



# Module 4: Meanings of consumption

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# Module description and UDs summary

## Module aims (overview)

The Module 4, Didactic Unit 1 and 2, aims to increase knowledge about the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations that lead people to engage in substance use. Understanding why people engage in psychoactive substances use (**motives**) is essential to know the complexity of the phenomenon and to intervene in NPS prevention and harm reduction activities. Didactic Unit 3 aims to discuss the social causes of NPS consumption, through a lens of social responsibility and to use sociological imagination to reflect about potential solutions to the prevention and intervention in this phenomenon.

## UDs summary

1. SET (profiling of the consumer): Motives for classical and novel psychoactive substances
2. Focus on NPS consumers
3. Meanings of consumption using the lens of sociological imagination (UPORTO)



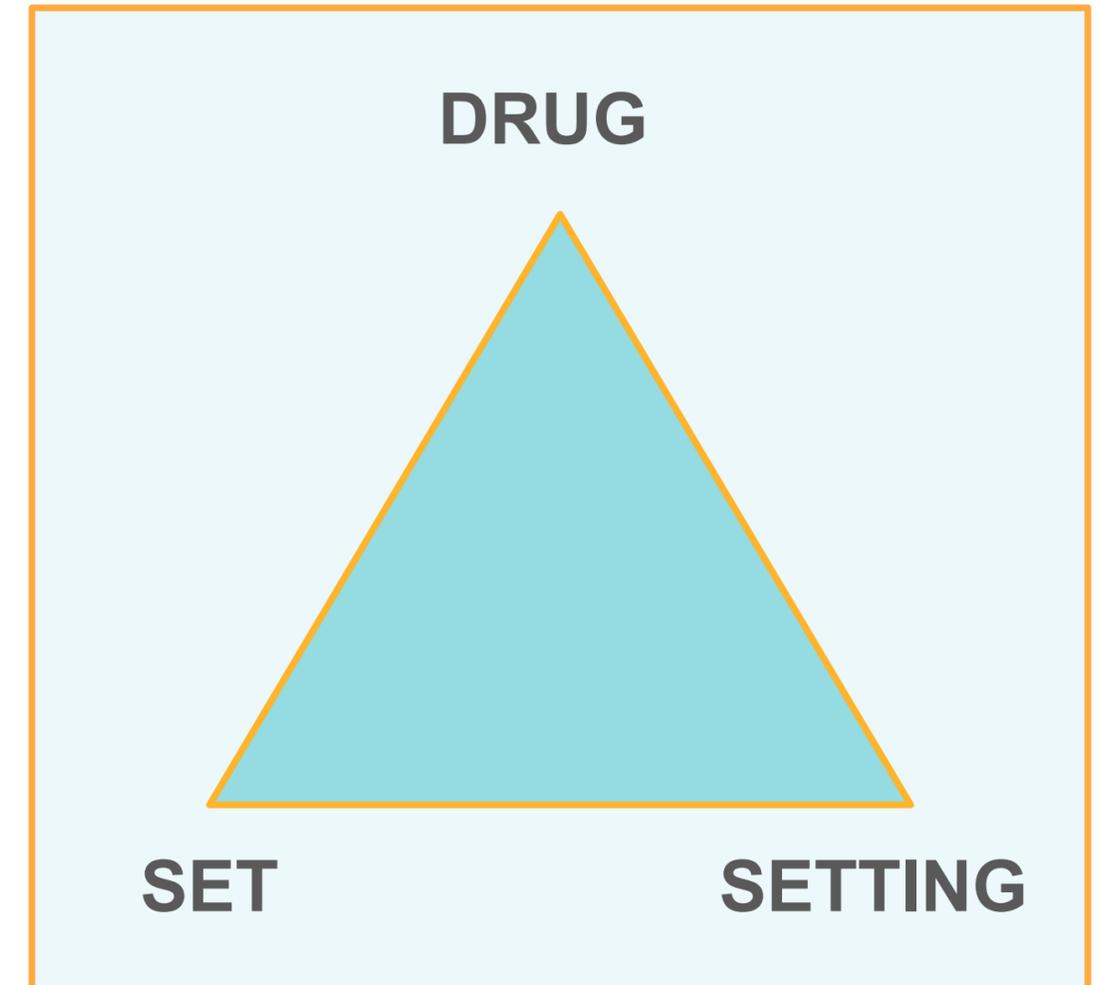
# UD 1.

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## **SET (Profiling the consumer): Motives for classical and novel psychoactive substances**

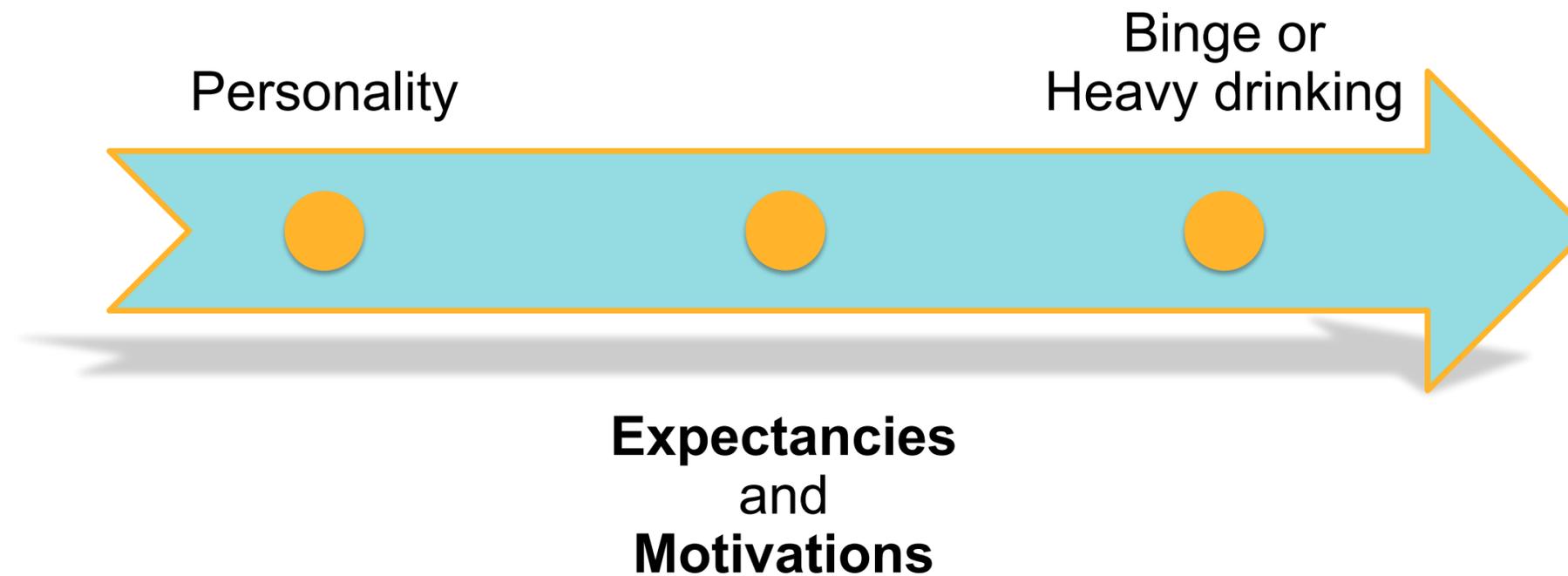
# Norman Zimberg's theory (1970's)

- Drug consumptions should be conceived as **human behaviours** characterized by intentions, social learning, cultures and subcultures.
- Just as it occurs in alcohol use, the creation and the spread of **social norms and rituals** allow to the most of consumers to use also the drugs in a manner which is **restrained and compatible with individual social life**.
- In his book *'Drug, set and setting'*, the author reinterprets drug use focusing on the concepts of **set** and **setting**, downsizing the centrality till then attributed to the substance's solely features.



