

Escapism



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Escaping from daily life

with
Pascal,
Jenna,
and Angela

More than just a game

From synthetic
cannabinoids at music
festivals to reputational
damage

The real reason behind
using drugs at festivals

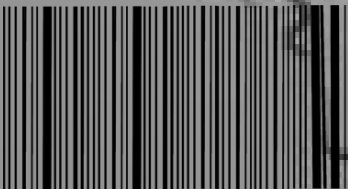


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**"EMBRACING ESCAPISM:
ESCAPING FROM DAILY
LIFE"**

Escapism in many forms

In today's fast-paced world, where pressures and stressors seem unending, the urge to escape has never been stronger.

Escapism, a trend to seek escape and distraction from reality or real-life problems, has been a significant aspect of human behavior for a long time. Whether it is at a sports event, where the excitement of competition and the friendship among fans create a powerful distraction from everyday life, or at festivals that encourage attendees to let go and fully immerse themselves in the experience, these events offer a significant escape from daily routines. However, while escapism can offer much-needed leisure and relaxation, there are risks involved. When individuals struggle to make distinctions between healthy escapism and over-avoidance, it can lead to serious negative effects. Both sports events and music festivals offer temporary escapes from everyday life, but without balance and awareness, they can lead to negative consequences.

Pascal, Jenna and Angela

**Editors-in-Chief for NHL
Stenden**

More than just A GAME

Written by: Pascal

With 3.4 million spectators at the World Cup of 2022 in Qatar (FIFA, n.d.), an estimated 12 million spectators lining up along the route every year for the Tour de France (Porter, 2021), and the Super Bowl regularly attracting more than 70 thousand fans to the live event (Gough, 2024), it is clear that sports events draw a lot of visitors. Nowadays, sports events are more than just competitive activities or sources of entertainment. They serve as a powerful escape route, allowing individuals to disconnect for a moment from the stresses of daily life. The phenomenon of escapism in the context of sports has become increasingly relevant, leading to a critical analysis of its effects on personal well-being. Escapism is a trend to seek escape and distraction from reality or real-life problems (Hirschman, 1983; Woody, 2018). While some view this pursuit as a harmless distraction, others label it as the “dark side” of leisure because of its addictive and unhealthy nature (Stenseng et al., 2011). These contrasting viewpoints raise an important question: How does escapism through sports events influence individual well-being?

THE HARMLESS DISTRACTION

Participating in or watching sports events has been acknowledged as a noteworthy factor in promoting mental health, providing a break from the stresses of everyday life, and enhancing general well-being (Collins & Kay, 2014), aligning with Sustainable Development Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being, fostering healthier communities worldwide. To illustrate, Carvache-Franco et al. (2024) conducted a study examining the motivations and satisfaction levels of sports tourists during the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar. Their findings unveiled a significant and positive relationship between the "Escape & Relaxation" aspect and overall satisfaction, highlighting how experiences related to sports events offer a temporary escape from daily problems and responsibilities. This positive influence of engaging in sports participation is supported by research such as that of Astakhova et al. (2022), which demonstrates that attending sporting events might have hedonistic features, providing individuals with an escape from daily life.

THE DARK SIDE

However, while the benefits of engaging in sports escapism are visible, it is essential to also consider the potential negative effects associated with escapism, especially when individuals become overly consumed in their sports fanaticism. While positive escapism offers individuals a necessary break from the stresses of everyday life, regenerating the individual and allowing them to return to a productive mindset, negative escapism can lead to negative effects such as avoidance and procrastination (Kelley & Tian, 2004). Blanchard and Gottry (2004) discovered that people typically procrastinate due to a lack of temporal and situational awareness. Individuals can become so engrossed in watching a sporting event that they experience a state of flow, which is characterized by a lack of temporal and situational awareness (Hyun-Woo Lee et al., 2017). The loss of temporal and situational awareness, may hinder individuals' ability to effectively manage their time and responsibilities, potentially undermining the benefits of escapism.

THE BALANCE

There is a complicated interaction between the positive and negative sides of the phenomena of escapism through sporting events. While participating in sports events can be a great way to relieve stress and recharge mentally, consuming too much escapism can have negative consequences like avoidance and procrastination. Building awareness of how we interact with sports escapism becomes essential as we maintain this balance, making sure that it continues to be a source of relaxation and distraction rather than an obstacle to personal wellbeing. Understanding both the benefits and the risks of sports escapism will help us benefit from its many positive aspects while avoiding its disadvantages and improving our quality of life in the process. Sports should lift us up, not weigh us down.

THE REAL REASON BEHIND USING *drugs at festivals*

Written by: Angela

Drugs are becoming more and more common (EMCDDA, 2012). The European Monitoring Committee on Drug and Drug Addiction (2012) sees the increase mostly happening with people that use it at special occasions for example, festivals. Within these festivals, you do not only see an increase in the intake of drugs but also an increase in drug-related deaths (Turrís, 2017). So, why are we using more drugs at festivals?

After a questionnaire done by 3vraagt (2023) young adolescents are using more drugs due to inflation. Festivals have become more and more expensive. Buying drugs and water is a cheaper option than buying beer and food at festivals. Young adolescents seem to choose drugs as a cheaper way of enjoying festivals. (3vraagt, 2023).

According to Jellink (2020) drugs influence your 'neurotransmitters' and stimulate directly or indirectly the quantity of dopamine. Dopamine is the substance that makes you feel happy and content. With the use of hard drugs, the dopamine levels are even higher, and you get a euphoric feeling. The happy and euphoric feeling only lasts a couple of hours. By using drugs, you use all the dopamine in your body, and it takes time for your body to make new dopamine. When your body is busy making more dopamine, your emotions could become negative or even depressive. The euphoric feeling is something people get addicted to and want the same feeling repeatedly. But getting the same feeling as the last time you used drugs, means you need to use more because your body is getting used to the drugs. It is a downward spiral of using more and more drugs and getting addicted.

