

How do I stop drugs & alcohol impacting my sex life?



This tip sheet is for men who date trans women or trans feminine people who want to understand how to use drugs and alcohol without it getting in the way of dating or relationships.*

Summary

- Some people enjoy combining drugs and sex. Understanding the reasons for using drugs or alcohol can lead to safer, more respectful experiences.
- Some men feel ashamed about being attracted to trans women, and may use drugs and alcohol to manage these feelings.
- Drugs and alcohol may make someone unsafe to be around for trans women.
- Different trans women have different boundaries around alcohol and drug use. Understanding these boundaries is a great way of showing trans women that you respect them.

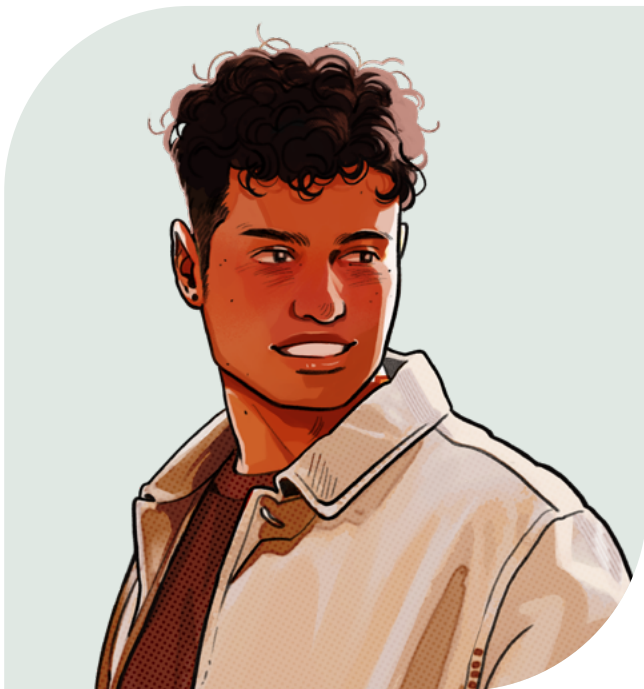
* "Men" in this resource refers to cisgender men. "Trans women" refers to trans women, trans feminine people, women who have a trans and gender diverse history or experience, but do not identify as transgender - and other trans feminine culturally-specific identities such as Sistergirls, Fa'afafine and Kinner.

Respectful use

Partying can be a lot of fun. Some trans women also like to have sex while they party.

Understanding why you use drugs or alcohol can help you party more safely and respectfully. Many people choose to use alcohol and drugs while socialising to give them more energy, to reduce anxiety, or to share a euphoric experience. Some people use alcohol and drugs during sex to feel more confident, increase sensation and arousal, delay orgasm, or feel more connected. Others use them because they are feeling lonely, depressed or frustrated, or because of peer pressure.

Some men feel ashamed or confused about their attraction to trans women or of the kind of sex they enjoy and may use drugs and alcohol to manage these feelings. This can lead to using too much, or at the wrong time. For tips on how to overcome feelings of shame and get more confident about dating trans women see our tip sheet “What does dating trans women mean for my sexuality?” on the Transfemme website.



@noahdeart

“Some men, once they’ve had substances, become erratic and I have to do so much more work evaluating risk and navigating my safety. I want men to work on their self-acceptance because we could have so much more fun together if they didn’t need to take drugs to overcome their shame.” Candy

Drugs and alcohol may also make someone less fun or even unsafe to be around. Trans women often say that men who are drunk or high are much more likely to misread or ignore their sexual desires or boundaries.

This can look like:

- Being sexually selfish or ignoring her pleasure
- Treating her as a sex object or focussing on only one part of her body
- Demanding sexual acts or only re-enacting scenes from porn
- Not asking for consent
- Not listening to or respecting her boundaries
- Not accepting a “no” or being pushy
- Not noticing if she is uncomfortable, nervous, distressed or in pain
- Using degrading or humiliating language
- Being rough or forceful during sex, e.g. choking
- Refusing to use or removing condoms without consent. Stealthing is unlawful in many states around Australia.
- Being inappropriately sexual in non-sexual situations.

You must have enthusiastic consent before and during sex. A person can change or withdraw their consent at any time. Without consent, many of the behaviours above are considered sexual assault. In some places, such as Victoria, it is now unlawful to have sex or sexual contact with someone without first proactively gaining their explicit consent, rather than waiting for them to say no. These laws are also being implemented in other regions.

You can't legally consent to sex if you're too drunk or high. This is because drugs and alcohol can impact decision-making and lower our inhibitions to the point we are unable to say no or know what we are agreeing to.

Trans women's reports of having experienced sexual violence or assault are alarmingly high and far too common.

Keeping this in mind, your date may have her own experiences of violence or sexual assault. Experiencing trauma like this can make it more difficult to say no to you if you are intoxicated or acting unpredictably, as they may be worried about how you will react.

Trans women have reported not feeling able to say no during sex with men because they don't feel safe and don't trust that men will listen or respect them. This is especially difficult if a man is drunk or on drugs and his behaviour is intense and unpredictable.

“I've had a lot of assault, a lot of violence from men who use drugs... With meth and stuff like that it can get out of hand so quickly. A lot of the time I would just try and get it over and done with.” Jenn

Here are some other tips to help you use drugs or alcohol while also respecting your partner/s:

- Don't assume trans women enjoy partying. Many are sober (meaning they don't use drugs and alcohol at all) or don't like combining partying with sex.
- Don't bring drugs into her space or home without consent. Some trans women feel uncomfortable being in the presence of illegal drugs as they are at greater risk of being harassed by police, or being imprisoned.
- Don't show up drunk or high without telling her first, giving her the option of waiting until you are sober.
- Don't drink or use drugs in her presence without getting consent.
- Don't pressure trans women to party with you.
- Don't have sex with your partner if she is too drunk, high or stoned to give consent, or if she is passed out.
- Don't have sex if you are too drunk or high to tell if she wants to and is having a good time. You might be pressuring or hurting her without realising.

“I’m sober these days, but I don’t mind when men use drugs. I found it really respectful when my lover and I made an agreement where he was able to use drugs before he came around but that he wouldn’t use at my house.” Elektra

It’s important to also understand how to take the right dose and how to avoid combining drugs in ways that put you or your partner/s at risk. You can find lots of great information on the different kinds of drugs and how to safely use them by clicking here [TouchBase](#) or by clicking here [Harm Reduction Victoria](#).

For non-judgmental and confidential information or advice in Australia:

Website: adf.org.au/resources/druginfo

Phone: 1300 85 85 84

Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm AEST

If you’re looking for support in Australia:

Qlife

National anonymous and confidential LGBTIQ+ peer support service (including partners)

Website: qlife.org.au

Phone: 1800 184 527

Opening hours: 3PM to midnight, every day

Telephone and web chat support service

Say It Out Loud

ACON’s sexual, domestic and family violence website *Say It Out Loud* provides information and guidance relating to sexual, family and intimate partner violence in the Australian LGBTIQ+ community.

Website: sayitoutloud.org.au

Men’s Referral Service

A free, confidential telephone service for men

Phone: 1300 766 491

Open any time.

For men outside Australia looking for counselling support, try searching online for “trans friendly counselling in my local area”.