Raves and clubs are dance parties with fast-paced music that’s accompanied by lightning effects and DJs. The cultural aspect orients the interest of the youth where it blends music, and social ideals. Everyone is in one setting where they dance for enrichment of peace, love, unity, respect and happiness. The environment often provides an outlet for an out-of-the-ordinary experience to escape pressures of work and school or to be part of a uniting culture. It provides a place of socialization and high excitement. These cultures use drugs to enhance a raver’s sensation with a boost of energy or engage into the spiritual aspect.

While these substances are often used as an immersive tool in raves and club environments, these drugs should be used with caution.

Hey, welcome to another episode of, “In the Mix.” A podcast provided through the Alcohol and Other Drug Services here at Grand Valley. As always, I’m Zachary Plisko. I’m here to inform students to be safe, be responsible and be smart when using substances. Here on episode nine, we’re talking about rave culture. We’ll discuss the history of raves, the top substances used at them and share tips on how to be safe if attending one.

First, we’ll go over the rise in popularity of raves.

Raves and clubbing evolved from 1980s house partying where people stayed at a person’s place overnight, blaring music and dancing non-stop. With the emergence of techno music, soon there was an expansion of locations where clubs would sponsor raves. At first, there was limited exposure because they were secretive, after-hours and restricted to invites only. It was known as an “underground” movement because of the secrecy and limited attendees.

In the mid 1980s, raves began to attract youth and young adults. Since most raves were growing in size, clubs couldn’t hold the capacity for one, so thousands of people would gather in open fields, outside of cities.

By the 1990s, raves were no longer a secret as events emerged with heavy advertising and promotion. So, instead of being in an open-field, venues began to be at stadiums. Those who promoted the raves capitalized on the profit opportunity where there was a clothing and music market, but especially a drug one too.

Raves then happened sparingly around the 2000s.

It wasn’t until the 2010s with EDM or Electronic Dance Music began to encompass all house music and raves music. Now, raves are massive music festivals with thousands of people attending that encompass the entirety of weekends and host world-famous DJs.

Ecstasy or more known as MDMA is a hallucinogenic and a drug stimulant. Users may experience a rush of good feelings known as a high, or intensified emotions – whether those be good or bad. Effects usually last six hours. It’s given a capsule, tablet or snorted from a powdered form. The popular term for ecstasy is molly, which refers to the “pure” form of ecstasy.

It’s the most common stimulant found in dance clubs and raves and it’s sold in small tablets of various colors imprinted with icons or words. Sometimes MDMA is altered with other substances like caffeine or LSD. These mixes are known as “designer drugs” that illicitly mix MDMA with other variants of the substance to create various intentional and unintentional effects.

If MDMA is exclusively used there’s an increased release of serotonin, dopamine and norepinephrine. Effects occur within thirty to sixty minutes after ingestion and last up to eight hours. People describe feelings of agitation, disorientation of time, hunger and thirst, but it is followed with a euphoric feeling of profound insight, intimacy and well-being.

Acute adverse issues of using MDMA do occur. Some may experience hypothermia where too much physical activity in a warm environment like a rave or club raises body temperature and MDMA interferes with regulating the body temperature. Other effects include illogical thoughts, hot flashes or chills, headaches, and joint stiffness.

Ecstasy is a Schedule 1 substance, meaning the government deems the drug as having no medical benefit and has a high potential for abuse.

GHB is known to mediate sleep cycle, body temperature, metabolism and memory. First appearing in the 1960s as an anesthetic, it later achieved recreational popularity. Quickly in the 1990s, nonprescription use of GHB was banned as there were findings by the FDA of intense effects of uncontrolled movements and slowed respiratory and nervous system.

The salty powder is masked by beverages and food. Often effects appear fifteen to thirty minutes after ingestion and peaks occur within an hour. It’s also worth noting the drug is colorless and odorless despite the salty and soapy taste.

GHB produces a euphoric feeling but quickly turns into dizziness and amnesia. Since GHB is a central nervous system depressant it causes sleepiness and slows down breathing and heart rate.

The feeling of GHB is similar to the effects of drinking alcohol. At low doses, users feel more sociable but light headed. At higher doses the listed effects are more intense with drowsiness then into a deep sleep.

Ketamine is known as a dissociative anesthetic drug often used for human anesthesia and veterinary purposes to relieve pain in a medical surrounding. It appeared in the 1980s as laboratories illegally produced the substance for recreational use.

If used for illicit purposes, the hallucinogenic drug causes people to feel detached from reality.

The substance rose to popularity in the nineties as a psychedelic club drug used for recreational use. People known as “psychonauts'' were mind explorers who were interested in a new transformative experience. Since Ketamine produces delirium, it causes a slowed perception and altered state of the mind. Often, the result is feeling of a floating sensation,changes in mood, and hallucinations.

In the club setting, the drug is used to render a person immobile. There’s a sense of ketamine-induced state where one loses control of their body and mind. People take Ketamine at a club to tap into their “spiritual potential.” Whether it’s the lightning effects or house music, participants at the club feel more a part when using the substance. When the feeling of detachment wares off, often people experience memory loss, nausea and depression.

Rohypnol is known by the popular culture nickname of “roofies”. It’s an illegal drug, but still is found in society. It’s a very potent benzodiazepine that slows messages traveling between the brain and body. At first the drug was developed as a form of preoperative anesthesia and treatment of insomnia, but it became prominent as an inexpensive recreational sedative drug since street cost is only fifty cents to five dollars.

A small dosage of only one to two milligrams of rohypnol reduces effects of anxiety inhibition and muscular tension. Higher doses produce amnesia, lack of muscle control and loss of consciousness. Effects usually occur after thirty minutes of ingesting it and last eight to twelve hours.

I only went over the basics of each drug and the effects if consumed. Refer back to season one, episode seven of in the mix where former host, Alex Baker talks more in-depth about the perception of substance use to add an element to partying.

Now, let’s go over a few tips if you plan on attending a rave.

Don’t go alone. Be sure to go with people you trust. Again, the event has thousands of people who attend the event, so having a small group with each other’s contact information will help keep each other safe. With having others with you, you can watch each other’s backs while still enjoying the event to the fullest.

Be aware of the drugs we talked about. Again, understand what these various substances look like and don’t take any from people you don’t know. Sometimes pills can be laced with other ingredients like fentanyl or methamphetamines. It only takes one pill to feel horrible effects or even overdose.

Keep hydrated. The rave environment gets toasty really quick as everyone is shoulder to shoulder and never stops dancing. So, have a few water bottles on you and know where the vendor stations are to get more water.

Watch your drinks. People can easily slip colorless and odorless substances above to cause harm upon an individual. Sadly, there are people out there who want to commit unlawful acts for explicit reasoning, which episode three in season one of “In the Mix '' talks about.

It’s suggested to not attend outlaw raves. Remember these are raves that are illegally held and are a “word by mouth” event. Events like this with no security or staff present can result in emergency situations where no professional help is readily available.

Don’t bring valuable items. You can’t always trust those around you, so don’t bring expensive items or all your different identification cards or credit/debit cards or a lot of cash. A suggestion if you do bring important items is a literal carry bag with a lock or combination. Some people even tie down their bags to make their items “pickpocket-proof.”

Verify policies of the rave. If a rave is more underground and less advertised, that means less security and more could go wrong. If a rave is more of a musical festival type in an open park, security and sometimes police are on standby at all times to ensure the safety of individuals.

That’s the end of episode nine of, “In the Mix.” Remember raves do provide a new outlet of a getaway and socialization, but be wary of the drugs and the uses. As always, I’m Zachary Plisko, see you in the next episode.