Prescription Drug Abuse

A Call to Protect our Elders, Children and Nations
Today’s Presentation

• Why YOU matter
• Why DO kids misuse prescription drugs
• What WE can do
Abusing prescription (Rx) drugs can be just as dangerous, addictive and even deadly as using ‘street’ drugs.

Dawnafe Whitesinger
Prescription Abuse

- Prescription pain relievers – Legal Opioids
  - Vicodin/Lortab (hydrocodone and acetaminophen)
  - OxyContin (oxycodone)
  - Percocet (oxycodone and acetaminophen)
  - Opana (oxymorphone)
  - Methadone

Illegal Opioid - Heroin
Heroin use is part of a larger substance abuse problem.

Nearly all people who used heroin also used at least 1 other drug.

Most used at least 3 other drugs.

Heroin is a highly addictive opioid drug with a high risk of overdose and death for users.

People who are addicted to...

- Alcohol: 2x
- Marijuana: 3x
- Cocaine: 15x
- Rx Opioid Painkillers: 40x

...more likely to be addicted to heroin.


Additional Risk – Fentanyl
American Indian Data

- Arizona Youth Survey (AYS) 2016
  - Conducted by the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission (by law they conduct the survey every 2 years)
- 49,240 students in 8th, 10th and 12th grade in Arizona participated
- 5,006 of those identify as American Indian
  - North - 921
  - North Central - 624
  - Central - 2601
  - Southern - 860
- Tribe specific information is not available. Only zip code and regional information was used to develop this presentation
Data Regions

Arizona Criminal Justice Commission, AYS, 2016
Prescription Abuse Impacts Everyone

• 1 out of 5 start in elementary school
• Prescription Pain Relievers are the most frequently misused
Prescription Drug Abuse Impacts Everyone

4 out of 10 Arizona Adults Know Someone Addicted to Prescription Painkillers
Other Prescription and Over the Counter Medicines Being Abused

- Prescription stimulants (Adderall, Ritalin)
- Prescription muscle relaxers (Flexeril, Cyclobenzaprine, Soma)
- Prescription tranquilizers/sedatives (Xanax, Valium)
- Sleep medications (Ambien, Lunesta)
- Over the Counter medications
  - NyQuil Liquid
  - Cough Syrup (Containing Dextromethorphan)
  - Cough and Cold medicines
Key Factor Driving Teen Medicine Abuse

431,000,000 opioid pills prescribed in Arizona

Enough for every Arizonan to have a 2.5 week supply

A lot of pills = A lot of access

Arizona Board of Pharmacy 2016*
Availability = Access

- 1 out of 6 take them from their home medicine cabinet
- Nearly half of all teens get prescription drugs from friends
- 1 out of 6 get them from a family member or relative

Source: AYS 2016
Combination of alcohol & prescription medicines is a recipe for death

Signs of Abuse

- Pinpoint pupils
- Slurred speech but no smell of alcohol
- Appear depressed or withdrawn socially
- Running out of pills
- Missing or stolen pills
- Missing money or valuables
- Track Marks

911 Should be called if there is an Overdose

Naloxone – There is a drug called Naloxone that can reverse an opioid overdose, but the person still needs to be treated at a hospital.
Take Action!

What’s the best way to keep a youth drug free?

YOU!
Take Action!

• Safeguard medications at home (and ask friends to do the same)
  • Take a look at the prescriptions and number of pills in your home
  • Keep track of refills
  • Don’t leave prescription drugs in the open or in obvious places
• Store them up and away
  • Put them in a secure place
Take Action! Follow Doctor’s Instructions

• Ask Questions
• Remember your medication is just for you
• If you suspect that someone has taken too much medication call 911
Take Action! Take Medications As Directed
Take Action! Read the Warnings

Warning labels may include:

• Do not use this medicine if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant

• May cause drowsiness

• Do not drink alcoholic beverages while taking this medicine

• Taking more than recommended may cause breathing problems
Take Action!
Dispose of Medications Properly

• Do NOT FLUSH medications down the toilet
• Drop off medications
  • Check with your Tribal police department or IHS Health Clinic
  • If there isn’t one, ask for a drop box
• Participate in prescription drug take back days
Rx Drop Boxes – What is o.k.?

- Expired or Unused Pills
- Over the Counter Medicine
- Samples
- Pet Medications
- Vitamins/Supplements
- **No** sharps, creams, liquids
Take Action! As a Last Resort

• If you can’t get to a Drop Box or Take Back Day
  • Mix your medications with coffee grounds or kitty litter and put them into an empty can or bag and throw in the garbage that goes to the landfill
Keep in Mind

• If you are thinking about becoming pregnant or are pregnant talk with your doctor about all medications (including over-the-counter) that you take.
✓ Share stories and talk with the children in your life about taking medicine safely.
Prescription Drug Checklist

- Share stories and talk with the children in your life about taking medicine safely.
- Secure medications
- Dispose of unused, unwanted or expired medications
- Remember your medication is just for you
- Share what you learned with others – DrugFree.org
Educate, Communicate, Safeguard, Dispose
Special Thanks

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