

All too often we read in the news about celebrities and people in the public eye using and being seen to be using Cocaine. To many it may appear to be glamorous and to be the in thing to do. Cocaine is very addictive. It can be difficult to resist the craving and the low moods and feeling rough after the effects wear off can tempt people into taking it more often and in larger amounts

I am sure that is not what one local family must be feeling after a tragic incident last year. A young life cut short due to the use of Cocaine.

Many people do not understand the implications of using Cocaine. Listed below are some of the effects that can experience:

- Heart failure – the use of Cocaine increases adrenaline which leads to an increase in blood pressure, blood vessels can constrict and prolonged use hardens the arteries
- Stokes and Seizures – caused by the repeated constriction of blood vessels and increase in blood pressure which can sometimes cut off the blood supply to parts of the brain and cause delicate blood vessels to break (causing bleeding in the brain).
- Respiratory System – taking Cocaine may cause lung problems. There is also emerging evidence from the USA that there is increased chance of catching TB which may be due to impaired immune systems.
- Liver damage – if alcohol is used in conjunction with cocaine the stresses on the liver will increase as a liver toxic substance is produced.
- Blood borne viruses – sharing the equipment used to take the Cocaine (bank notes, straws etc.) can increase your chances of infection from blood borne viruses such as Hepatitis C
- Mental Health - people who use Cocaine regularly develop serious problems with anxiety and paranoia. Some may experience serious mental health problems.

Jillian Hunt, Bracknell Forest DAAT Co-ordinator said ‘the effect that the prolonged use of Cocaine can have can not be minimised. It can break up families, cause the user to build up huge debts, they may lose their homes and possessions. Sometimes the only way to pay off these debts is through crime. So the cycle continues. It is also interesting to note that prolonged use of Cocaine can lead to impotence’.

Detective Inspector Nick Evans said ‘Cocaine is a class A drug, it is illegal to have, give away or sell. Being found in possession can get you up to seven years in jail. Supplying someone else, including your friends, can get you life and an unlimited fine’.

Don't be tempted – cocaine is not glamorous – it can kill!