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# X-Drop

## Black & BLUES

Sub Drop, Top Drop, Event Drop





Richard Sprott, PHD  
 Anna Randall, DHS, MSW, MPH  
 CARAS & TASHRA  
 Dec. 3, 2016  
 Sexceptional Series Austin

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### OVERVIEW OF OUR TIME WITH YOU

A. Why we do Kink

B. Share your experiences with DROP

C. Discuss different models to explain it:

- Peak Erotic Experiences
- Transformational Experiences
- Grief Work
- Identity/Self Development

*D Further Work Needed – Future directions*

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### HOW IS KINK EXPERIENCED?

- A relationship structure – “Our Dynamic”
- A spiritual experience
- As intense physical sensation
- For self-actualization
- As a feeling - such as emotional catharsis
- As a spicy addition to sex
- As a social niche
- As a political & cultural identity
- As a skill & an art
- As a ‘safer sex’ way to play with others



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### MOTIVATIONS FOR KINK

- Pleasure
- Catharsis
- Emotion regulation: to up-regulate or down-regulate
- To counter depression symptoms
- To counter anxiety symptoms
- Personal Growth,
- Trauma Reframing,
- Symptom Management
- Self Exploration,
- Intimacy

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#### AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

- *Confidentiality tonight*
- *If you would care to: SHARE THE QUALITIES of your most exciting and satisfying sexual experiences*

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#### WHAT IS TOP-DROP LIKE FOR YOU?

What feelings do you have during Top-drop?

When does it happen for you?

How do you cope with it?

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WHAT IS SUB-DROP  
LIKE FOR YOU?

What feelings do you have during Sub-drop?

When does it happen for you?

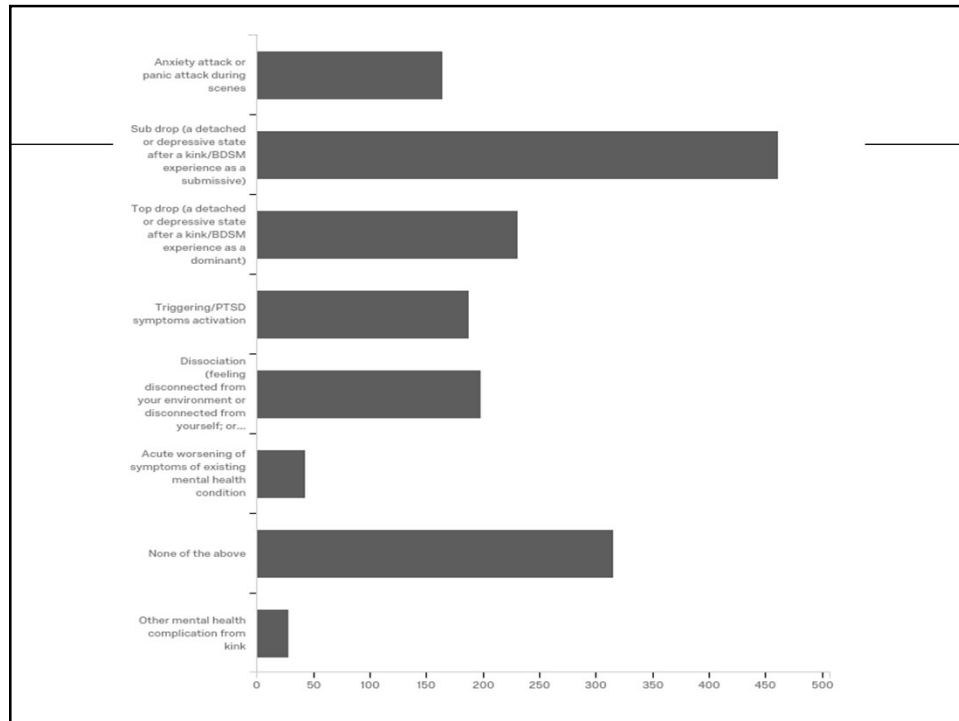
How do you cope with it?

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PSYCHOLOGICAL STATES IN NATIONAL  
KINK HEALTH SURVEY

2016 TASHRA STUDY

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#	Field	Choice Count
1	Anxiety attack or panic attack during scenes	16.79% 164
2	Sub drop (a detached or depressive state after a kink/BDSM experience as a submissive)	47.19% 461
3	Top drop (a detached or depressive state after a kink/BDSM experience as a dominant)	23.64% 231
4	Triggering/PTSD symptoms activation	19.14% 187
5	Dissociation (feeling disconnected from your environment or disconnected from yourself; or having memory gaps)	20.27% 198
6	Acute worsening of symptoms of existing mental health condition	4.40% 43
7	None of the above	32.24% 315
8	Other mental health complication from kink	2.87% 28

