

## Anna's story

// I first used hallucinogens when I was about 17. I went to a party with my friend and someone was making a magic mushroom brew. I was nervous about using it, but drank a little and it was fun - it mostly made me laugh lots. The next thing I tried was acid. That wasn't so fun. The trip itself was ok at first, but it just went on so long and I got worried I was never coming back. I wasn't coping very well and then the people I was with went out and left me on my own to deal with the come down. I thought I was going mad. I got really scared. Most of my friends didn't have any dramas with acid, but I wish I'd left it 'til I was a bit older or done it with people I could trust. //



## Contacts



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# Hallucinogens

# Facts about



## Facts about Hallucinogens

While many people associate hallucinogens with the 60's, hallucinogens have actually been used for thousands of years throughout many different cultures.

The term 'hallucinogens' covers a range of naturally occurring and synthetic substances that cause alterations to the way you perceive things and experience reality. Things can look, sound, smell, taste and feel different when you use hallucinogens.

Different types of hallucinogens include:

- LSD (Lysergic acid diethylamide)
- DMT (Dimethyltryptamine)
- Psilocybin (Magic Mushrooms)
- Mescaline

### Effects

The effects of hallucinogens can be varied depending on a number of different things including:

- Type of substance and the amount used
- How you are feeling (and who you are with) when you take it
- Whether you have used it before

Effects might include:

- Seeing and hearing things that aren't there
- Feeling enhanced feelings of spirituality or feeling a deeper understanding of the universe
- Feeling happy and relaxed
- Blurred vision or distorted sense of touch
- Fast or irregular heart beat
- Different perceptions of time (e.g. time feels like it is speeding up or slowing down)
- Vomiting, sweating, or chills
- Confusion or feeling overwhelmed or nervous

## Reducing the Harms

Obviously, the best way of making sure you don't suffer negative consequences from using hallucinogens is to not use them. If you have a history of mental health problems, particularly with psychosis, hallucinogens could have a particularly intense effect and may cause a return of previous symptoms. Similarly, if you have a history of mental illness in your family, you may be susceptible to mental illness yourself, and hallucinogen use can be a catalyst for that illness developing.

Some people find the hallucinogenic experience overwhelming and difficult. This is most likely to happen to people using for the first-time, especially if they are unprepared or have taken a large dose. There are a number of things you can do to minimize the chances of a bad experience:

### Plan ahead

- How you are feeling before you take the hallucinogen can greatly influence the experience. If you are feeling anxious, scared or uncomfortable, these feelings may influence your trip. Hallucinogens can also make people act impulsively, so if you have been having any feelings about suicide, it is not a good idea to use hallucinogens.



More information about the role of a trip-sitter can be found here: <http://www.maps.org/resources/responding-to-difficult-psychedelic-experiences>

- Make sure you have eaten something light and nutritious beforehand, and that you are well rested.
- Plan your environment – create a safe space where you feel relaxed and comfortable. Some people like to use music and lighting to make the space warm and welcoming.
- Think about who you will be using with. If you feel uncomfortable around the people you are using with, those feelings may influence your drug experience.

### Look after yourself and others

- Consider having a 'trip-sitter' – someone who will not be using drugs with you, but will be there to be a calm, comforting presence and look after you whilst you are using hallucinogens. Even if you are not using a trip sitter, don't use alone, especially if you do not have any prior experience using hallucinogens. It is useful to have someone there to ensure you do not try and do something dangerous if you lose touch with reality.
- Sometimes people start to have 'bad trips' and become scared or agitated. This can be very overwhelming for them – if you are with someone who is feeling that way remove as much stimuli (e.g. bright lights or loud noises) as possible and take them somewhere safe and comforting. Reassure them that they are not going mad, that it is the effect of the drugs that they are feeling, and that it will pass.

### Dealing with the come down

- If you intend to use hallucinogens, be aware that it may take a few days for you to recover, and that you may feel anxious and depressed after using. Make sure you have somewhere safe and comforting you can go and people you can talk to if you are not feeling good.

### Getting help if you need it

- If you continue to feel bad after using hallucinogens, there are a number of places you can get help – there's a list of useful numbers on the back of this leaflet.