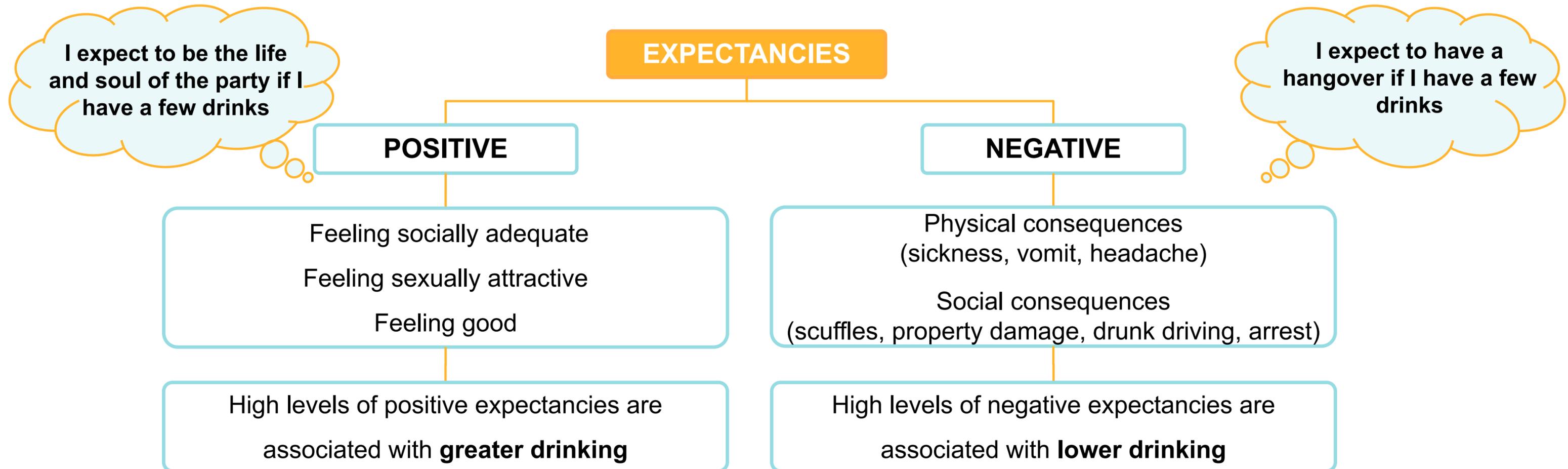
# Motivational model as a risk factor

- The motivational model of alcohol use suggests that the **expectancies about the effects** of the intake and the drinking **motives** mediate the link between antecedents and drinking behaviour (Kuntsche, Knibbe, Gmel, & Engels, 2005).



# Expectancies

- **Beliefs about the** behavioral, physical, cognitive, affective and emotional **effects** of the substance's intake.

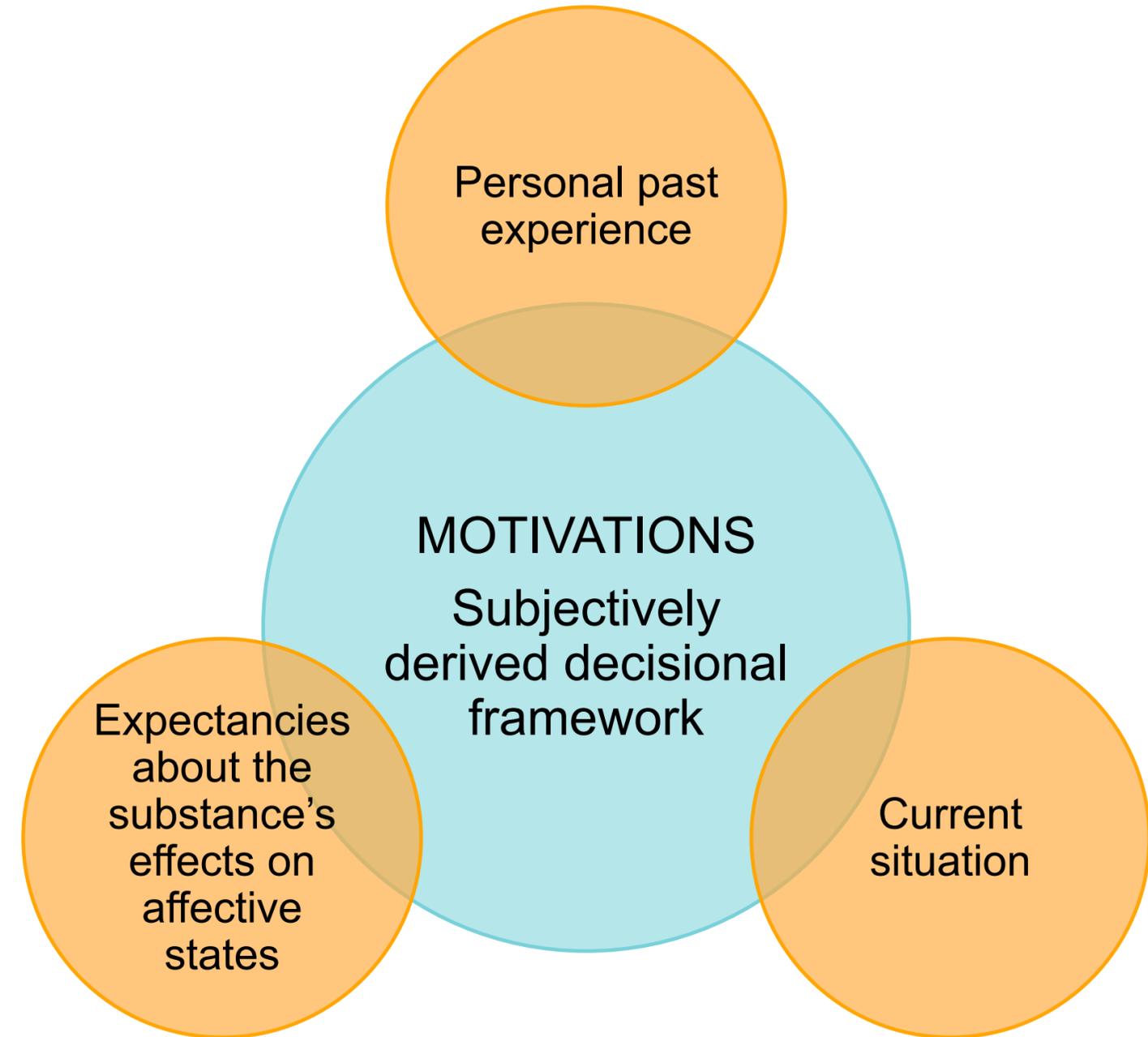


# Expectancies

- **Distal factors**
- Directly involved in the **decision-making process**: the consumption is a choice
- Play an important role especially in **drug-naïve persons** and/or during ages in which the experience with substances is not stabilized yet
- In children they are undetermined and confused and tend to **increase with age** (Miller, Smith, & Goldman, 1990)
- Created and influenced by **parental** behaviour, **peer** interaction, **media's** representation (Martino, Collins, Ellickson, Schell, & McCaffrey, 2006)
- Influence not only the behaviour, but also the **perception of the subsequent experiences** with the substance which, in turn, reinforce the original expectancies (Oei & Morawska, 2004)

# Motivations

- **Proximal factors**
- They are evaluations given to specific **affective states** which people aim to **purse** (Cox e Klinger, 2004)
- People **drink in order to attain certain valued outcomes** (Cox & Klinger, 1988)
- Compared to expectancies, they are **stronger predictors of the binge drinking behaviour**





# Motivations

## FOUR-FACTOR MODEL (Cooper 1994)

Identifies **4 categories of drinking motives** among adolescents.

Each motive reflects a **change in the affective state** (positive/negative) and a **source of the change** (internal/external).

