Inhalant use – the deliberate inhalation of volatile substances with purposes of intoxication – affects the lives of tens of thousands of young people around the globe. Despite massive presence in the streets, it remains a poorly understood form of drug use. Existing policy frameworks are narrowly biomedical and tend to individualize harm. Forming part of a broader project investigating inhalant use and intervention in Mexico, India, and Australia, the study proposed here aims at establishing a comparative, meaning-centred, and critical medical anthropology of inhalant use.