

Sub-Drop By Aropedeevil

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Sub-Drop: Not just for Subs!

Sub-Drop is a misnomer. Anyone can experience the effects associated with sub-drop, regardless of the role.

The buzz on Fetlife about this topic suggest Tops/Doms experience this phenomena as often as their counterparts do.

For this handout we will still refer to it as 'sub-drop', but all that we discuss applies to all persons who experience the phenomena, not just submissives.

Sub Drop is the **emotional and physical** effects of the release and drop of *endorphins* in the body as a result of some forms of BDSM activity (for some people). The 'drop' itself can be experienced during the scene, directly after the scene, after a rest period after the scene, hours after the scene, or even days after a scene.

Although the word 'drop' indicates something negative the after effects of endorphin release can be positive as well. The positive aspects are easily handled, which of course explains why the dialogue about this topic often focuses on the negative effects.

The physical effects of sub-drop can include feeling fatigued or energized, crying, giggling, laughing, mumbling, shaking, muscle spasms, aches and pains and recovery from marks. The emotional effects can include sadness or giddiness, depression, lack of motivation or inspiration, discouraged or bolstered, irrational, confused, focused, disorientated and so on. The symptoms can be all positive or all negative, or a merging of both. The intensity can be mild to extreme.

The endorphins and other hormones released during play are part of what makes play so incredibly lovely **and** so very addictive. Those same hormones also create a need for your body to recalibrate (so to speak) to it's previous hormonal state, which takes time. It is during this time that most people experience the effects of sub-drop.

Sub-drop can be a very terrible and terrifying experience, particularly if you are unprepared or do not know what you are experiencing is a side effect of the endorphins. There is much you can do to alleviate the effects of sub-drop for yourself and for your partner/playmate.

Every Experience is Unique

No one can tell you what sub-drop will be like for you, or accurately predict when you will experience it. Some find that the intensity of the session matches the intensity of after effects. Some find that they experience more (or less) effects after a session with a well known (to them) partner.

Whatever your experience, know that you are not alone and that the effects will pass.

Sub Drop Myths

Myth: The more you trust the person you scene with the less likely you will experience Sub-Drop.

Truth: The opposite appears to be more accurate. The more connected you are with your playmate, the more you trust them, the more likely you will experience Sub-Drop. This may be due to intimacy resulting in more limits being pushed and tested, or to the emotional trust that comes with a deeper connection, allowing us to let down more of our barriers.

Myth: Sub-Drop is more often experienced by people with less control over their emotions, (otherwise known as 'only wimps experience sub-drop').

Truth: Sub-Drop is not related to one's physical strength, psychological resilience or emotional fortitude. It is all about hormones, particularly adrenaline and endorphins.

Myth: Proper after-care prevents sub-drop.

Truth: Proper after-care can help prevent or mitigate sub-drop, but it is not a magic wand.

Preventing Sub-Drop

There are some steps you can take to help prevent Sub-drop from occurring.

1. Ensure that you have shared all pertinent information with your session mate prior to the session. (Example, if being called 'girl' triggers an abuse flashback, share that. If someone saying 'whatever' fills you with rage, share that.)
2. The more 'intense' the planned session, the more care that needs to be used in sharing information as well as planning for aftercare.
3. Before ending the scene, the Top/Dom may wish to give a signal that the session is winding to a close. This can be done in many ways, from a verbal, "Time to start making your way back" to switching to rubbing the bottoms back, massaging, loosening ropes, making soothing noises. This warning allows the bottom to begin gathering themselves, reducing the shock between endorphin high (subspace) and reality.
4. Be prepared. If you find it easier to return to the real world if you are wrapped up in a blanket, bring one. You should have your own after-care kit if playing with a casual partner, in which the things that you have found helpful are ready to go.

5. Some things to consider for after-care: blanket, water, hot beverage, snack, massage lotion, towel, bath, cuddling, 'debriefing', verbal reassurance that you did well, permission to have a cry if you need, sugar or chocolate, protein. Keep track of what seems to work for you in creating a feeling of well being after a session.
6. If playing with a casual partner, you can arrange to have someone close to you provide more intimate after-care. If you are playing with someone you can contact anytime, arrange to be able to email, text or call in a few hours or the next day to debrief further.
7. Do not keep feelings bottled up. If you need to talk, yell, cry, giggle or w.h.y, do so.
8. If play included intense physical play, ensure that after-care includes ice packs, vitamin E rubs etc.
9. Make sure you ate properly and are hydrated and reasonably well rested before playing.
10. Have a self care plan for if you experience Sub-drop.

When Sub-Drop Hits

If you find yourself experiencing the effects of sub-drop, don't despair. If you can contact your Dom/Top, do so. Share your feelings and concerns, talk it out, get reassurance. If you cannot contact your Dom/Top you can turn to a fellow kinkster, journal, blog or any other safe way to vent your feelings.

If you heeded Tip #10 in preventing Sub-Drop, you have an after-care plan. Such a plan might include taking a long bath, with bubbles and a favourite book, going to get a massage, reading a letter or poem or email that you wrote yourself or that your Dom/Top wrote you to remind you how wonderful you are, calling your mentor or going to the gym. Again, whatever helps you feel reassured, validated and safe.

After-care:

There is no right or wrong way, really, for after-care. Whatever works for you and your partner is perfectly fine. It doesn't need to be elaborate. Sometimes I just need to be told 'good girl'. Other times I need to cry and be cuddled.

Don't forget that Doms and Tops need after-care too, from reassurance that they did a fine job in the scene, to cuddles and touching base later. When negotiating a scene, find out what after-care your playmate needs.