Enhancement  
motives

Social  
motives

Coping  
motives

Conformity  
motives



# Motivations

## Enhancement motives

- Drinking in order **to enhance positive affective states**
- Binge drinkers: desire to feel alcohol effects (Kairouz et al., 2002)
- Common among **university students**
- Related with **impulsivity, extraversion and sensation seeking**
- Extroverted people are **more sensitive to positive affective cues**, then, more likely to drink to enhance their emotions.



**Positive affective state**  
**Internal source**



# Motivations

## Social motives

- Drinking for social facilitation aimed **to enhance socialization and social aggregation, to create a ‘party atmosphere’**
- Associated with the moderate drinking (Kairouz et al., 2002)
- Drinkers lead by social motives are unlikely to develop alcohol-related problems.



Positive affective state  
External source



# Motivations

## Coping motives

- Drinking in order **to escape, avoid or regulate negative emotions.**
- The **most determinant factor** of alcohol use (Cooper et al., 1995)
- When facing negative emotions, youngsters try to regulate or to reduce them, dispelling the problem source; when they fail, they tend to use **less adaptive strategies** to alleviate negative affective state (e.g., alcohol use).
- Associated with **binge drinking** (Labouvie & Bates, 2002) and **alcoholism in adulthood**
- **Heavy drinkers** adolescents show **higher scores in coping motives** than non-drinkers and moderate drinkers (Windle, 1996)
- In **Italy**, the main motive related with the binge drinking is the coping motive, especially in late adolescents (Graziano et al. 2012)



Negative affective state  
Internal source



# Motivations

## Conformity motives

- Drinking in order **to adapt to the peer group** or **to avoid social problems**
- Negatively related with *how much* and *how often* a person drinks and with the drinking to the pub or at home
- Positively related with the **drinking at parties**, where the **social pression to conform is stronger**.
- In Italy, they are **negatively related with the binge drinking** (Graziano et al., 2012).



Negative affective state  
External source

## In summary...

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- **Higher risk with psychological motives** (internal, such as enhancement or coping motives) than with social motives (external, such as social or conformity motives)
- The motivational system is **often unaware** and taking substances becomes an automatic process of which adolescents perceive a **low control**.
- Taking substances **is a choice not a destiny...**
- ...but **I need to wonder** about my own **features, expectancies** and **motivations to really perceive to have a choice!**





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## UD 2.

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# Focus on NPS consumers

# Who are NPS consumers?

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Compared to illicit drug users, licit substances users and non-users, NPS users tend to show:

- higher levels of **sensation seeking** and **impulsivity**;
- more **peers who use substances**;
- **lower levels of risk perception**
- show **more risk-related behavior** compared to non-drug users and even illicit drug users.

# Who are NPS consumers?

**NPS consumers profiles** have been studied based on features such as knowledge on NPS substances themselves as well as harm reduction strategies, the context of NPS consumption and potential problematic use (Simonis et al. 2020)

Experienced users	Underprivileged users	Occasional users
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>High expertise</b> in substances and effects	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Less informed</b> on the substances and effects	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Enough informed</b> on the substances and effects
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Easy access</b> to information and harm reduction strategies	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Limited access to information</b> but quite aware of harm reduction strategies	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Adequate access to information</b> and harm reduction strategies
<input type="checkbox"/> Consume of <b>several different NPS substances</b> on <b>different occasions</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>NPS use is limited to specific products</b> but intertwined to classic illicit drug use	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>NPS use particularly controlled</b> and occurring only in specific settings
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Partially</b> characterized by a <b>problematic use</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Problematic use of substances</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>No problematic use</b>

# Cyber markets' customers

- **Internet and social networking** sites play a significant role in the marketing and distribution of recreational/prescription drugs

## Profile of the cyber markets' customers



Adolescents/Young adults

Men

Caucasian

From USA, New Zealand, Australia, UK

Highly educated

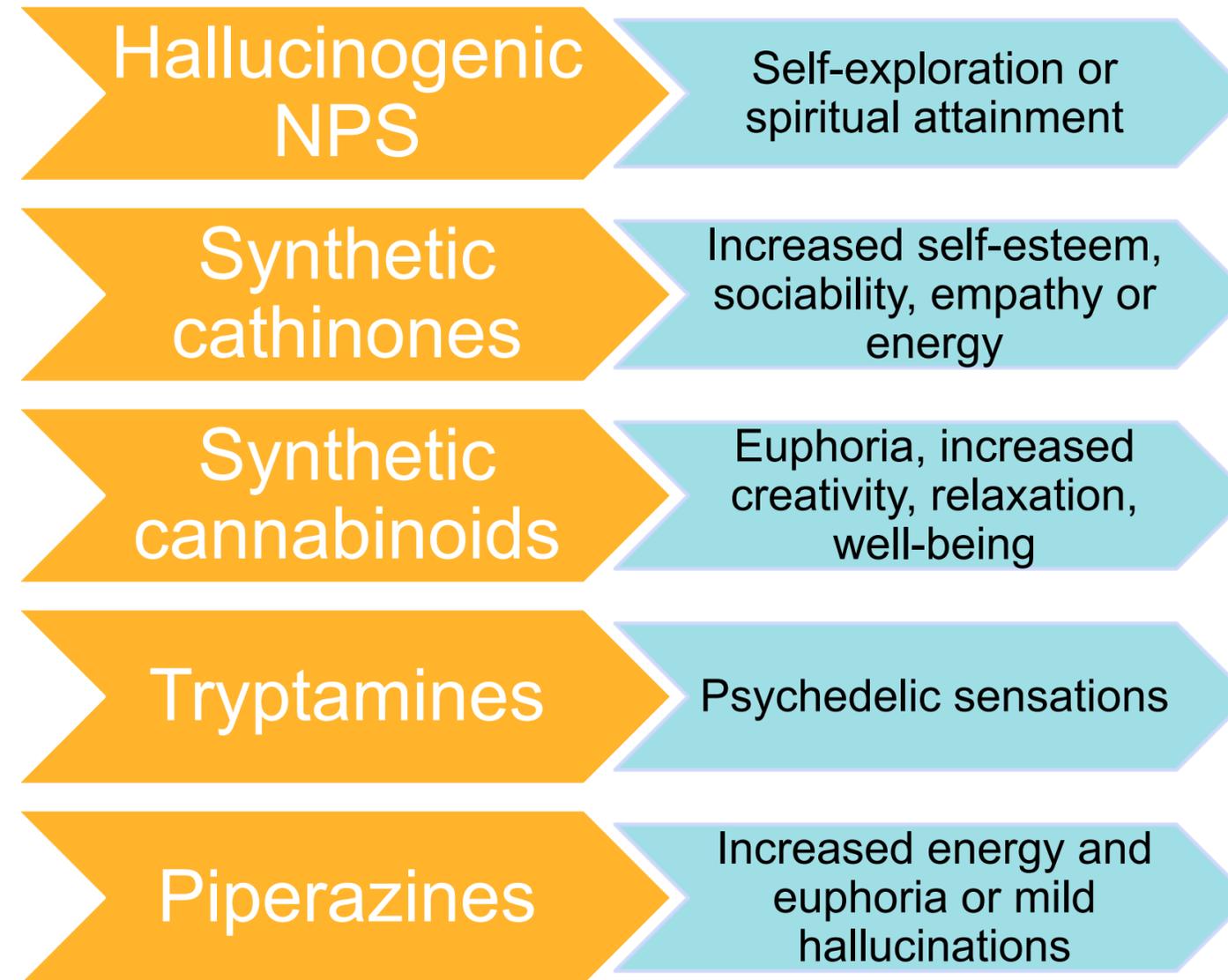
Employed

Avid users of the web (clear sense of 'community' and 'sharing')

Online sources to impact as minimally as possible on the work/professional status

# Expectations regarding the effects of NPS

Varying expectancies might be linked to the use of specific NPS products:



# Intrinsic motives of NPS use

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The motives related to NPS use are **very similar** to the reasons behind the use of **other legal or illegal substances**.

