

Dual Diagnosis: e-learning training course



Here are four stories about people with a dual diagnosis involving mental illness and drug misuse, including cannabis, heroin, crack cocaine, amphetamines, ecstasy and alcohol. The stories are an excellent training resource and are presented as an online e-learning training course. Aimed at people with a dual diagnosis, as well as practitioners and trainers, the training course contains essential information and advice about reducing the harmful effects of drugs and alcohol.

This colourful and engaging training course is particularly attractive to those seeking to provide practical information in jargon-free language to users and practitioners working with dual diagnosis clients. It can be used as a focus for discussion in a group setting but is equally suitable for those who would rather work by themselves or in one-to-one sessions at their own pace and at a time and place of their choosing.

Topics addressed include:

1. Understanding the chemistry of drugs
2. Identifying warning signs and triggers
3. Understanding diagnosis, treatment and medication
4. The danger of mixing drugs
5. Fighting addiction
6. Exploring schizophrenia and paranoia
7. The different types of cannabis
8. The side effects of stimulant drugs
9. Hangovers, withdrawals and comedowns
10. Raising overdose awareness
11. Identifying ecstasy psychosis
12. Managing drug use
13. The risk of injecting
14. How to deal with an emergency
15. Homelessness, arrest and compulsory detention

Developed in association with Manchester Mental Health and Social Care Trust, this training course is derived from a series of four booklets. The stories are based on the experiences of people in psychiatric treatment and were told as part of a PhD sponsored by the Trust and the University of Salford and in collaboration with Lifeline. Original research and text by Michael Linnell and Mark Holland. Michael also produced the booklet illustrations.

Training course comprises:

- David - the man with the transparent head (*Cannabis*)
- 'Raving Mad' Martha (*Ecstasy*)
- Jason - the psychonaut (*Alcohol and other drugs*)
- A man called God - in heaven and hell (*Heroin and Crack Cocaine*)

This resource offers the learner the chance to step inside the head of someone at risk from substance misuse and addresses directly the issues faced by people with a dual diagnosis. Practitioners from the entire range of health and social care services will find it relevant, including those working in the fields of criminal justice and housing. Furthermore, the resource is user-friendly, stimulating and extremely informative and up-to-date.

Managers and trainers will find the resource to be a key tool for equipping practitioners with an insight in to the issues of dual diagnosis and this particular client group. The self-help approach of the course's content means that carers and service users will also find the resource valuable.

Training Course Content

Unit 1 - David has a diagnosis of schizophrenia. He has been in and out of hospital several times and, still only in his 20's, he learns about the effects, both good and bad, of cannabis on his mental health. His story is told in a sympathetic and moving way.

Unit 2 - Martha knows the dark side and the bright side to ecstasy (and other drugs) and this comes through in a story that shows how a person might have to adapt their lives to the distress and stigma of mental illness. There are tips on safer use, relapse prevention, dealing with emergencies and more.

Unit 3 - Jason will use anything as long as it makes him feel 'normal'. Thing is, it doesn't make him feel normal - it just makes him feel less 'abnormal'. He hears things, sees things, gets weird and bizarre ideas and simply keeps using drink and drugs to get through it all. This unit includes a useful drug interactions matrix which shows how substances interact with medications.

Unit 4 - Geoff (aka 'God') is usually living on the street (he has been for years). On occasions he has a roof over his head - but that is often a hospital roof after being sectioned. His life is like heaven and hell, speedballing or drinking and being in hospital. But he wants what others want - it just seems to be a case of staying alive until it comes about.