

IT'S DRUG ABUSE!

How the non-medical use of prescription drugs can hurt you

Script

Introduction

Narrator: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that about 100 Americans die every day from unintentional drug overdoses, mostly resulting from prescription drug abuse. This equates to about one death every 15 minutes. So during the time we spend together for this program, as many as four people will likely die from this cause.

According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, the average age when prescription drug abuse starts is around 21 or 22. Therefore, college students are at a vulnerable age for initiating the misuse or abuse of prescription medications, which could lead them down a path to serious health, social, academic and legal consequences. This program will explore some of the causes and consequences of prescription drug abuse. It will also address where a student could seek help for a prescription drug abuse problem and how we can choose to follow safe medication-taking practices. We will do so by presenting three short scenes from a skit called "It's Drug Abuse!" and conducting brief discussions after each scene.

Scene 1: The Opiate Epidemic

Narrator: Sam walks up to a group of friends sitting at a lunch table in the student union, carrying a large bag of dog food.

Sam: Hey, guys!

Group: *(The group makes room at the table)* Hey Sam!

Pat: What's with the dog food? Did you bring us lunch? *(The group laughs).*

Sam: Ha ha – funny. Actually I'm stopping at Elliot's apartment after class to feed Murphy. Elliot's mom asked me to since he is still in the hospital.

Taylor: I can't believe this happened – not too long ago Elliot was perfectly fine, ya know?...

Pat: Yeah, and now he's in a hospital room after OD'ing on pain pills! I had no clue he had such a huge problem.

Sam: Well the problem wasn't so huge in the beginning. I remember Elliot started taking his mom's leftover Percocet pills because his knees hurt after our long runs. It was only once in a while at first and then he began taking some before we went out on the weekends. Once I mentioned that maybe he shouldn't be taking that stuff so much, but he got pretty defensive and really didn't hang out or run with me too much after that...

Pat: A few months ago, Elliot stopped going to class and started copying my notes. Recently, he hasn't even bothered to do that. I just assumed he was burnt out with school – who isn't?!

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Taylor: I wonder if he was taking other drugs besides Percocet? A couple of times I saw Elliot walking toward a sketchy car that had pulled up to our dorm in the middle of the night. I really hope he didn't get into heroin or some other "street" drug – now that's some serious drug abuse!

Sam: Yeah, but geez, taking a drug like Percocet before going out is also drug abuse and can be just as dangerous!

Taylor: I still just can't believe this. I mean, look at Elliot. He was the last person you could see this happening to, right? He had it all – good grades, he was happy, and healthy, and obviously he had some pretty amazing people for friends! It's just crazy that those prescription pills essentially ruined his life!

Scene 2: I Need Help

Narrator: It's about 6 p.m. on a Tuesday, and Jordan returns to their dorm room to drop off some books before heading to the dining hall for dinner. Jordan turns on the lights and walks into the room, where Cameron is still in bed.

Cameron: *(In a hoarse voice)* Jordan, jeez turn off the lights!

Jordan: Cameron, it's 6 o'clock! Did you get up at all today?

Cameron: No... I can't freaking wake up. My body is all screwed up.

Jordan: You haven't been to class since last week, and even then you slept through Poly Sci and Econ. Yeah, I'd say you're screwed up.

Cameron: Shut up, I know. I think I'm gonna have to take an Adderall to get my butt outta bed and study for Accounting. I'm so behind... I just can't wake up, though!

Jordan: Well, just don't keep me up all night, ok? I want to get some decent sleep tonight. I'm going to the dining hall right now – think you can get outta bed for food?

Cameron: No, I'm gonna take this Adderall and wake up in half an hour.

Jordan: Dude, you are like dependent on that stuff... You think that using it has any thing to do with your messed-up sleep cycle?

Cameron: I mean, I don't know. I only take it when I have to. And it really helps keep me going when I'm partying on the weekends, too.

Jordan: Hmm, I don't know much about it, but you seem to take it at least Thursday through Sunday night every week, so it's got to be affecting your sleep. And, you never "have to" take it – it's not even prescribed for you, and it's a prescription drug. That's drug abuse, Cam! *(Jordan leaves to get dinner.)*

Narrator: Cameron takes the Adderall, lies in bed for another 45 minutes, and wakes up to check Facebook. After that Cameron searches the Internet for Adderall, and clicks on the first link.