Intrinsic motives of NPS consumption usually include:

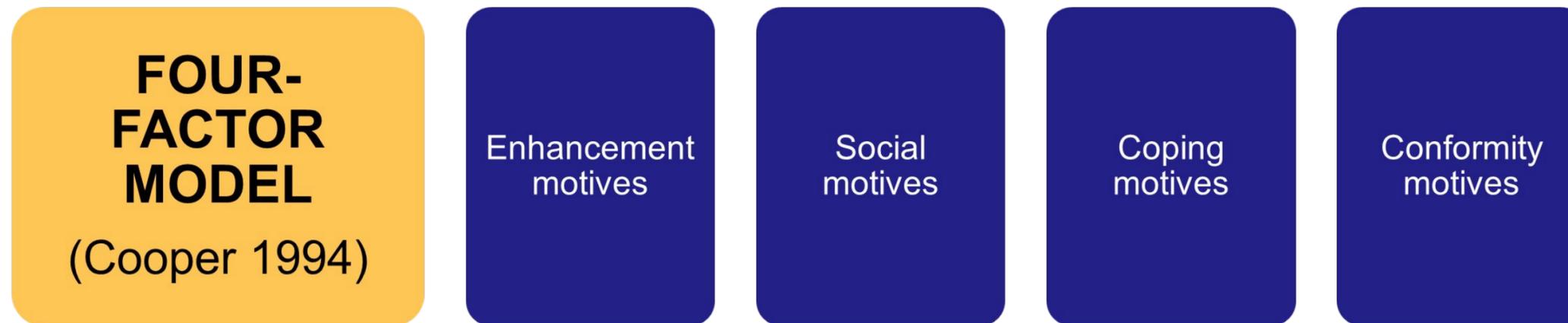
- **Curiosity**
- **Increasing pleasure**
- **Experimentation**
- **Self-exploration**
- **Escapism**

Similarly to other legal drugs (Cox and Klinger, 1988), **psychological motives** of use may represent the **final decision whether to use different types of NPS or not** and therefore they might be the most **proximal factor** for using them.

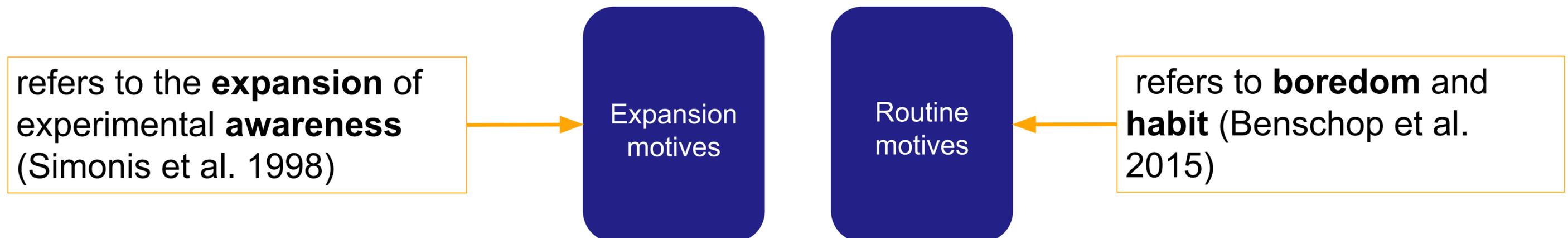
# Motivational model

Cooper's four-factor model has been used to study not only alcohol, but also:

- **Amphetamine-related motives** (Thurn et al. 2017), which resulted equal to those of Cooper's model

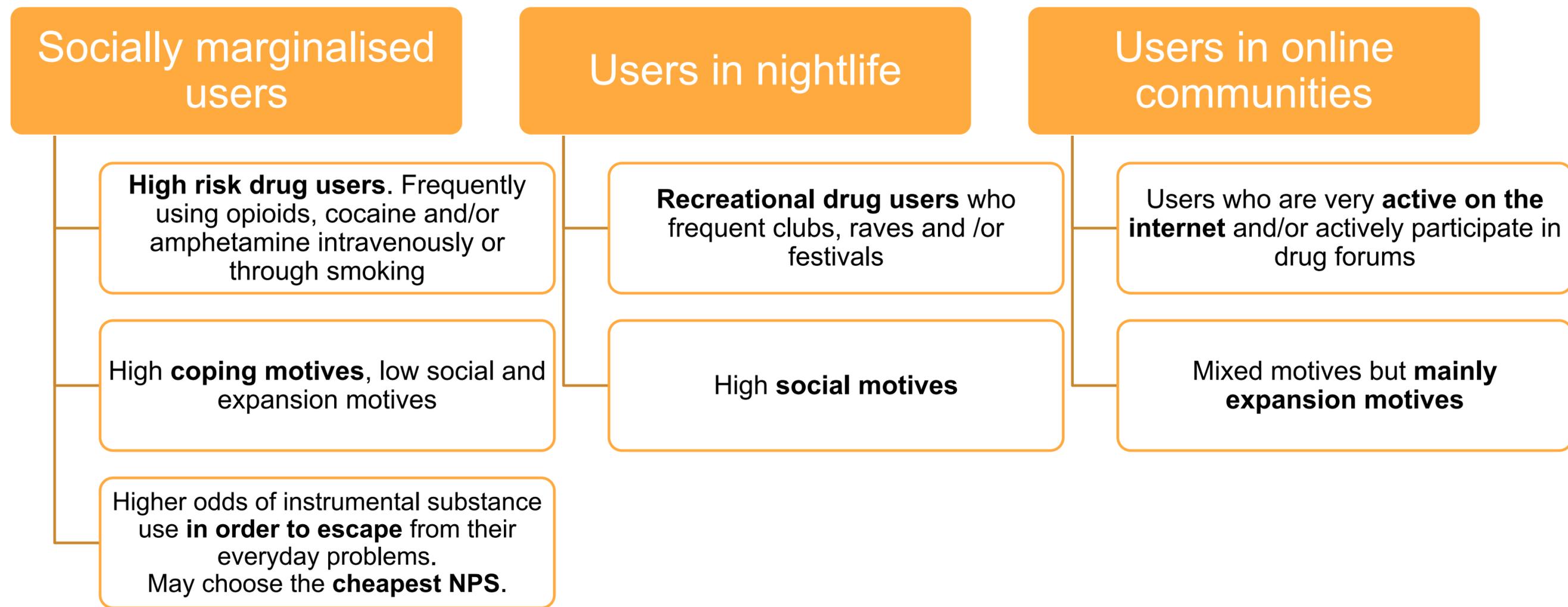


- **Marijuana-related motives**, for which Cooper's model was expanded with other motivational factors:



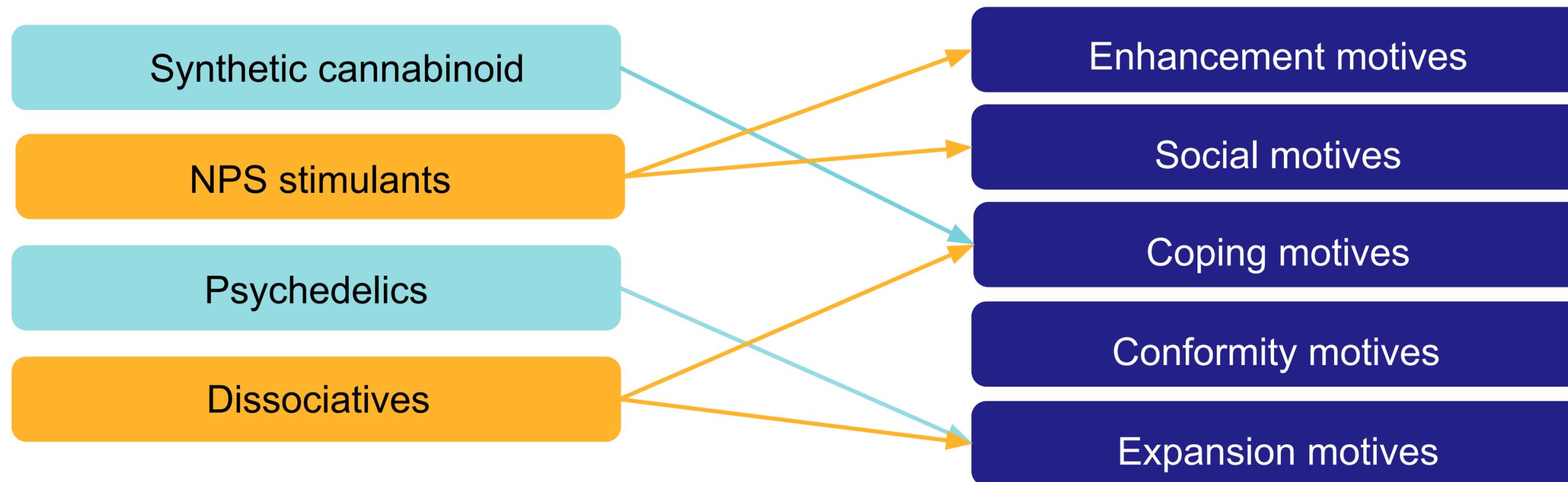
# Motives related to NPS users

Literature examined different subgroups of NPS users and the motivations related to NPS use (Benschop et al. 2020).



# Motives related to specific NPS

Each NPS type yielded a specific pattern of associations with motives (Benschop et al. 2020).



Expansion and enhancement motives seem to be linked to the chosen NPS product type. The coping, social and conformity motives were rather associated with the user groups.

# Other motives

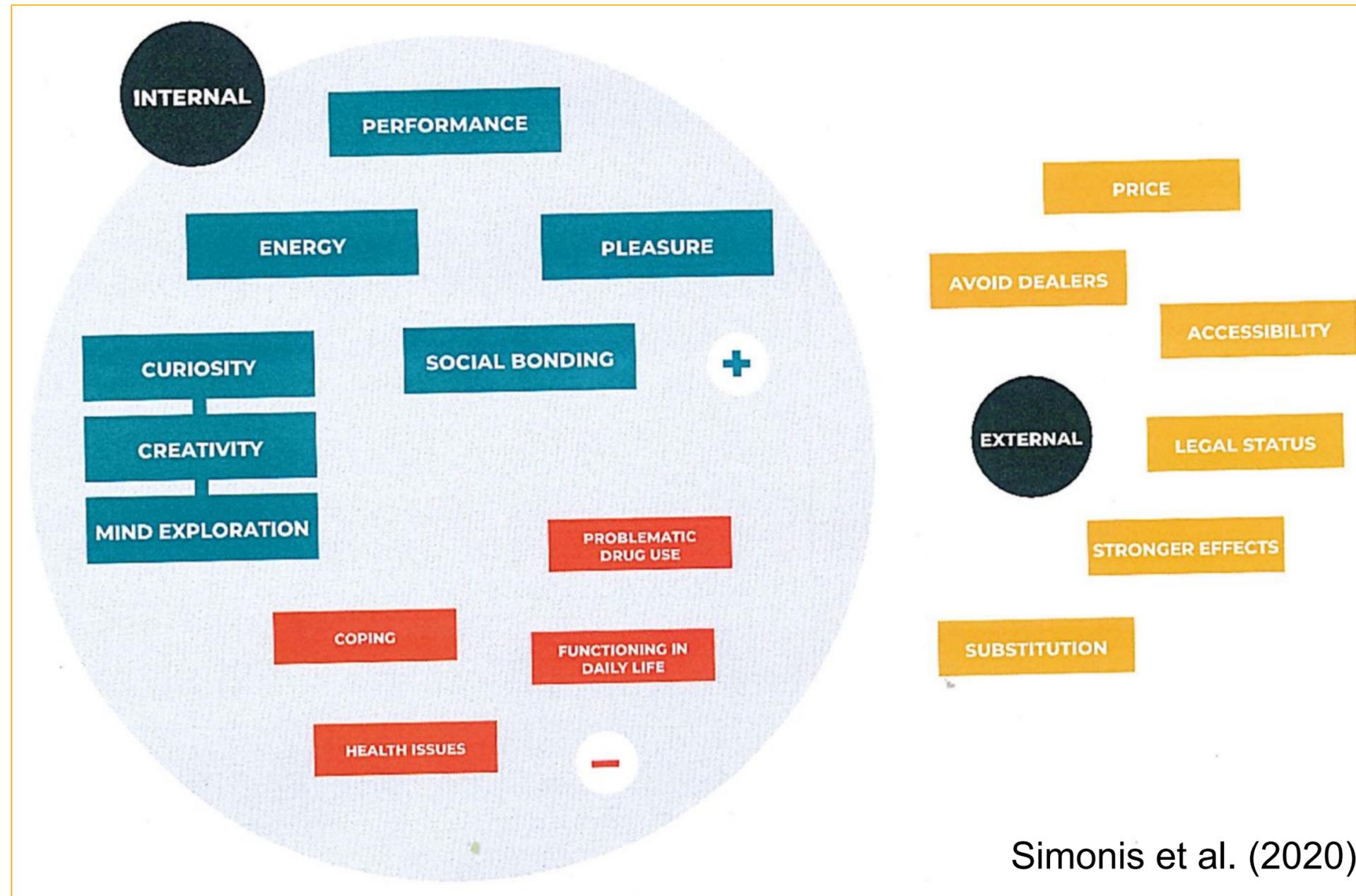
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Besides motives depending on the specific class of substances and the effects desired by NPS users, other motives related to NPS use are:

- Lower **costs**
- **Legal status**
- Desire to **avoid detection** in drug tests
- (Online) **easier accessibility**

Other motives which lead users turning to NPS for a variety of reasons include **cognitive enhancement, creativity, pleasure, self-medication**, the desire **to seek a new and attractive experience**

# Internal and external motives





# NPS users' perspective

I get a new vista of my mental landscape

Self-exploration and personal growth

I believe each drug is unique and offers a range of effects that I am keen to experience

Novel and exciting adventure

To increase my appetite / For weight loss

Enhancement of abilities and performance

I was curious to see what the substance was going to do with me

Curiosity and interest about the effects

I wanted to use it to have fun, and I had a good time

Recreation and pleasure

Because of prohibition, I can't obtain LSD. Unfortunately, NPS were the only option I had in obtaining psychedelics

Ease of acquisition, abundant availability, low prices and less perceived risks

The medical community has not been able to help me

Coping

To share novel social experiences and assist bonding among friends

Social bonding and belonging

What can I say? I'm an addict. It takes me chemicals to get out of bed in the morning

Problematic and unintentional use

# NPS use and motives over time

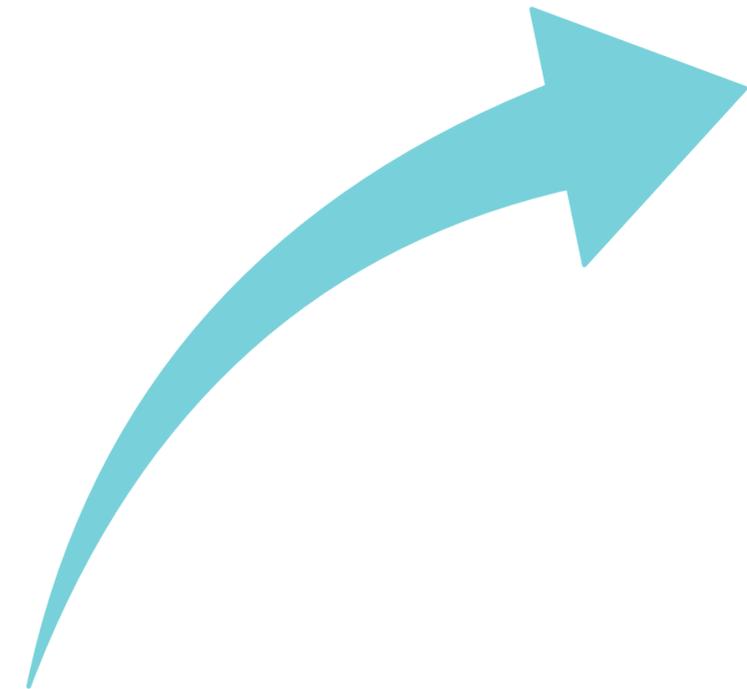
Varying motivations correspond with **trends in use over time**

