

# Prescription for Trouble



## RESOURCE GUIDE



Connect with Kids

- Fact Sheet
- Parent Tip Sheet
- Grades 6-8 Lesson Plan
- Grades 9-12 Lesson Plan
- Discussion Questions

# Character Traits

All Connect with Kids  
programs address these  
26 character traits:

Caring/Compassion	Citizenship
Civility	Conviction
Cooperation	Courage
Courtesy	Diligence
Freedom	Generosity
Helpfulness	Honesty
Honor	Integrity
Justice/Fairness	Kindness
Loyalty	Patience
Peace	Perseverance
Respect	Responsibility
Self-Control	Togetherness
Tolerance	Trustworthiness



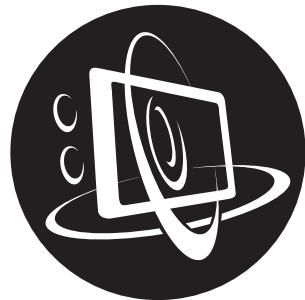
Connect with Kids

# Prescription for Trouble

The sub-culture of drug use in America has evolved, and now there is a new threat to our children: medicine, legal drugs that are sold in every pharmacy and found in every medicine cabinet. Sleeping pills, painkillers, muscle relaxers, ADHD pills, and cough medicine have become the drugs of choice. According to the Partnership for a Drug-Free America™, with the exception of marijuana, young people are more likely to abuse these legal drugs than any other. In *Prescription for Trouble* you'll witness the true stories of the dangerous — and sometimes deadly — outcomes for teen drug abusers, and hear from their parents and friends, and experts on what to do to stop this trend.

**This resource guide is designed to accompany the video entitled "Prescription for Trouble." This resource guide includes:**

- Fact Sheet
- Parent Tip Sheet
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- Discussion Questions



## Connect with Kids





# Prescription for Trouble

## Fact Sheet

### WHAT WE KNOW

The problem of teen and young adult abuse of prescription medications grows daily in the United States. Consider the following 2007 statistics collected by the Partnership for a Drug Free America:

- 20% of teens have abused a prescription pain medication
- 20% of teens have abused prescription stimulants and/or tranquilizers
- 10% of teens have abused cough medication.

Teens feel these drugs are legitimate, manufactured in a laboratory, prescribed by doctors and purchased within the law; therefore they are not as dangerous or as addictive as illegal drugs purchased on the street. They are readily available, often found in their home medicine cabinets or in the pockets of their friends. One does not need to find a connection as one would for heroin, cocaine or marijuana.

### WHAT WE CAN DO

Education and communication are the key ingredients to helping children avoid experimentation and possible addiction to any kind of drugs. Experts recommend telling children the following information about prescription drugs:

- Prescription drugs taken without a doctor's prescription or against a doctor's orders or supervision are often just as dangerous as taking illegal drugs or drinking alcohol.
- Painkillers contain the same basic ingredients as heroin: opiates. They can adversely affect the respiratory system and cause serious, chronic depression.
- Depression medications can cause seizures, respiratory depression, and seriously decreased heart rate.

- Stimulants cause body temperature to rise, irregular heart beats, cardiovascular system failure, seizures (often fatal), and hostility or paranoia.
- Doctors prescribe specific medications for specific illnesses — medications that can have beneficial results for the intended diagnosis. However, prescription medications can have very different impact on people who are healthy.
- Doses of medications are designed for a specific person based on age, weight, degree of illness and other variables. The effects of taking an inappropriate dosage can range from mild to deadly, and can cause dangerous interactions if other drugs or chemicals are present in the body.
- The dangers from abusing prescription medications increase when other drugs or chemicals are present in the body and can often be lethal.

