



I Have Worked with “Huffers”

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Submission: 📅 October 26, 2017; **Published:** 📅 November 13, 2017

Opinion

I have worked with “huffers” and one had an astounding motive for sniffing glue to get “high”. He was a lonely young person and when he used glue he entered a Disney World where the household plants grew faces and talked to him and the trees in the park grew arms and hands which reached out to give him a hug and shake his hand.

Because this young man was allowed to talk about his drug experience rather than be “water boarded” with recovery ideology/theology he was able to capitalize on an unknown, unacknowledged skill. I asked him to draw a picture of his “glue experience”. He did. It was cartoon, but it was good. He developed his artistic talent and left glue sniffing behind as his talent and associations flowered naturally.

Aside from posters, and bumper stickers, and party patrols, what does prevention have to offer? If it is “glorifying drugs” to allow a client to discuss his “drug experience” then how will you ever know what is going on inside the client’s head and how he or she perceives drug sensations.

Sensation recognition is the beginning of self conscious use. This is use that takes account of the psychological expectations about what the drug will do & the socio-environmental setting in which the drug is done.

Attention to sensations, sets, and settings will bring about greater opportunities for controlled drug experiences.

There is a scene in the Academy Award winning movie, traffic, that will help illustrate what I am saying about the importance of recognizing drug sensations. The scene played by Katherine Zeta Jones as Helena Ayala is involved in a drug deal to become the sole distributor of Obregón Brothers Cocaine in the USA. Naturally the brothers want to sample some of Ayala’s imported cocaine, & offer

some too Helena but Helena declines saying that she is pregnant and won’t do it.

Juan Obregón: [hands her a mirror with cocaine on it] you first.

Helena Ayala: I’m six months pregnant, I won’t do it.

Juan Obregón: Then we don’t have a deal.

Helena Ayala: Yeah, right, we don’t have a deal. I’m sorry to have wasted your time Mr. Obregón...

Juan Obregón: Okay. Okay, okay.

[Sniffs cocaine]

Juan Obregón: That’s good coke.

Helena Ayala: It should be... it’s yours.

The point is: how did he know it was “good cocaine”? How does anyone know if the euphoric drugs ingested are effective accept by the sensations they provide. Here, for example, a multi-million dollar drug deal is based on the sensations produced by two lines of cocaine. Those sensations must be fairly important.

I would suggest that the reason that treatment and prevention isn’t working is that we are ignoring the real issue... how people feel when they get ‘high’.

Inflicting yet again more punishment on “addicts” by resorting to criminal legislation should, by now, obviously not be the answer.

In the movie Traffic character Helena Ayala/ still six months pregnant lunches with her friends at the country club... as Helena has a second glass of wine, she says: I told my doctor, I’m Southern European. I grew up on wine. I’m not giving up wine. Wine is in my blood. I’m a wino! (Laughter)