NPS used for '**opportunistic**'  
**reasons** (availability, legal status)



Decline in use over time

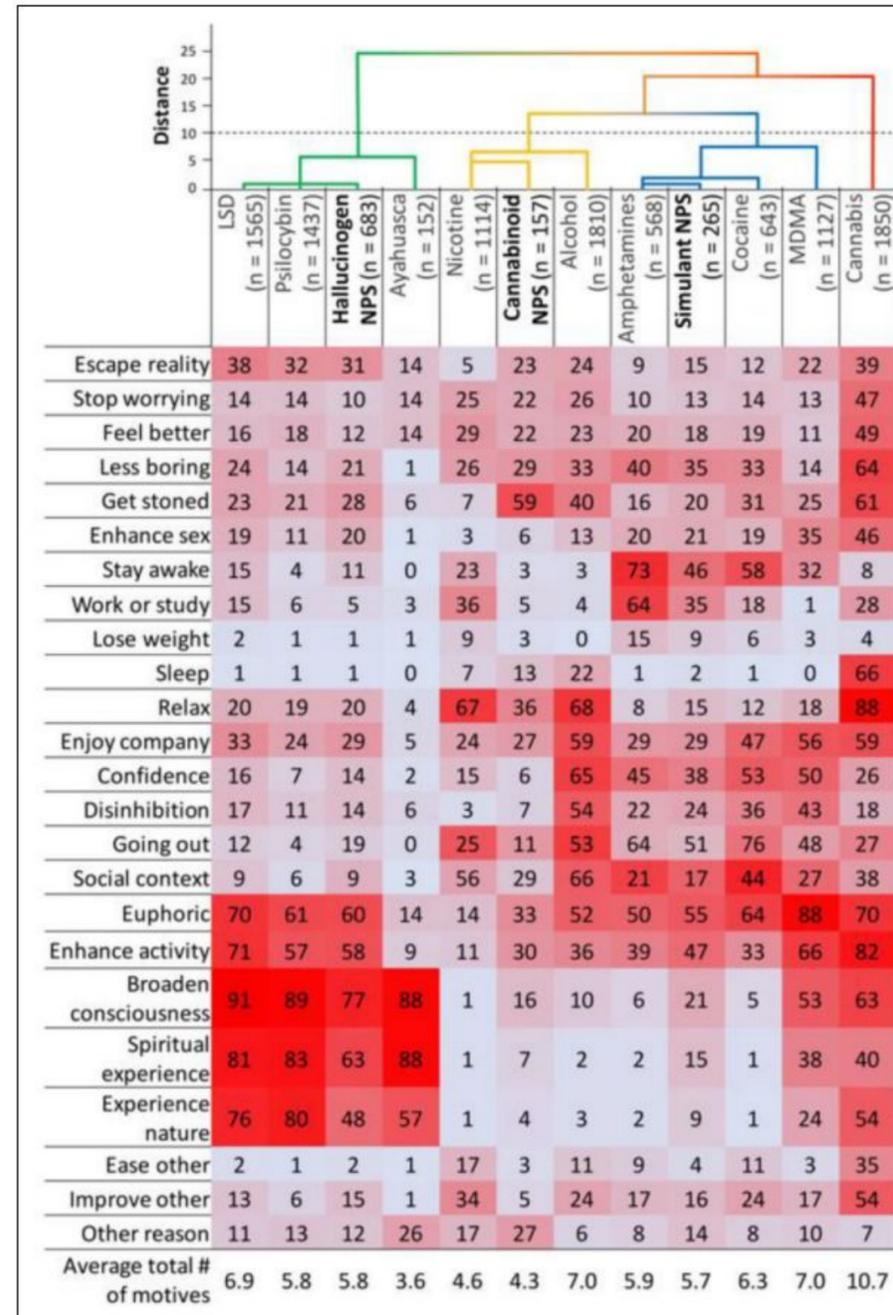
Increase in use over time



NPS used for **desirable qualities** of a  
substance (value for money, short effect  
duration) or the **perception of a superior  
product** (high/better purity)



# Motives for classical substances and NPS



Kettner et al. (2019)

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## DU 3.

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# DU3: Meanings of consumption using the lens of sociological imagination



## DU 3.

### Sociology

(Goode, 2007)



- Socialization
- Culture
- Social interactions
- Inequality
- Deviant behaviour
- Group behaviour
- Social control

### Sociology of Education

(Saha 2001, 2015)



Social structures (e.g., schools' bureaucratic structure) influence individual achievement at schools and social processes (e.g., teaching and learning processes) enhance individual's agency.

**Individual experiences** affect education and its outcomes.



Substance abuse



## DU 3.

Social issues



- C. Wright Mills (1959)
- *Troubles*: individual problems related to the self - private sphere
- *Issues*: structural, organizational, systemic problems - public sphere

Social environments may lead individuals in similar circumstances to think and act in similar ways – e.g. to consume NSP

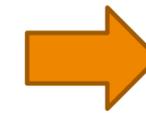
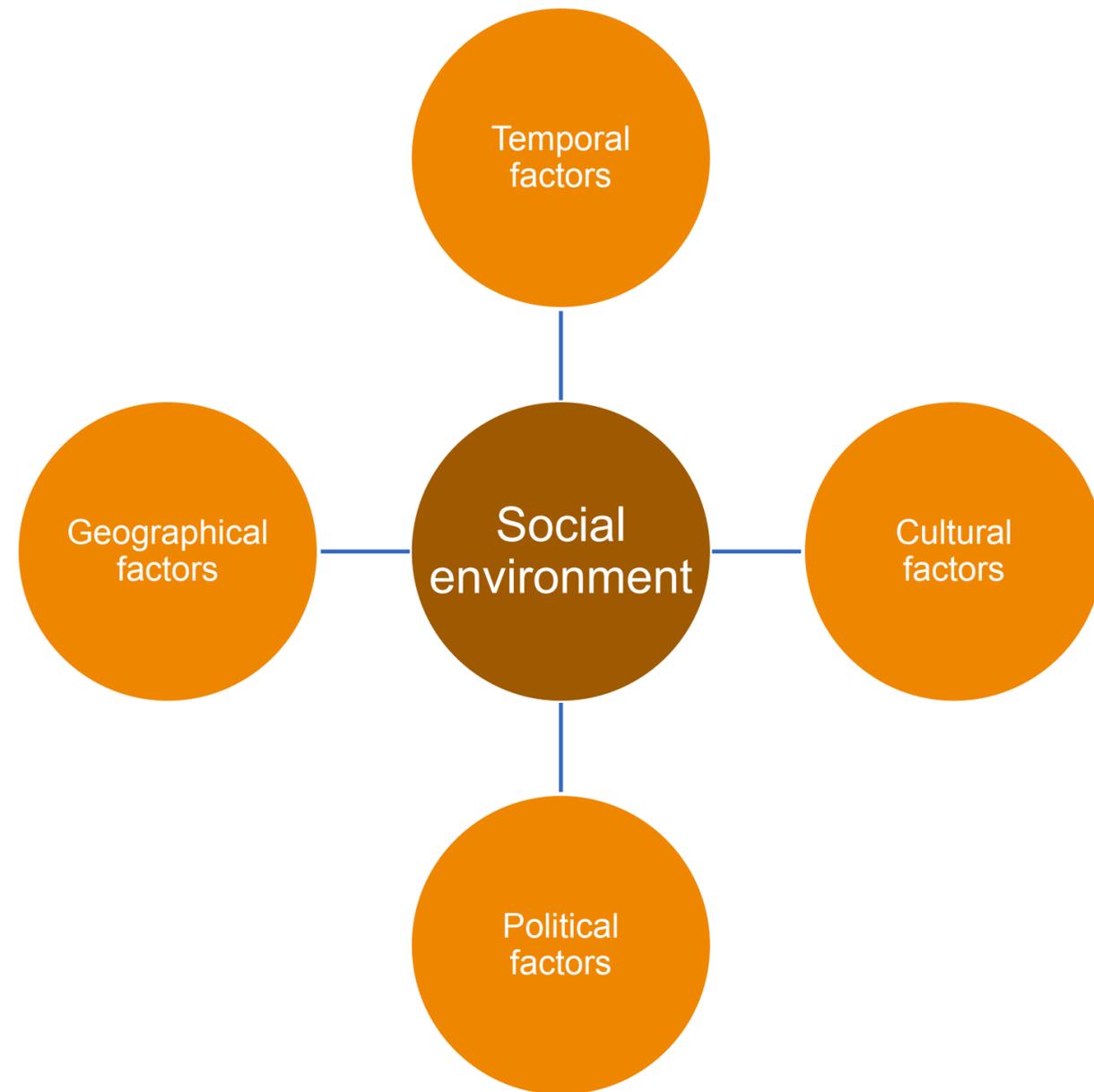


