



STUYVESANT HIGH SCHOOL'S SPARK PROGRAM



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PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE

I. Prescription Drugs



- **In the United States**, there are more than 2,800 drugs that have been approved by the **Food and Drug Administration (FDA)** for the treatment of illnesses and diseases. Taken under a doctor's care, these medications help millions of people each year. **However, there is a growing trend of self-medicating and/or abusing prescription medications.**
(www.phoenixhouse.org)

Classes of Prescription Medication

- (1) **Prescription Pain Relievers:** Some common narcotic opioid groups include **Codeine, Demoral, Fentanyl, Morphine, OxyContin, Percocet, Percodan and Vicodin.**
- (2) **Prescription Sedatives & Tranquilizers:** These act as central nervous system depressants. **Barbituates** like **Mebaral** and **Nembutal** are prescription sedatives and **Benzodiazepines** like **Librium, Valium** and **Xanax** serve as prescription tranquilizers.
- (3) **Prescription Stimulants:** A class of drugs **i.e. Adderall, Concerta, Dexedrine, Focalin** and **Ritalin** intended to increase energy and alertness but which also increase blood pressure and heart rate and breathing. They are prescribed to treat asthma, obesity, ADHD, narcolepsy and some forms of depression.
- (4) **Anti-Depressants** (Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRI), Monoamine Oxidase Inhibitors (MAOI) and Tricyclics): **Psychiatric drugs used to alleviate mood disorders** such as anxiety and depression. **Some of these include** Amitryptiline, Celexa, Nardil, Paxil, Prozac and Zoloft.

II. Doctor's Prescription

- **Prescription medication** such as pain relievers, CNS depressants and stimulants are highly beneficial treatments for a variety of health conditions.
- **Pain relievers** enable individuals with chronic pain to lead productive lives; **pain tranquilizers** can reduce anxiety and help patients with sleep disorders; **pain stimulants** help people with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (**ADHD**) focus their attention.
- **Most people who take prescription medication** use them responsibly.
- **But when abused** – that is, taken by someone other than the patient for whom the medication was prescribed or taken in a manner or dosage other than what was prescribed – prescription medications can produce serious adverse health effects including addiction.



III. "About The Buzz"

- **Many teens think prescription drugs** are safe because they are prescribed by a doctor. But taking them for **non-medical use** to get high or "**self-medicate**" can be just as dangerous and addictive as taking illegal street drugs.
- **The amount taken determines the effect.** A small amount acts as a stimulant (speeds you up). A greater amount acts as a sedative (slows you down). An even larger amount poisons and can kill.
- **There are very serious health risks in taking prescription drugs. This is why they are taken only under the care of a doctor.** And even then, they have to be closely monitored to avoid addiction or other problems.

IV. Effects & Health Risks

- (1) **Prescription Pain Relievers:** PPR abuse can be dangerous (even deadly) with too high a dose or when taken with other drugs like alcohol. Health risks issues include lack of energy, inability to concentrate, nausea and vomiting and apathy. Significant doses of PPR abuse cause breathing problems. **When abused**, PPRs can be addictive.
- (2) **Prescription Sedatives & Tranquilizers:** Health risks related to depressant abuse include loss of coordination, respiratory, dizziness due to lowered blood pressure, slurred speech, poor concentration, confusion and in extreme cases, coma and possible death.



- (3) **Prescription Stimulants:** Health risks related to stimulant abuse include increased heart and respiratory rates, excessive sweating, vomiting, tremors, anxiety, hostility and aggression and in severe abuse, suicidal/homicidal tendencies, convulsions and cardiovascular collapse, coma and possible death.
- (4) **Anti-Depressants:** Health risks to anti-depressants abuse include headaches, nausea, nervousness, insomnia, appetite or weight changes and various sexual complications such as impotence, erectile dysfunction and others.

Some Helpful Resources/Referrals

- **Drug Information On-Line**
www.drugs.com
- **National Institute On Drug Abuse**
www.drugabuse.gov
- **Partnership At DrugFree.org**
www.drugfree.org