Good health and well-being are something we nowadays strive for to enhance our future. It is even the third Sustainable Development Goal from the United Nations (United Nations, n.d.) Drugs are something that negatively impacts our well-being and our health. In the Netherlands, we know that drugs are not good for your health and well-being (Rigter, 2006). However, we do see that one in ten adolescents in the Netherlands uses drugs. High-educated men in their twenties are using drugs the most. Nowadays people are using even more drugs, since 2016 there has been an increase of 2% (Hupkins, 2023).

However, not all young adolescents are using drugs simply because it is cheaper (3vraagt, 2023). According to Munster M. (2023) some young adolescents are using drugs to cope with mental issues. In the years 2021 and 2022, one in five adolescents in the Netherlands has used drugs because of mental issues.



The use of drugs is a way to escape the real world. It seems that more people are using drugs to cope rather than just using drugs because of having a cheaper day. After a study conducted by Trimbos (2023), most people use drugs to suppress negative emotions, get an out-of-the-world experience, or feel social cohesion.

Young adolescents feel more and more pressure from society to live up to expectations (MVWS, 2023) to forget about this stress young adolescents are using drugs (Trimbos, 2023). The increase in drugs is also seen by festival organizers in the Netherlands (Kiel, 2024). However, it is hard to regulate drug use. In the Netherlands, we have the opium act (Hapsari et al., 2022). This means it is legal to buy 'soft' drugs. Hard drugs are illegal to buy or to possess but not forbidden to use (politie, n.d.). Drugs and the law surrounding drugs remain in the Netherlands a gray area.

Also, festival organizers see that more and more municipalities are questioning their zero-tolerance policy regarding drugs due to its popularity. When they regulate the drugs more in smaller portions it becomes clearer what is used and how they can help those people in need (De Greef et al., 2017) Young adolescents are having a hard time living up to the expectations. The use of drugs at festivals helps them escape from daily life, it isn't just about inflation. That is the real reason behind using drugs at festivals.

From synthetic cannabinoids at music festivals

TO REPUTATIONAL DAMAGE

Written by: Jenna

Music festivals provide attendees with an opportunity to create unconventional experiences and escape from the mundanity of everyday life. Music festivals are often seen as an interruption from everyday life, whereby the occasion for drug use is stimulated (Borlagdan et al., 2010; Luckman, 2003). However, there is also a downside to this escape from everyday life; the attraction of escaping everyday life collides with psychological risks. This article explores the psychological risks associated with the use of synthetic cannabinoids during music festivals and how that leads to reputational damage.

Music festivals hold a special place in many people's hearts because they offer an event with unique experiences, emotional moments, and social connections. During music festivals, attendees go into vacation mode (Palamar and Sönmez, 2022), in such a manner that their goal is to get the maximum pleasure and enjoyment out of the festival. To ensure that attendees can still get the maximum pleasure and enjoyment out of their festival, one in five festival goers expect that they will use more drugs during festivals due to the increased prices of tickets and tokens (Kester and Cornelisse, 2023). Since using drugs at festivals is cheaper than consuming alcoholic drinks.

According to Hotham et al. (2023), people who use synthetic cannabinoids suffer more from the symptoms of depression, anxiety, behaviour disorders, and hallucinations than people who do not use this drug. Users of the drug were more than twice as likely to experience a disorder or hallucination. This highlights the urgent need to address the psychological risks associated with synthetic cannabinoid use, particularly in environments like music festivals where their consumption is prevalent. In such a manner, a study conducted by Winstock et al. (2015) reported psychological symptoms associated with consuming synthetic cannabinoids. These symptoms consist of panic, anxiety, paranoia, and agitation. In a related study, Soussan and Kjellgren (2014) identified similar psychological symptoms when using synthetic cannabinoids: emotional detachment, fear, memory loss, and disorientation. Another similar study by Mathews et al. (2019), surveyed the psychological risks associated with the use of synthetic cannabinoids.

The findings revealed, like the previous studies mentioned, the following psychological risks: anxiety, paranoia, memory loss, and panic attacks.

The aforementioned psychological risks associated with using synthetic cannabinoids have consequences for individual well-being but also for the entire dynamic during a music festival. Attendees who struggle with psychological effects such as anxiety, paranoia, memory impairment, and panic attacks, experience more fear and panic instead of enjoying the experience of the music festival. This consequence aligns with the Sustainable Development Goal to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. On the other hand, the psychological risks can impact the entire festival dynamic through panic attacks and disorientation of attendees. This would require medical personnel, potentially disrupting the festival's flow and the attendees' mood. Therefore, the attendees' experience can be negative and they might not return to another edition of the music festival. This contributes to damaging the reputation of the music festival. According to IVRM (n.d.), the following five cons are associated with reputational damage: loss of customers, employees who are less productive and involved, higher acquisition costs, and investors who pull out. The particular cons persuade long-term challenges which could induce failure and even bankruptcy. The psychological risks mentioned, also impact the local environment by greater pressure on local emergency services and negative publicity of the music festival which could harm the localities' reputation. The latter can lead to economic consequences due to less tourism, indirectly leading to fewer music festival attendees.

The presence of psychological risks associated with the use of synthetic cannabinoids at music festivals emphasizes the need to integrate proactive measures (Burton, 2023), ensuring a space of connection and positive experiences for every visitor. Herewith, the music festival saves the individual well-being, but also certainly the entire dynamic of the music festival and its reputation. The dark sides of drug use, simply to temporarily escape from everyday life, can no longer be ignored. On this wise, music festivals do not risk any reputational damage.

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