The social environment/experiences influence individual decision-making processes

(Hironimus-Wendt & Wallace, 2009)



# DU 3.



Essential to understand  
structural shifts in society



shaping the role of  
individuals in society, drug  
experience as risks and  
**substance abuse**

(Seddon, 2011)



## DU 3.

Substance use is associated with **social issues**, such as:

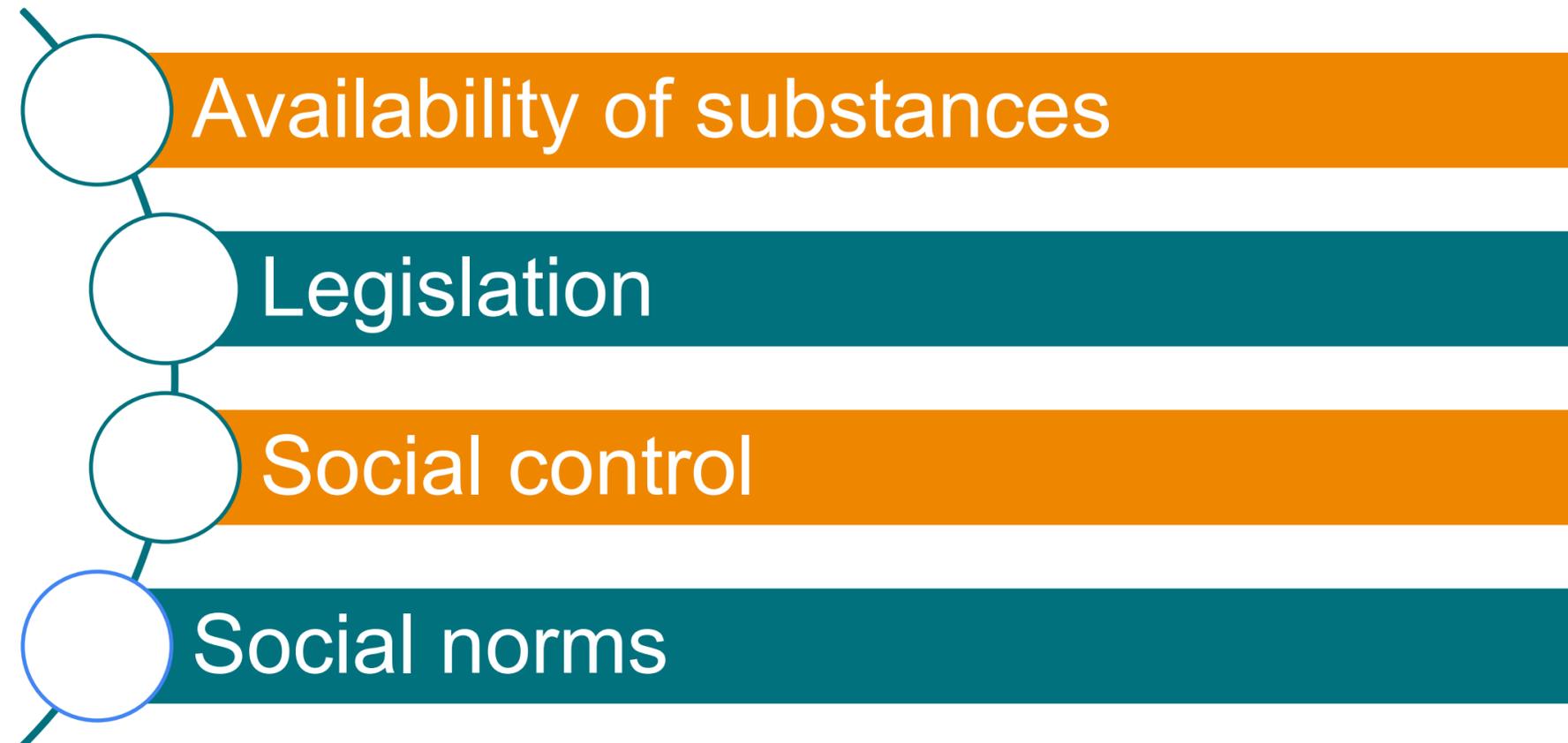


(Goode, 2007)



## DU 3.

Individual predisposition is a necessary but insufficient condition for substance abuse to occur.  
Some **social factors** that influence it:



(Goode, 2007)



## DU 3.

Characteristics of NSP that facilitate consumption:



(Bujalski, 2021; Goode, 2007)



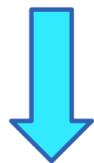
## DU 3.

Sociological imagination



NPS consumption as a community/social problem underlines the role of social factors influencing individual choice/decision-making

Social responsibility



Structures are made to change due to human action and its outcomes.

Understanding the social and individual causes of these choices allows for the **imagination and planning of alternatives as future change is always possible**



Better community and society – humanistic perspective

(Mills, 1959; Hironimus-Wendt & Wallace, 2009; Seddon, 2011)



## DU 3.

Sociological imagination

Social responsibility



This transformative process happens through education



Students learn to become aware of their **agency** and **responsibility for social change** and to imagine improvements to communities through solutions to social issues

(Mills, 1959; Hironimus-Wendt & Wallace, 2009)



# DU 3.

Active learning

Democratic

Open to debate

In contact with  
real world



(Mills, 1959; Hironimus-Wendt & Wallace, 2009)

# DU 3.

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## Module 4

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# Didactic Unit: meanings of consumption using the lens of sociological imagination

Authors: Amélia Veiga, Fernando Remião and Eunice Carmo (U.Porto)

Disciplines involved: Sociology of Education and Psychology

Index of contents:

Individual and social causes of NPS consumption

Individual and social meanings of NPS consumption

Citizenship and social responsibility

## Module 4

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# Didactic Unit: meanings of consumption using the lens of sociological imagination

Learning objectives:

Identifying NPS consumption as a community/social problem

To develop skills and abilities to question the causes of NPS consumption

Times, materials and spaces:

This DU will take place over three 45-minute in-class sessions (but can also be adapted to the online format). Materials will include a computer with projector and speakers with internet access (for the presentation of the videos and images) and the availability of computer or smartphones with access to the Poll Everywhere app.

