



TOPIC

How can we talk about GHB/GBL without stigma or discrimination?

Wie sprechen wir über GBH/GBL ohne Stigma und Diskriminierung?

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WHAT DID WE TALK ABOUT?

Deutsch:

GHB/GBL: ein gefundenes Fressen für die Medien und immer noch von vielen Clubs nicht als Teil des Nachtlebens akzeptiert. Aber was steckt dahinter? Welche Stigmas geistern durch die Gesellschaft im Bezug auf auf G? Wir haben uns damit auseinandergesetzt, was sich verändern muss, um den gefährlichen Stigmas von GHB/GBL entgegen zu wirken. Was kann jede und jeder tun, um die Tabuisierung und die damit einhergehenden Distanzierung von G-Konsument*innen nicht weiter zu unterstützen?

Ein ClubTalk auf Englisch mit Menschen aus verschiedensten Bereichen des Nachtlebens und vielen spannenden Perspektiven und Meinungen.

Englisch:

GHB/GBL: a feast for the media and still not accepted as part of nightlife by many clubs. But what's behind it? What stigmas surround G in society?

We've explored what needs to change to counter the dangerous stigmas around GHB/GBL. What can each of us do to stop supporting the taboo and the resulting marginalization of G users?

A ClubTalk in english with people from various areas of nightlife, offering diverse perspectives and opinions.

Questions and topics we talked about:

What's the difference between GHB/GBL?

GHB (Gamma-Hydroxybutyrate) is the active substance that directly affects the brain, producing sedative and euphoric effects. GBL (Gamma-Butyrolactone), on the other hand, is a precursor that the body rapidly converts into GHB after ingestion, making its effects come on faster and stronger. Because of GBL's quicker onset, GBL has a higher risk of accidental overdose. GBL also has a more chemical taste and is more corrosive, which can irritate the mouth and throat. While both substances have similar effects, GBL is generally considered more potent and unpredictable due to its faster absorption.

What's BDO?

BDO (1,4-Butanediol) is a chemical that the body converts into GHB after ingestion, producing similar sedative and euphoric effects. Compared to GHB, BDO takes longer to kick in because the body needs to metabolize it first. Both substances can lead to unconsciousness, respiratory depression, and overdose if misused, but dosing BDO can be trickier due to its delayed onset. Additionally, BDO has a harsher taste and can cause more nausea than GHB.

How did G come up?

GHB first emerged in the 1960s as an anesthetic and later gained popularity in the fitness community for its potential to promote sleep and muscle growth. In the 80s and 90s, it became known as a party drug due to its euphoric and disinhibiting effects. Around the same time, GHB and its precursors, GBL and BDO, started being used in club and rave scenes. Its association with sexual assault and accidental overdoses contributed to the criminalization of GHB in many countries.

What does it mean G being a chemsex-drug?

GHB is considered a chemical-sex drug because it lowers inhibitions, enhances physical sensations, and can increase feelings of intimacy and arousal. Its effects, such as relaxation and euphoria, make it popular in sexual contexts, particularly in party and queer scenes. Some people use it to reduce anxiety or to intensify pleasure during sex.

Add on for consumption reflection:

On an individual level: monitor your substance use to prevent it from turning into misuse > is your consumption changing? Can you manage your daily life without substances? Hack: keep a consumption journal. In what situations do you use substances? What feelings are associated with it? Avoid substances when you're not feeling well! You can find more tips on reflecting on your consumption here: https://safer-nightlife.berlin/_konsumkompetenz/

Societal topics connecting to the stigmatization of GHB/GBL:

How does Stigma work?

Image of Stigma being the outside Layer of a Matrioschka:

- seeing and breaking the different layers can help to diminishing stigmas
- first outside layer: rape-drug, ko-tropfen, overdosing (media)
- second layer: one can get addicted fast. rehab is hard, similar to alcohol and needs medical attention.
- third layer: there are informed consumers, having great experiences on GHB/GBL
- fourth layer: ...

GHB is heavily stigmatized due to its association with overdoses, addiction, and unpredictable effects, which make it seem especially dangerous. It's also linked to non-consensual drugging and sexual assault, earning it the reputation of a "rape drug." Users are often judged as reckless or irresponsible, reinforcing the idea that taking G is inherently dangerous or immoral. This stigma can lead to isolation, preventing open conversations about safer use and pushing consumption into riskier, hidden spaces.

Combating GHB stigma starts with open, judgment-free conversations about its use, focusing on education rather than fear. Promoting harm reduction practices, like proper dosing and recognizing overdose signs, helps create a safer environment while reducing misinformation. Clubs and communities can support this by offering resources, training staff, and creating spaces where people feel safe seeking help. Ultimately, shifting the narrative from punishment to care and understanding fosters a more compassionate approach that reduces stigma and encourages responsible use.

Add on for consumption reflection:

Stigmatization is used to silence and label the “different” use of substances. This form of stigmatization is also referred to as “discursive silencing”. As a result, knowledge about how to deal with substances and other lifestyles are marginalized and distorted. What remains in the end are people who are stigmatized as problematic. This thought curve also results in the 1.5-fold risk of queer people being affected by substance use disorders. Have a look at sidekicks.berlin more information regarding queer topics: <https://sidekicks.berlin>

Tipps and tricks regarding G:

Speaking up

We talked about the importance of giving honest feedback to G-consumers, how their behavior can affect others. If we all keep talking to our friends and people in our environment, it can help give consumers a realistic perspective on how they behave when they're juicy.

Speaking up in a club setting, where strangers might be overstepping boundaries or having an effect on one's personal space, can be difficult, especially for FLINTAs. If you don't feel comfortable or safe enough to speak up, don't hesitate to get support from others, like an awareness-team or sober friends.

With speaking about consuming G and how other party guests experience G-consumers, we're actively working against stigmas and the taboo, of not talking about G in a club environment.

Getting support for G-Addiction and/or risky consumption:

If your G-consumption is not casual and conscious anymore and you'd like support from professionals, there are many places you can get the help you want and need. If you need support with the consumption of friend or family member, visit one of the official addiction counseling centers, they will be able to support you as well.

We've listed a few of the most important links/websites on the next page.

Information about Substances:

Sidekicks: <https://sidekicks.berlin>

SONAR: <https://safer-nightlife.berlin>

Know-Drugs App: <https://knowdrugs.app/de/>

Drug-Checking Berlin: <https://drugchecking.berlin>

Addiction Counseling (not complete):

Vista: <https://vistaberlin.de/konsum-alkohol-medikamente-und-drogen>

Drogennotdienst: <https://drogennotdienst.de>

Fixpunkt: <https://www.fixpunkt.org>

Schwulenberatung: <https://schwulenberatungberlin.de>

GBH/GBL/BDO detox:

Jewish Hospital (Mitte): <https://www.juedisches-krankenhaus.de/kliniken-und-medizinische-zentren/klinik-fuer-psychiatrie-und-psychotherapie/medizinische-schwerpunkte/suchtbehandlung/behandlungsmoeglichkeiten/ghb-oder-gbl.html>