### RESOURCES

*Consumer Healthcare Products Association*

[www.chpa-info.org](http://www.chpa-info.org)

*D.A.R.E.*

[www.dare.com](http://www.dare.com)

*Drug Enforcement Administration,*

*National Drug Threat Assessment 2007*

[www.dea.gov](http://www.dea.gov)

*Kids Health*

[www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)

*The National Institute of Drug Abuse*

[www.nida.nih.gov](http://www.nida.nih.gov)

*OTC (Over the Counter) Safety*

[www.otcsafety.org](http://www.otcsafety.org)

*The Partnership for a Drug-free America™*

[www.drugfree.org](http://www.drugfree.org)





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# Prescription for Trouble

## Parent Tip Sheet

### SIGNS YOUR CHILD IS INVOLVED WITH DRUGS

With the rise of abuse of prescription medications, it's crucial for parents to recognize the physical and behavioral warning signs of potential drug problems. Physical signs include: lack of sleep or change in sleeping patterns; bloodshot eyes; inability to concentrate; loss of coordination; weight change; neglected appearance or hygiene; and change in speech patterns or ability to speak clearly. Behavioral signs include: mood changes; becoming easily irritated; extreme secrecy; lying; failure to fulfill responsibilities at home, at school or at work; loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities; coming home late; unusual smells on clothing or on the breath. Keep your eyes open as to the disappearance of any of the following: money from your wallet, medications from your cabinet, alcohol from your supply cabinet, or valuables from your collection areas. Most importantly, make sure your child does not "go missing" for extended periods of time.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO

Experts suggest the following tips:

1. **Learn everything you can about medications.** Find out what kids in your area are abusing and don't be reluctant to share that information with others in your community. Know what medications are in your own cabinet, how they should and should not be used, and what complications could occur if they were used inappropriately.
2. **Talk about it with your kids.** What do your kids know about prescription and over-the-counter drug abuse in their schools? What do they know about the medications they take? Do they know the dangers of abusing those medications? Do they understand the importance of following a doctor's instructions? Do they understand that abusing medications can be lethal?

3. **Set clear expectations.** Your kids need to know your rules. They should never take medications without your knowledge. Ever.
4. **Start with your own medicine cabinet.** Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about any medications you might already have at home and find out about their potential for abuse. Count your prescription and OTC medications. Know how many doses are in the container. If necessary, put them in a safer, more guarded place. If your child is taking a prescription medication to school, make sure you talk with the appropriate school personnel about the policy for medication distribution, and if possible, personally deliver the medications to the school nurse or office personnel. Be sure all unused medicines are returned.

### RESOURCES

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[www.chpa-info.org](http://www.chpa-info.org)

*D.A.R.E.*

[www.dare.com](http://www.dare.com)

*Drug Enforcement Administration;*

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*Kids Health*

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*The National Institute on Drug Abuse*

[www.nida.nih.gov](http://www.nida.nih.gov)

*OTC Safety*

[www.otcsafety.org](http://www.otcsafety.org)

*The Partnership for a Drug-Free America™*

[www.drugfree.org](http://www.drugfree.org)





## For the Classroom

# Prescription for Trouble

## Lesson Plan Grades 6-8

### Not My Body!

#### PURPOSE

Students will understand the difference between medical use and illegal abuse of prescription and over-the-counter medicines. They will create a poster of what specific medicines can do to help heal a body when taken under a doctor's supervision and how the same drugs can hurt a body when misused or abused.

#### OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Learn the health risks of drug abuse.
- Compare and contrast medicinal use and illegal use of prescription and over-the-counter medicines.
- Research the effects of specific medicines.
- Create a life-sized poster of the benefits of correct, supervised use of a specific medicine and the ways it can injure a body if misused or abused.

#### MATERIALS

- Research/resource materials (from media center, science and/or health books, the Internet if available)
- List of commonly abused prescription and over-the-counter medicines
- Pens, pencils, papers
- Large, long pieces of art or butcher paper, cut to size of students' bodies.
- Art supplies

NOTE: This lesson takes two class periods.

