

## ALCOHOL AND DRUG DEPENDENCE FIVE – INHALANTS

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**(This is based on belief in God. If that offends you, stop reading now)**

In this presentation, we will look at using inhalants, which honestly baffles me.

Working late one night at an office space in a Florida strip center, I heard a peculiar sound outside our back door. I slid outside through the front and around the building to find a small group of teenagers around the condensing unit component of our air conditioner. One young man was laying on the ground, inhaling gas directly from the relief valve on the freon tank. Knowing what I know about such gasses, I was completely confused. (To be continued)

### General Description of Drugs in this Class

Inhalants are volatile and very toxic substances or fumes, sniffed or "huffed." Inhalants affect the brain with great speed and force, keeping oxygen from reaching it. The 'intoxication' produced usually lasts just a few minutes, so users inhale repeatedly, increasing danger.

Inhalants come in three classes of product. Industrial or household solvents, including paint thinners, degreasers, gasoline, glues and art or office supply solvents. Gasses found in household or commercial products, include butane lighters, propane tanks, whipping cream aerosols or dispensers (whippets), refrigerant gases and household aerosol propellants. Aliphatic nitrites include cyclohexyl nitrite, now available to the general public; amyl nitrite, available only by prescription and butyl nitrite, now an illegal substance.

**Common Street Names:** Whippets, poppers, snappers, air blast, moon gas, oz, poor man's pot, bolt, boppers, bullet rush, Satan's secret, buzz bomb, shoot the breeze, snotballs, Texas shoe shine, highball, thrust, hippie crack, toilet water, huff, toncho, laughing gas, and locker room. Other names include the thousands of household products with toxic fumes that can be inhaled.

### How Inhalants Affect Users

Inhalant effects are immediate, but short lasting. A tingling rises up the neck and the brain absorbs the "high." People using inhalants can't really walk or work. They become spaced out for a few minutes, not knowing what they're doing or where they're going.

Inhalants actually displace oxygen in the bloodstream, needed by the brain. Oxygen can't bind to blood cells already bound to gasses from inhalants. When users are experiencing is the effect of oxygen deprivation to their brain and other body organs. Cells deprived of oxygen don't live long, and the primary cells at risk in this sad game, are brain cells that won't grow back.

### Legitimate Medical Uses

None.

### Reasons Behind Inhalant Use

Reasons given for abusing inhalants seem to indicate some brain damage has already occurred. I'm bored and it gives me something to do. Doing it helps me seem rebellious and cool. Using them helps me fit in with the crowd. I prove I'm not afraid to use them. They make me act funny and provide entertainment to my friends. They're cheap, easy to obtain and hide.

Users generally seek acceptance from peers, in order to fit in with a group.

### Consequences for Abuse of Inhalants

## Physical Health

Given the probable death of cells needing oxygen, including brain cells and other organs? The primary physical risks seem to be widespread and long-lasting damage to the brain and other parts of the nervous system, heart attacks, accidents when the body isn't working correctly, a lifetime of illness from damaged organs, permanent disability and death. Other seemingly less severe symptoms include; slurred speech, dizziness, hallucinations, loss in control, headaches, confusion, choking on vomit, suffocation, muscle spasms and tremors, liver, lung and kidney problems. If prolonged use is survived, cognition, movement, vision and hearing can suffer damage. Chronic inhalant abusers may permanently lose the ability to perform everyday functions, like walking, talking and thinking.

## Mental Health

A high percentage of inhalant users eventually experience brain damage.

## Probability of Addiction / Dependence

There are very few long term inhalant users, If they don't stop or move on to other drugs, using these will probably destroy them.

## Social or Societal Consequences

Your 'friends' are not laughing with you. They're laughing at you, while you destroy your present and your future life for their entertainment. Your family will be left to deal with guilt for failing to recognize you had a problem, before your funeral became necessary. Or they will get to take care of a crippled or brain damaged child for the rest of their lives.

## Legal Consequences

The abuse exists because; products are free or generally inexpensive, no complex paraphernalia is needed to abuse products, they are available in stores, homes and schools, easy to conceal and use can occur anywhere. Laws prohibiting sale of products with toxic fumes to minors are difficult to enforce and legal consequences for use are minimal.

