

DISCUSSION GUIDE

DIRECTIONS

With a group of young adults, watch the videos on www.opioids.thetruth.com. Allow time for the students to reflect on the videos and guide a conversation about prescription drug misuse.

If any student indicates a struggle with addiction or a family member's struggle with addiction, make sure to talk to him or her after the discussion and refer them to a school public health counselor or they can call the free, confidential, 24/7 information service for individuals, friends, and family who are worried about a substance use disorder. 1-800-662-HELP¹

QUESTIONS

What do you see happening in these videos?

What do you think or feel about what you just saw?

These videos are all real stories. Did the people in the videos give a specific reason about why they started to abuse or misuse prescription drugs?

These videos show people becoming addicted to a prescription medication. What does it mean to be addicted? Can you become addicted to something that is recommended to you by a doctor?

Who in these videos seemed most like someone you might know? Do you think prescription drug misuse may be happening in our community?

The people in these videos were all misusing prescription pills. Do you think their friends or family were aware they were misusing pills? How could their friends or family have supported healthier, safer actions?

Prescription pain pills (opioids) can be helpful when used as prescribed by a doctor. You often get them for severe pain, after a surgery or even when your wisdom teeth are removed. They come in many forms like Vicodin, Percocet, and Oxycontin. When do you think pain pills are okay and not okay to use?

Safe, medically-prescribed use:

- Using a medication exactly as the doctor prescribed it (accurate dosage and pattern of use, e.g. twice a day, each night, etc.)
- Keeping your doctor aware of the level of pain you are experiencing
- Stopping the use of prescription opioids when your pain can be managed another way such as over-the-counter drugs
- Never using pills that have not been prescribed to you

Unsafe, risky use:

- Taking pain pills after you need them – when your pain can be managed another way such as over the counter drugs
- Taking pills that are expired
- Taking an opioid that was prescribed for someone else (even if you're taking it to reduce your own pain)
- Taking a higher dose of an opioid than you were prescribed, or taking your medication more often than prescribed
- Taking an opioid (yours or someone else's) to get high or feel good²

What do you think are steps to take to make sure you, your friends and family can stay safe and addiction free?

- Safe disposal of unnecessary or unused prescription pain pills
- Talk to your doctor about alternatives when he or she prescribes prescription opioid pain pills
- Ensure prescription medication is used exactly as prescribed by a doctor
- Know the signs of overdose and addiction

If you found out that one of your friends was misusing a prescription drug, what would you do?³

- Let your friend know you are there to support him or her, and you are concerned about their drug use
- Encourage your friend to seek help from a trusted adult

ANSWERS SHOULD GUIDE TOWARD

- Be a positive influence by inviting your friend to join you in activities that don't involve drug use
- Talk to a trusted adult right away if you think your friend is a danger to himself or herself
- Call 1-800-662-HELP for more information on how to help a friend who may be misusing prescription opioids



¹<https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline>

²<https://teens.drugabuse.gov/blog/post/what-does-it-mean-misuse-opioids>

³<https://teens.drugabuse.gov/blog/post/eight-questions-teens-about-drugs-and-alcohol>