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### DIFFERENT MODELS

#### Models used to explain X-drop:

- Biochemical
- Theories of Grief
- Identity/Self Development

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### BIOCHEMICAL EXPLANATIONS

#### Commonly described by BDSM community members as:

the after-effects of high adrenaline and endorphin rushes

*“Subdrop is when all the endorphins and  
adrenaline are settled down again.”*

<http://isthisbdsbm.blogspot.com/2013/09/aftercare.html>

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### BIOCHEMICAL EXPLANATIONS

*"Since the increase of hormones and chemicals has produced a trance-like state, as play ends the submissive may feel out-of-body, detached from reality. As the sub's system stops producing morphine-like drugs, and as the parasympathetic nervous system kicks in again, the sub may feel a deep exhaustion, a sharp drop in temperature, as well as incoherence and un-coordination. In the lifestyle, this is commonly referred to as "drop" or "sub-drop"."*

[http://chicomunch.com/publ/basic\\_info\\_about\\_bdsm/bdsm\\_101\\_subspace\\_aftercare\\_and\\_sub\\_drop\\_and\\_sometimes\\_top\\_drop/1-1-0-23](http://chicomunch.com/publ/basic_info_about_bdsm/bdsm_101_subspace_aftercare_and_sub_drop_and_sometimes_top_drop/1-1-0-23)

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### BIOCHEMICAL EXPLANATIONS

*"As the high comes down, and the parasympathetic nervous system kicks in (to counteract the effects of the aforementioned chemicals), a deep exhaustion, as well as incoherence may result."*

<http://asibdsm.com/subspace-after-care/>

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**BIOCHEMICAL EXPLANATIONS**

Problem: there is no research to test these ideas about the physiological profile of the more immediate type of x-drop

In fact, one could argue that the exhaustion phase of a stress reaction is more complicated, and involves increasing lactate, ammonia and creatine kinase rather than endorphins or adrenaline

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**BIOCHEMICAL EXPLANATIONS**

Counter-balancing an acute stress response is not the same thing as exhaustion phase.

Often hormonal stress responses have negative feedback loops, meaning that there would be a falling level of adrenaline, etc, as a scene goes on.

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WHAT MIGHT BE HAPPENING INSTEAD?

Biochemical reactions to acute stressors may not  
account for the second kind of “drop”

We propose that “Delayed X-Drop” requires a different  
explanation

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WE PROPOSE A PRE-CONDITION:  
A PEAK EROTIC EXPERIENCE

*“Flames of passion are fueled by a mixture of  
attractions and obstacles to overcome”*

***ATTRACTION + OBSTACLES = EXCITEMENT***

The Erotic Equation by Dr. C.A. Tripp

Obstacles can be associated with and or amplify excitement.  
When compelling associations are repeated

*VOILA – an association becomes solidified.*

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THE CORNERSTONES OF EROTICISM ARE  
INTENSIFIED BY BDSM

## Effective arousal intensifiers:

- Intense eroticism is paradoxical and unpredictable.
- Things that arouse us, under different circumstances, or in differing intensity
  - also turn us off.
- Anything that we find that inhibits us sexually
  - can at a later time be a turn-on.

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EROTIC CONFLICTS THAT AMPLIFY  
THE EROTIC EXPERIENCE

## Amplifying Components:

- Longing and Anticipation
- Violating Prohibitions
- Searching for Power
- Overcoming Ambivalence

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EMOTIONAL TRANSFORMATIONS  
PERMEATE EROTIC LIFE

## Emotional Transformations

- ANXIETY -----> SECURITY
- WEAKNESS -----> STRENGTH
- GUILT -----> FREEDOM
- ANGER -----> APPRECIATION (SATISFACTION)
- FEAR -----> LOVE
- SHAME -----> ACCEPTANCE (PRIDE)
- WOUNDING -----> HEALING

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TRANSCENDENCE

*“When we surrender to a transcendent experience, we glimpse our Universal Aspects, moving beyond the limitations of the ego, and its illusions of separateness. The great paradox of transcendence is that while self-consciousness totally disappears, we know more clearly than at any other time exactly who we are.”*

--Jack Morin

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## ECSTASY

FRIEND DESCRIBING A MOMENT OF ECSTASY:

*"It felt like the fulfillment of my life, but, more than that, the fulfillment of all life, of life itself. It put everything into perspective and gave it all unity, purpose, and nobility... It's completely changed me. Still today, everything I do—and, more importantly, don't do—is grounded in that vision, grounded in that reality..."*

Burton, N. (January 19, 2015) The psychology of ecstasy. Blog post. Retrieved from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/hide-and-seek/201501/the-psychology-ecstasy>

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## OTHER KINDS OF TRANSCENDENT EXPERIENCES

"Transcendent experiences are the intersection of the timeless moment" (Eliot, 1970)

- Kundalini Awakening
- Mystical Ecstasy and Rapture
- Shamanic Ecstatic Trance States – Soul Journeying
- Burning Man
- "The Experience of Awe"
- Near Death Experiences
- Birth
- Jungian Synchronicity – ESP

*"One knows something that until that moment was unknown. When the darkness again descends, does the person chart a course dictated by the current reality of the darkness ... or by that knowing, the knowledge of the terrain that was momentarily glimpsed?"*

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WHAT DOES TRANSCENDENCE  
HAVE TO DO WITH "X" DROP?