#### PROCEDURE

1. Discuss the documentary by asking, *Why is it important for students to know the facts about drug abuse? Why do people abuse drugs? Why do people think that using prescription drugs or over-the-counter drugs for "recreational purposes" is better than abusing illegal drugs?*

2. Distribute the list of commonly abused prescription and over-the-counter medicines that follow. Ask, *Has anyone ever taken any one of these medicines because a doctor, nurse, parent, or some other adult has instructed you to do so to get relief from some illness? Did it help? How?*
3. Go through the list and have students check off the medicines that can be found in their family's medicine cabinet and discuss the intended use for each.
4. Break them into pairs (or, if necessary, groups no larger than three) and assign each group a specific medicine from the list. Their task is to take one of the medicines and research the following:
  - Where it comes from
  - Its effect on the human body
  - The medicinal use or uses
  - How it is legally dispensed
  - Common non-medicinal uses
  - Illegal uses
  - Dangers to the human body
5. Provide students remaining class time to complete their research.
6. On day two, give each group a life-sized piece of paper and have them trace a full-body outline of one of their members. Then, using a science book or other resource, have them label the following: brain, stomach, lungs, spinal cord, heart, muscular system, nervous system, respiratory system.
7. On the left side of the body, they will list the specific positive affects of the medicine; on the right side, they will list the possible adverse affects of the medicine if misused or abused. Be sure to connect the words to the correct system or area of the body.
8. When they have completed their body maps, display them around the classroom and have the class tour the exhibit.

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# Prescription for Trouble

## Lesson Plan Grades 6-8

### Not My Body (cont.)

#### For the Classroom

9. Ask, *If you know a medicine can hurt your body in these ways, why would you take it? What attracts people to these medicines? Why do they abuse them? How can we as a society influence teens and even adults to find totally drug-free alternatives for stress, relaxation and even concentration?*
10. Have them write a response to these questions in their journals or in a paragraph to be submitted.

#### EVALUATION

- Did students participate in the discussion?
- Did each group complete the research?
- Did each group complete the body map?
- Did class members understand the dangers/risks of drug abuse?

#### COMMONLY ABUSED PRESCRIPTION OR OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINES

- Dextromethorphan (cough medicine)  
Alka-seltzer Plus Cold & Cough Medicine,  
Coricidin HPB Cough and Cold, Dayquil  
LiquiCaps, Dimetapp DM, Robitussin cough  
products, Sudafed cough products, Triaminic  
cough syrups, Tylenol Cold products,  
Vicks 44 Cough Relief products and  
Vicks NyQuil LiquiCaps.
- Opioids/pain relievers:  
Dilaudid, Lorcet, Lortab, OxyContin,  
Percocet, Percodan, Tylox, Vicodin
- Depressants:  
Valium, Xanax
- Stimulants:  
Adderall, Concerta, Ritalin



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## For the Classroom

# Prescription for Trouble

## Lesson Plan Grades 9-12

### My Way, Not Sideways

#### PURPOSE

Students brainstorm a list of activities they love to participate in that keep them away from abusing drugs of any kind. Students will create a visual advertising the benefits of their selected activity.

#### OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Brainstorm activities they love to participate in
- Create a visual (poster, bookmark, bumper sticker, etc.) OR write and perform a commercial to advertise their activity to younger children, as well as their peers.
- Understand how these activities help keep them away from abusing drugs and help keep them on track to lead a happy and healthy life.

#### MATERIALS

- Board/overhead
- Pens, pencils
- Paper
- Poster board
- Art supplies
- Performance space

#### PROCEDURE

1. On a piece of paper, have each student list all the activities they love to do after school, on the weekends, during vacations, and during school breaks. Give them five minutes to complete their list.
2. Have students share their top three favorite activities with the class in a discussion and record their ideas on the board/overhead.
3. Remind students that in the documentary, one of the kids tells us that the best way to avoid abusing drugs is to find an activity that is fun and will keep you away from temptation. Ask, *What does that mean?*

4. Break students into groups of no more than three (preferably two) who have a similar interest. Their assignment is to create either a visual (a poster, bumper sticker, bookmark, etc.) or write and perform a commercial that will advertise how much better their selected activity is than abusing drugs. The target audience for their message may be either younger children or their peers, and remind them to consider this target audience every step of the way.
5. Remind students to consider the following questions: *Why is it important to find something you love to do? What does it help you with in the future? How does something like an activity help you to resist temptation to abuse drugs or do some other unhealthy thing? How does your activity help you make healthy choices?*
6. Allow students classtime to complete their task; it might take more than just one class period.
7. When they have finished, have each group present its project to the class.
8. Find a time for them to share their projects with another class or another part of the school population.