Cameron: "Contains amphetamine"... like methamphetamine? That's hardcore stuff... I wonder if Adderall can be as hardcore? Is Jordan right?

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Narrator: Cameron then reads another blog post of a girl who is addicted to Adderall.

Cameron: *(To himself)* Jeez, this is scary – it can be addicting? And this girl is depressed and failing out of school? I've got to stop this.

Narrator: Cameron continues to read blog posts of people who abused Adderall. Jordan then returns from dinner. Confused and wondering what to do next, Cameron confides in Jordan.

Cameron: So... I searched Adderall on the Internet and evidently it's addicting... and screws up sleeping patterns... and it says it changes your mood, and can make you depressed. You were right, Jordan! Do you think my mood has changed though?

Jordan: Oh my gosh, addicting? Well, I guess it's kinda changed... I mean, you've been a bump on a log for, like, two weeks now.

Cameron: That sounds about right. I never thought of this as drug abuse until right now, but I guess it is. Makes me feel kinda sick thinking about it.

Jordan: Well, you're using a medication that wasn't prescribed for you and for sketchy reasons, even to party. That's just dumb, Cam.

Cameron: Thanks Jordan, you make me feel so much better... not! Ok, so what do I do now? Who do I talk to about it?

Jordan: Hmm, remember when our RA did that presentation about the counseling services at the health center? She told us you could call there and get help for things like this – maybe you should try that?

Cameron: Yeah, I remember. I'm going to call them. I guess that magnet they gave us from the health center will be more useful than I thought. Thanks, Jordan, you're a good friend.

Scene 3: One of the Gang or a Gang of One?

Narrator: It's Wednesday afternoon after classes. Alex is sitting on the couch in their dorm room, flipping through channels on T.V. when Casey enters the room.

Casey: Hey, Alex! You ready?!

Alex: Ready? For what?

Casey: Uh, hello... the intramural B-ball championships! I heard the other team's two best players won't be able to play in the finals, which means we're definitely gonna win tomorrow night! I've even chosen the bar where we're going to celebrate afterwards. Why aren't you more pumped?

Alex: I would be, but my knee has really been bothering me since last week's game, and I don't know if I can play. The ibuprofen I've been taking does absolutely nothing!

Casey: Well, then take more, we need you!

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Alex: I'm already taking the maximum amount recommended on the drug label.

Casey: *(Casey roots around in a desk drawer and pulls out a prescription bottle.)* Here, then take one of these *(handing the bottle to Alex)*. It's Vicodin – I have some leftover from when I got my wisdom teeth out last summer. I didn't need all of them. Trust me, they are amazing – your knee won't hurt a bit after popping one of these!

Alex: *(Alex does not reach out to take the pills.)* But, that's your prescription...

Casey: And your point is?... I mean, you borrowed my laptop earlier. What's the problem? We're roommates – we share, that's what we do!

Alex: This is different, it doesn't feel right. It's almost like drug abuse. I don't even think it's legal, and the last thing I want to risk is something like a felony on my record. I've also heard stories of how that stuff can make you feel weird and really mess you up. I just don't want to risk having a bad reaction to it.

Casey: *(Sarcastically)* A felony, seriously? No one will ever know you took it! And why would you have a bad reaction? I thought you took Vicodin last year when you broke your arm.

Alex: Yeah, I did.

Casey: Any problems then?

Alex: Problems? Nooo...

Casey: Well good, here. *(Casey extends his open palm again, offering the Vicodin.)* I just think it's stupid for you to miss the big game tomorrow when you don't have to. Look, everybody takes these drugs, it's no big deal.

Alex: Listen, I appreciate the offer to help, but I'm not gonna take it. Even if you don't think it's a big deal, there's more to it than whether or not I can play in the game, so I'm not going to risk it. But thanks for looking out for me. I'll stop by the student health center tomorrow and see what they think. Maybe they can tape it up for me or something.

Casey: Ok, whatever, as long as you'll be good-to-go tomorrow.