Pateris, sedinti maionte es horehch nere femet neria cas; in erus, nessilis.

Upil. Cibuncur, nemus cris, non spermam tente nos cia iea ses et perer. Ver licienilis publico nuciliv entiitp spcuris, sultum condierterum atu perrater, contem combert estratusanum in hore nos sper qui consi, vir hos ceter, nonsuam pu

The Northern Echo
The North's campaigning newspaper
Founded 1870 Issue No 45,499

COMMMENT
Commnt 300 words hdpn

HE struggles of addiction have hit the headlines again following the sad death of Carrie Fisher. The actress, who shot to fame aged 19, playing Princess Leia in the Star Wars series, was candid about her life-long battles with drug addiction and mental illness. Her first experience of recreational drugs was as a 13-year-old when she was presented with a bag of marijuana. And she went on to write a fictionalised account of her Travails in the best-selling novel Postcards From The Edge.

There is a strong lobby for legalising some recreational drugs, most notably marijuana, under the guise of the purported medical benefits as well as arguments that legalisation will result in greater regulation and user safety in the same way that alcohol and tobacco are controlled.

A literal tap to the reality is that recreational drugs exist, ranging from tablets and substances which are inhaled or smoked, through to preparations which can be injected into the bloodstream.

Many reasons have been cited for why individuals experiment with recreational drug use, including peer pressure, rebelliousness, as an aid to relaxation, and indeed the belief that such substances will expand your mind and somehow provide a more enlightened outlook on life. However, in the same way that there is no evidence to suggest any benefit from consuming alcohol if you are teetotal, there are no physical or mental health gains whatsoever from recreational drug use. Just as the answer to one’s problems is never at the bottom of a glass, nor will it be at the end of a needle.

And although certain aspects of society and the media have chosen to glamourise drug use, the reality is anything but. The most commonly used recreational drug in the UK is marijuana, also known as cannabis, a leaf which is either smoked on its own or mixed with tobacco. It is often incorrectly portrayed as a fairly innocuous, harmless drug which helps to make you feel relaxed and happy by altering the way you view stressful events, making them seem less worrisome. In actual fact it is more likely to impair your ability think straight and carry out simple everyday tasks such as driving, resulting in possible harm to the user as well as others. Repeated use is linked with serious consequences including schizophrenia and dementia. These may occur long after the use of marijuana has ceased.

Cocaine, known colloquially as coke, will be forever linked with the excesses of the 1980s, with multiple films of the time depicting well-heeled executives snorting the white powder, often with the aid of £20 or £50 notes. Carrie Fisher once claimed that she had taken cocaine during the filming of The Empire Strikes Back, but said later: “I didn’t even like coke that much. It was just a case of getting on whatever train I needed to get.”

Apart from the physical and mental side effects of drug use, these substances affect society as a whole, destroying the lives of those who use them, their loved ones and often completely unrelated individuals. A sustained habit is expensive and individuals may turn to crime to fund it. Persons in regular jobs may lose their employment due to the mental impairment that such drugs actually cause. Drug users are more likely to engage in risk-taking behaviour, for example driving under the influence. Behavioural alterations, including irritability and sudden outbursts during the come-down period, and the substance of addiction becoming the centre of that person’s world, ruin relationships and families.

Despite all this, we now have a better understanding of the common symptoms and signs of addiction, greater resources for helping those who are affected as well as reduced social stigma attached to seeking help. The signs of drug use are many and varied, and although a change in behaviour is the most common, it would be wrong to say that all persons with this are drug users. Often there are multiple but subtle signs that alert concern.

If you are worried that a loved one may be taking recreational drugs, it may help to talk with them privately in a non-confrontational manner. They may be under a lot of stress and a friendly face is what they need. Your regular GP will also be an excellent source of support and information. Some may be able to manage drug addiction themselves, and all will be able to direct you towards the appropriate help.

ADDITION: Cocaine can promote feelings of euphoria but can also bring on massive physical and mental lows

What do you think?

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The Northern Echo
Daily average audience

Print 68,281
Source: JICREG November 1, 2015

Online 58,663
Source: ABCE Jul – Dec 2015

TOTAL 126,944

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