

School Services Personnel

Why Am I Needed?

In a recent study, 3% of youth aged 12-17 reported current nonmedical use of prescription medications.*

Historically, the favored substances used by teens has been alcohol and marijuana. Now prescription pills have entered the teen realm through easy access to medicine cabinets or by way of a friend sharing a personal prescription of “Vicodin, Xanax, or Adderall,” to name a few by brand. Although the media has sensationalized teen Pharmaceutical parties or Pharm parties, the threat of being exposed to prescription medication at the school-aged level during a party or in an educational institution is still very real.** The collateral damage during these parties can result in teens having to deal with STDS, unwanted pregnancy, mental health disorders like depression and anxiety, guilt, low self-esteem, and poor school performance.

Interventions on the middle school level may reduce risk of prescription drug use later in young adulthood. “Young adults who had participated in a community-based prevention program in middle school reduced their prescription drug misuse up to 65 percent...researchers studied the effectiveness of the Iowa Strengthening Families Program, designed for parents and children ages 10 to 14. It aims to prevent teen substance abuse and other behavior problems, strengthen parenting skills and build family strengths. It consists of seven sessions for parents, youth and families, and includes videos, role-playing, discussions, learning games and family projects.”***

What Do I Need to Know?

The signs and symptoms of an opioid overdose are chest pain, difficulty staying awake, shallow or absent breathing, blue or ashen lips, unresponsiveness to stimulation, such as a sternal rub, dizziness, faintness, nausea, vomiting, cold and clammy skin, slowed heart rate, and/or convulsions.

Recognize the signs and symptoms of various intoxication:

Opiates: slurred speech, very tired, falling in and out of sleep (nodding off), difficulty standing or sitting straight, unbalanced and uncoordinated, pupils constricted to pin points in the eye.

Benzodiazepines: lapses in memory, poor judgment/confusion, unsteady walking, violent or out of control behavior, passing out, slurred speech, dizziness, rapid eye movements, unusually revved up or sedated.

Stimulants: suspiciously too alert, seeming to appear nervous, sweating, often thinking and moving with abnormally high energy, high body temperature, dilated pupils.



What Needs To Be Done?



- Advocate for deferment programs that offer help, treatment, and special curriculums targeting intervention, not just punishment or expulsion for drug use.
- Implement Prevention curriculums and positive student leadership groups.
- Involve the student body in positive activities that support abstinence.
- Warn parents of “pharm parties” and the importance of properly monitoring, storing, and disposing of prescription medications.
- Know the indications of drug use: changes in physical appearance, behavioral issues, habit and action changes, multiple health issues, school work performance changes.
- Consider parenting classes to empower single, blended, or disengaged families using a structured curriculum.
- Focus on the enhancement of protective factors that reduce substance use. Effective prevention programs involve students, families and the community at large. Protective factors include extra-curricular activities, positive communication skills, social skills, and access to adult support systems.
- Indirectly communicate through posters, informational pamphlets, announcements, online quizzes, and questionnaires.
- Directly communicate by talking to a student about drug use if you suspect he or she is in danger.
- Parent involvement is considered a protective factor. Consider working through barriers that prevent parent involvement.
- Naloxone is a medication that can be administered to reverse an opioid overdose. Check with the school health department to discuss policy and having naloxone on site. Teach students the benefits of calling 911, saving lives with Naloxone, and the laws protecting them from prosecution during an overdose emergency.
- Take Correctly, Store Securely, Dispose Properly, Never Share.™***

Resources

Family Check-up:
<http://www.drugabuse.gov/sites/default/files/files/Famliycheckupall.pdf>

Student Quizzes:
<http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/national-drug-iq-challenge>

Radio Game:
<http://www.drugabuse.gov/news-events/nida-notes/podcasts/2013/05/jack-jill-keep-your-body-healthy-radio-spot-female-announcer>

Interaction:
<http://timetoact.drugfree.org/think-first-step-ask.html>

For more information
visit
project Lazarus.org
or call
+1.336.667.8100



*Retrieved from <http://oas.samhsa.gov/NSDUH/2k10NSDUH/2k10Results.htm#2.16>

**Retrieved from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bHIF54fajh4>

***Retrieved from <http://www.drugfree.org/join-together/community-related/middle-school-prevention-program-helps-cut-later-prescription-drug-abuse-study>