## AFTER TRANSFORMATIONAL EXPERIENCE?

What happens when we get the blues?

*Is it Loss?*

*Grief?*

*Bereavement?*

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## GRIEF AND GRIEF WORK

### LINDEMANN 1944

- Emancipation from guilt and regret
- Bereavement
- Form new roles/relationships



### KUBLER-ROSS 1969

- Denial
- Anger
- Bargaining
- Depression
- Acceptance

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## GRIEF AND GRIEF WORK

### PARKES-BOWLBY MODEL

- Numbness
- Searching and Yearning
- Disorganization and Despair
- Reorganization and Recovery



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## IDENTITY AND SELF DEVELOPMENT

- The process of forming a new identity can involve the “loss” of the old identities
- Growing from one stage to the next is experienced as a disorienting, anxious, or frightening experience – you are losing the way you make sense of the world
- Kegan argued that “depression” (not clinical depression, but “developmental depression”) was a natural response to the growth of the self

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### THE EMERGENCE OF THE NEW YOU?



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### TRANSCENDENCE

*"When we surrender to a transcendent experience, we glimpse our Universal Aspects, moving beyond the limitations of the ego, and its illusions of separateness. The great paradox of transcendence is that while self-consciousness totally disappears, we know more clearly than at any other time exactly who we are."*

--Jack Morin

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### CAN KINK BE THERAPEUTIC?

- Anecdotal evidence: people clearly **use** BDSM activities **for needs and functions** that address healing, **relief from suffering, and personal growth**

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### FURTHER WORK NEEDED

- Are some individuals more prone to experience later X-drop than others?
- What exactly are the emotional dynamics of later X-drop?
- How does the community support the experience of X-drop?
- Does later x-drop involve identity change?

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# Journal of Positive Sexuality

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## ***Black and Blue: sub Drop, Top Drop, Event Drop and Scene Drop***

Sprott and Randall

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### **Black and Blues: Sub Drop, Top Drop, Event Drop and Scene Drop**

Richard A. Sprott, Ph.D.  
California State University, East Bay

Anna Randall, MSW, MPH, DHS  
The Alternative Sexualities Health Research Alliance

*A couple of days after a magnificent BDSM scene with her Dominant, KittyK feels unusually sad and insecure. While it was one of the high points of her D's relationship with SirStephan, "I feel a little lost and unconnected, maybe even a bit embarrassed, even though Sir has been so attentive," she reports.*

*Then there is Samuel, who attends his first full weekend kink/leather event – filled with valuable classes and exciting play parties. He connects with some awesome people and gets a sense of being immersed in this world that he has always dreamed about; he feels a great sense of belonging. A few days later, after he gets back to his everyday work and home life, he finds it hard to concentrate, he feels exhausted, and he lacks interest in the usual things that bring him pleasure and satisfaction.*

It is not unusual to hear descriptions like this when a person spends time in various kink, BDSM and leather communities. For some people, after having a wonderful, energetic, amazing kink/BDSM experience, they seem to have some sort of letdown, emotional downturn or crash. This appears to happen to people from different cultural backgrounds, and across genders and orientations and ages. Within the kink world, these post-event occurrences are often labeled with terms like "sub drop" or "event drop" – as well as "Top drop" or "Dom drop". These terms are used to describe many different kinds of feelings, involve many time frames, from minutes to days after. What exactly is this experience? As researchers with a keen desire to better understand the kink experience and how this understanding can translate to clinical practice, this paper is an enquiry into what drop might signify.

#### **In the Moment.....the term "drop" may be ambiguous**

*Many people in the kink communities talk about "sub drop" or "Top drop" as an exhaustion or refractory phase of an intense scene, as the moment when "all the endorphins and adrenaline are scolded down again." (Christine, n.d.)*

*"Since the increase of hormones and chemicals has produced a trance-like state, as play ends the submissive may feel out of body, detached from reality. As the sub's system stops producing morphine-like drugs, and as the parasympathetic nervous system kicks in again, the sub may feel a deep exhaustion, a sharp drop in temperature, as well as*

<sup>7</sup> These two case descriptions are each an amalgamation of several clients' experiences. They are not descriptions of individual people or their experiences.

<sup>8</sup> In keeping with a kink community practice, we are using capitalization to indicate submissive roles (lowercase) and Dominant roles (uppercase).