

TEEN PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE VIDEO DISCUSSION GUIDE

PARENTS.
THE ANTI-DRUG.

USING THIS VIDEO AS AN INFORMAL INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDE:

The “Teens in Treatment” video was produced by the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign to provide parents, educators, and other adults with a first-hand look at the consequences of teen prescription drug abuse and addiction. This short five-minute video features four teens talking about their addiction to—and recovery from—prescription drugs.



This video and accompanying discussion guide can be used as instructional tools and a centerpiece for dialogue about teen prescription drug abuse, along with other materials provided in this Teen Prescription Drug Abuse Toolkit. In a large- or small-group setting, we suggest you play the video first, and then lead a conversation using the discussion topics below.

All teens featured in this video have given the Media Campaign permission to use this footage for educational and promotional purposes. Parents and guardians have signed release forms for children under the age of 18. The Media Campaign worked with select treatment providers to identify and interview the teens featured in this video.

Hosting and Staging a Group Discussion

Parents play a crucial role in controlling access to prescription drugs in their own homes and within their own families, but groups like yours can tackle teen prescription drug abuse at the community level as well. Use this video to get attention and create a forum for discussion. Encourage conversation in one or more of these ways after showing the video:

- » **Organize a roundtable discussion or town hall meeting.** You may include parents, coaches or other influential adults, such as medical and parenting experts. Should teens participate, they can share experiences about school culture, ease of access to drugs and the party atmosphere they encounter.
- » **Invite local treatment professionals to attend your event and serve as resources.**
- » **Engage local media.** Contact your local newspaper or TV or radio station and help put them in touch with local spokespeople (e.g., teens and/or parents who can share their stories; counselors, etc.), or invite them to the roundtable discussion or town hall meeting on the topic.
- » **Develop a list of local resources to offer to your community, including local help numbers, area experts, and prevention and treatment facilities in your area.** You can customize many materials from TheAntiDrug.com's “Resources” area to create customized versions of these helpful materials.
- » **Look for opportunities to partner with appropriate local corporate or community organizations that can help get the word out about teen prescription drug abuse.** These partners might help disseminate your materials. Think about groups such as your local drug-free community program, libraries, medical associations and physician groups, PTA, and community centers.
- » **Find an appropriate, comfortable space to accommodate your group.** It should be big enough to accommodate breakout groups and quiet enough to watch the video and facilitate emotional discussions. If possible, work with a facilitator to handle discussions and flow of the meeting.

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STEP ONE Show the Video

You have organized your group discussion and now you're ready to begin. After an introduction to the group—along with any guest speakers or special guests—officially begin the event and discussion by playing the video.

STEP TWO Begin the Discussion with an Overview of the Problem

OVERVIEW FOR DISCUSSION

Although illicit drug use by teens is declining, teen prescription drug abuse is an emerging threat. Teens abuse prescription drugs more than any illicit drug except marijuana—more than cocaine, heroine, and methamphetamine combined. In fact, every day, more than 2,000 kids age 12 to 17 try a painkiller for the first time to get high. Many teens wrongly believe that abusing prescription drugs is “safer” than using illicit drugs. But treatment admissions for addiction to prescription painkillers increased by more than 300 percent from 1996 to 2006.

Prescription drugs provide many benefits when used correctly under a medical provider's care. But when abused, they can be just as dangerous as illicit drugs, especially when taken with alcohol or illicit drugs. Prescription drugs are easy to get; 70 percent of kids age 12 and older say they get them from friends or relatives, often for free. The concern is that parents are not aware of this issue, and consequently, they are not having conversations with their teens to express their disapproval clearly and consistently. Research shows that teens whose parents express disapproval about drug abuse are far less likely to engage in substance use, so it's important for parents to understand the issues, recognize signs of a problem, safeguard their homes, and talk with their teens.

GUIDELINES FOR DISCUSSION

Discussing issues related to teen prescription drug abuse can be a deeply personal and emotional experience. Consequently, it is important to keep the following tips in mind:

- » Make all participants aware of the meeting length and purpose of the discussion.
- » Establish guidelines for the discussion (e.g., respect others' feelings and experiences, listen without interrupting).
- » Form small groups and encourage participation from everyone.
- » If the discussion takes place immediately after the video plays, take a break to give participants time to gather their thoughts.
- » Sum up the discussion at the end with thoughts about actions that parents and groups can take.

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STEP THREE

Open Up the Discussion to the Group

- » Overview of the problem: What thoughts do you have after watching this video?
- » What sets prescription drug abuse apart from other drug abuse? (prompt for availability, perspective that they are “safe”)
- » What surprised you in the video? Signs of addiction? Easy availability of drugs?
- » What have you heard teens in your life saying about taking prescription drugs to get high?
- » What do you think parents can do to keep their kids away from prescription drug abuse?
- » What do you think those in the education community can do to keep kids away from prescription drug abuse?
- » Would you be able to recognize the signs of prescription drug abuse and/or addiction? How?
- » How can parents start a discussion with their teens about prescription drug abuse?
- » Can you share stories from your own life—experiencing this issue with your own teen or other teens in your life?

STEP FOUR

Discuss Specific Steps a Parent Can Take

Parents play a very important role in safeguarding their teens from prescription drug abuse by talking to their teens and taking a few simple steps to ensure a safe environment. Here are five key ways to prevent teen prescription drug abuse in your own home:

1. Safeguard all drugs at home. Monitor quantities and control access. You might do this by keeping all prescription drugs in one place that only you know about and counting the number of pills in the bottles.
2. Set clear rules for teens about all drug and alcohol use, including not sharing medicine and always following the medical provider’s advice and dosages.
3. Be a good role model by following these same rules with your own medicines.
4. Properly dispose of old or unneeded medicines.
5. Ask friends and family to safeguard their prescription drugs as well.

Other Available Resources

This discussion guide is part of a Teen Prescription Drug Abuse Toolkit provided by the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign and made available at www.TheAntiDrug.com under “Resources.” You can also call 1-800-788-2800 to order these materials.

OTHER MATERIALS IN THIS TOOLKIT INCLUDE:

- » “Prescription for Danger,” a Report about Teen Prescription Drug Abuse (download)
- » Rx Strategizer for Community Groups (download or order)
- » Brochure for Parents (download or order)
- » Rx Wallet Card—To help keep track of your prescriptions (download)
- » Open Letter Ads Available for Community Groups to Customize (download)