## **The Trap Associated With Inhalant Use:**

Users are dead or permanently damaged before they figure out that replacing oxygen in their cells with toxic fumes was an incredibly foolish choice.

## **The Rest of the Story:**

The reason for teens around our condenser unit eventually came out. Extremely bored, this was just a way to pass time. Huffing freon created a 'buzz,' making them act really goofy till it wore off. Was it fun? (Insert shrugs here). Just something to do. Did they know displacing oxygen in their blood with gas of no use to their cells, could lead to irreversible brain damage or sudden death? (Insert more shrugs here) It was just something to do. What????

This is an age of living foolishly and dying stupidly, taking risks and engaging in extreme sports. Just to be in the record books? As though risking self-destruction has anything to do with our purpose here. It is never necessary to die like a fool. Boredom will do that to you, if doing anything, no matter how foolish, seems better than doing nothing.

## **A Practical Application:**

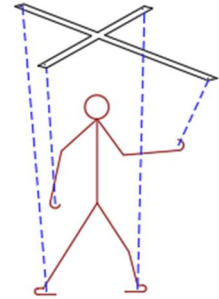
Puppets on strings are not admirable, since they're just being controlled by someone. But we can all become puppets, allow others to control our actions and our destinies. A puppet master makes a puppet dance any way they choose, by just pulling the right strings. Ever do things you had no real interest in, just to fit in? So you wouldn't be called weak, a kill joy, a party pooper or coward? Those kind of words are used in peer pressure.

We first surrender our minds, giving "friends" more control over us than teachers, parents, pastors or God. Everyone else is doing what we know to be wrong or stupid, but we join in anyway. And others seem to know how our hot spots can be used for manipulation.

Once the mind is on their string, the rest of the body follows, with emotional attachment being next. It's easy to get our identity entangled in another person's, then do whatever it takes to continue friendship. We know we're being used, hated it, but still let someone do it. God said to Adam. "It's not good to be alone." Being used or being alone seems to be the two choices. So we let them attach that string too.

With mind and emotions in control of others, we just go where they lead us. They command, we do it and then pay the consequences. We stay up all night to impress fellow partiers, struggling the next full day at work. Blowing money to impress others only hurts when bills become due. Wrong place at the wrong time when the police arrive can cost lots of time, lots of money, all of our possessions and our families. But we dance as others pull strings, to keep our so-called "friends."

Everyone has their strings pulled, but who we allow to do it is an important decision to make, deliberately and ahead of time. Once in activities best avoided, it's difficult to resist.



### **A Historical Application:**

Even heroes take stupid risks. In the scriptures, a hero of Israel named Abner made a minor mistake, backing one of Saul's sons over David to be Israel's next king. Abner was actually a good friend to David, just thought Saul's son had a right to his father's throne. On a battlefield, Abner's army met David's army, commanded by Joab, the mightiest of David's men. When the battle was totally lost, Abner wisely decided to run away.

Abner was reasonably fast of foot and soon outran his enemies, except for one pesky lad who Abner could not shake. While Asahel was quick, he was also unarmed and unarmored. Abner asked him to back off, or at least stop and arm himself. When Asahel refused, Abner struck behind him with his spear's butt end, trying to knock him down. Unfortunately, Abner was a mighty man and the spear's blunt back end still punched through Asahel, killing him. Now Abner did have a problem. Asahel was Joab's little brother.

Under Israel's law, the kinfolk of an accident victim had every right to kill you in return. Blood for blood! But if you could get to a city of refuge before they caught you, you were safe from revenge. But you had to stay inside the city, to stay protected.

It's not an easy change, going from army commander to fugitive. Abner quickly became restless. He messaged David, asking to meet and make peace. He received permission and did reforge an alliance with David. But he had left the city of refuge to do so. Hearing Abner had come and left, Joab quickly caught Abner and his men. He convinced Abner to meet and talk with him. There, outside of Abner's safe place, Joab murdered him. Since revenge was Joab's right, David could only cry for his friend. "Died Abner as a fool dieth?"

### **Trying Out a Better Way:**

We are not required to make such foolish decisions. A really good choice is to allow God to control our actions. He's the only friend we have, whose plans for us are always for good and never for evil. He's the only who ever loved us enough to die for us.



Joab Killing Abner - Hirschvogel