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# Didactic Unit: meanings of consumption using the lens of sociological imagination

Teaching strategies: Brainstorming

Mediation tools: Poll Everywhere

Activity involving students in the process of construction: co-creation of scenarios where NPS consumption does not exist

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# Didactic Unit: meanings of consumption using the lens of sociological imagination

Teaching-learning sequence

15 minutes - Topic overview: individual and social causes of NPS consumption

20 minutes - Brainstorming: Is NPS consumption a personal/individual problem or are multiple people facing the same problem? In what social environments is NPS consumption more likely to proliferate? Why?

15 minutes - Debate

## Module 4

# Didactic Unit: meanings of consumption using the lens of sociological imagination

### Resources for topic overview:

13.54 minutes video about users of synthetic cannabinoids:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t6pmc7Tpx4w>

The whole video is relevant, but a few minutes can be skipped e.g. 2.50 through 4.30; finish at minute 11



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# Didactic Unit: meanings of consumption using the lens of sociological imagination

Teaching-learning sequence

15 minutes - Topic overview: Individual and social meanings of NPS consumption

20 minutes - Brainstorming: Why NPS use emerged? Why do people use drugs? What are the contexts/circumstances in which people use NPS?

15 minutes - Debate

## Module 4

# Didactic Unit: meanings of consumption using the lens of sociological imagination

### Resources for topic overview:

15 minute video about the social meanings of addiction:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PY9DcIMGxMs&t=4s>

The video is 14.42 minutes long. The whole video is relevant for the discussion. Alternatively, we suggest showing the first 7.41 minutes.



## Module 4

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# Didactic Unit: meanings of consumption using the lens of sociological imagination

Teaching-learning sequence

15 minutes - Topic overview: Citizenship and social responsibility

20 minutes - Brainstorming: If we lived in a more equal society would the use of NPS and other drugs disappear? Why or why not?

15 minutes - In what social conditions would the use of NPS disappear? What can I do to stop the consumption of NPS?

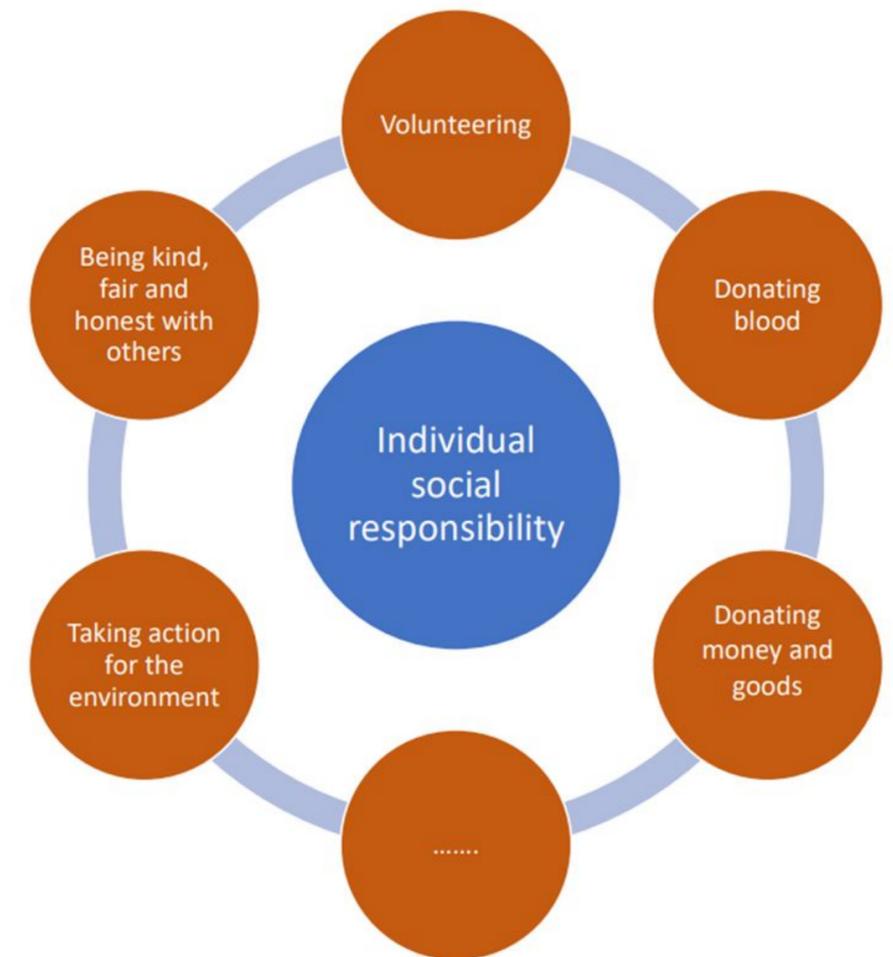
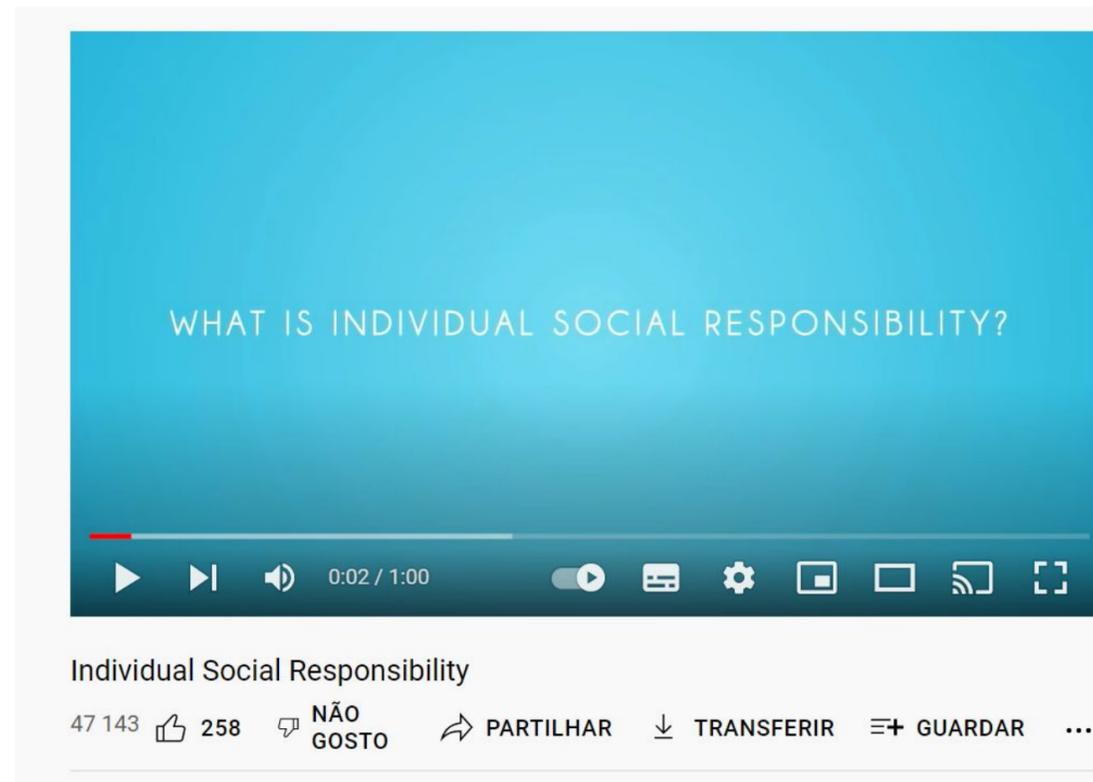
## Module 4

# Didactic Unit: meanings of consumption using the lens of sociological imagination

### Resources for topic overview:

1 Minute video about individual social responsibility:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gWff2Ne4v78>

Image with examples of actions based on the concept of individual social responsibility



## Module 4

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# Didactic Unit: meanings of consumption using the lens of sociological imagination

Assessment instruments and methods:

Co-creation of 3 scenarios where NPS use does not exist

Peer to peer evaluation: selection by the students of the scenario where NPS use would be less likely



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