#### EVALUATION

- Did students participate in the discussion?
- Did each group create a visual or commercial about its selected activity?
- Could each group explain how their activity helps them to make healthy choices?





# Prescription for Trouble

## Discussion Questions

### Opening

1. Are you aware of advertisements for prescription medications (RX meds)? Which ones? What are they for? When you see these ads, do you consider using them? Why or why not?
2. Do you think television advertisements for prescription medicines have contributed to drug abuse in the USA? Explain your answer.
3. Do you consider Red Bull and other highly caffeinated drinks a drug? Why or why not?
4. Describe what the documentary means by "The age of medication."
5. Why are RX meds the fastest growing area of drug abuse?

### Part I

1. How would you warn others about the dangers of over-the-counter (OTC) and prescription drugs so that it matches the perceived dangers of the likes of heroin, cocaine, meth, and other illegal drugs?
2. Why do people consider prescription drugs safe? When ARE they safe? When are they unsafe?
3. Describe a "pharm party." What is their allure?
4. Laura says, "A lot of kids think that you just get high. And the high is the only part of it. But they don't see that you have to come down...and in comes the depressions, worthlessness. And then you know it starts a vicious cycle because you want to get high again so you won't come down." Describe the vicious cycle of addiction. Do you think knowing about the "down" side of getting high would dissuade kids from trying drugs? Why or why not?

### Part II

1. Describe Andrew Theriot's decline into addiction. Did he ever foresee what would happen to him?
2. What were Andrew's images of a drug addict before he became one? How did he fall into his own stereotype?
3. What is Russian roulette? How is experimenting with drugs like playing Russian roulette?
4. Andrew says, "Addiction becomes who you are." How is this statement true for Andrew? How is it true for the others in this program?
5. How could you warn someone about the dangers of addiction so that they would listen? Can you? Should you try? Why?
6. Describe Andrew's withdrawal symptoms. Could anyone go through these alone? How?



# Prescription for Trouble

## Discussion Questions (cont.)

### Part III

1. People say Ross was a “smart kid.” Based on what you know he did, do you agree or disagree with them? Why?
2. Describe consequences of drug abuse. Why aren’t any of these strong enough to deter abuse?
3. Why aren’t kids afraid of prescription drugs the way they are of illegal drugs?
4. Several kids on the teen council make statements to the effect, “Saying no to people who offer you drugs is so hard.” Do you agree or disagree? Why?
5. What is the “something more powerful” in your life that keeps you away from drugs?

### Close

1. How could a parent help a child understand the dangers of prescription drug abuse? What would you say about it if you were a parent?
2. How do you love, trust and believe in a child and still “keep your eyes wide open” at the same time? Aren’t they contradictory actions? How do you suggest parents go about doing this?
3. What are some of the ways kids fool their parents into thinking “not my kid,” and that everything is OK?

## For more information



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on Connect with Kids or  
*Prescription for Trouble*,  
please call (888) 598-KIDS (5437) or  
email to [sales@cwknetwork.com](mailto:sales@cwknetwork.com)

# 'Pharm' Parties (fär'm • pär'tēs)

"pharm" is short for 'pharmaceutical'. A social gathering where everyone brings some kind of prescription or over-the-counter drug to share — like a pharmaceutical cocktail party. This often creates a potentially deadly mixture.



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**This special program was produced by the highly skilled television and education team at CWK Network, Inc.**

**CWK**Network  
Connect with kids.

Phone 1.888.598.KIDS  
[www.connectwithkids.com](http://www.connectwithkids.com)