If you are not in a place where medical assistance can be easily accessed, it is vital that you call 000. Discuss some of the fears that the students identified as barriers to seeking help and whether these are justified. e.g., if you call for an ambulance, do the police actually become involved?

## STRENGTH-BASED APPROACH:

### SCENARIO: ACTIVITIES

#### ACTIVITY 4: BARRIERS TO SEEKING HELP (CONTINUED)

Using Activity Sheet 2 and the DARTA fact sheets listed below, students should identify what happens when you call 000 and attempt to debunk some of the myths around seeking help in this way:

- [Calling 000 for a medical emergency](#)
- [Calling an ambulance: Your questions answered](#)
- [Calling an ambulance for someone who is drunk](#)

Bring the class together and ask the students to share with others what they had learnt from reading the fact sheets. Is there anything that surprised them? Are there things that they already knew? Do they believe that knowing these facts could possibly change people's reluctance to call 000 for medical assistance? Get the class to agree on one fact about calling 000 for help that they believe is the most important and could possibly change behaviour.

## ACTIVITY SHEET 1:

### WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?

At the end of the scenario Jacqui was very hot, sweating profusely and was not making sense when she tried to speak. Hannah had stayed with her and wanted to help but didn't know where to go and was also frightened she would get into trouble.

**What do you think happened next?**

**If that had happened what would have been the best response?**

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Here are two other possibilities – can you identify what the best help-seeking behaviour would have been if that had happened?

**What do you think happened next?** Jacqui appears to slip into unconsciousness and then begins to fit  
**Appropriate help-seeking behaviour:**

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**What do you think happened next?** Jacqui starts to feel a little better and even though she is still not feeling the best she tells Hannah that she is now able to get up and walk around

**Appropriate help-seeking behaviour:**

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## ACTIVITY SHEET 2:

# WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU CALL 000?

Indicate whether you believe the following statements concerning calling 000 for medical assistance are true or false.

You have to give your name to the ambulance operator when you call	
You are not legally able to leave the scene once you've called an ambulance	
The ambulance operator will ask you for your personal details	
Your parents will always be called if you are taken to hospital	
The police will always attend an ambulance call if illicit drugs are involved	
The operator will always need to know your exact location when you call	
The paramedics will want to know your parents' contact details and will need to call them	
The information that you provide to the paramedic is strictly confidential	
The person who calls for the ambulance has to pay the bill	
You may be asked personal questions about your friend by the paramedic and your answers will be given to the police	

Using information provided on the following fact sheets find out whether you were correct:

- Calling 000 for a medical emergency
- Calling an ambulance: Your questions answered
- Calling an ambulance for someone who is drunk

Select two of the statements from above that you have now found out are false and then write down the information you have discovered that supports your finding.

**Statement 1:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Facts:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Statement 2:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Facts:** \_\_\_\_\_

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