

## HOW CAN I COPE BETTER WITH STRESS AND PEER PRESSURE?

Peer pressure is real, but don't give in to the temptation to fit in. Your true friends will respect your decisions.

- If you're feeling stressed or pressure about class deadlines, ask your professors how you can better manage your time, or find ways to relax, such as exercising or spending time with friends.
- Discuss your prescriptions with your doctor or pharmacist, and learn how to properly use them. Commonly abused medicines include pain relievers, stimulants, sedatives, and tranquilizers.
- If someone offers you a stimulant or another drug to stay up all night cramming for a big exam, remember, not only is this dangerous, but people who are well-rested perform better on tests.
- Turn to your family and friends for support during this exciting, yet challenging, time in your life.
- Look at the big picture – keep your goals and the “finish line” in mind when making decisions – on campus and off.

*Please remember that prescription medicines, when used correctly and under a doctor's supervision, are usually safe and effective.*

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## RESOURCES

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) National Helpline:  
**800-662-HELP (800-662-4357)**  
(Toll-Free) (English and Spanish)  
**800-487-4889 (TDD) (Toll-Free)**

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Treatment Locator:  
<http://www.samhsa.gov/treatment>

SAMHSA's website:  
<http://www.samhsa.gov>

SAMHSA's **Recovery Month** website:  
<http://www.recoverymonth.gov>

To order SAMHSA publications:  
<http://store.samhsa.gov>

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA):  
**301-443-1124**  
<http://www.drugabuse.gov>

FDA Safe Disposal of Unused Medication:  
<http://www.fda.gov/drugs/resourcesforyou/consumers/buyingusingmedicinesafely/ensuringsafeuseofmedicine/safedisposalofmedicines/ucm186187.htm>

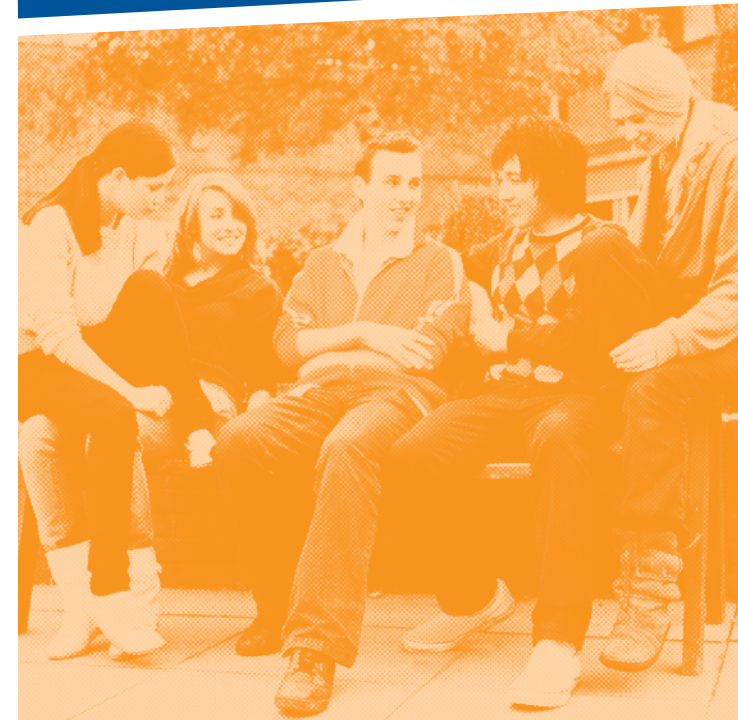
National Council on Patient Information and Education (NCPIE):  
**301-340-3940**  
<http://www.talkaboutrx.org>



*The statistics in this brochure are from SAMHSA's 2010 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, SAMHSA's Drug Abuse Warning Network, 2009; National Estimates of Drug-Related Emergency Department Visits, and "Drug exposure opportunities and use patterns among college students: Results of a longitudinal prospective cohort study" (Arria et. al., 2008).*

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Not Worth The Risk  
even if it's legal



**YOU'RE IN CONTROL**  
Using Prescription Medicine Responsibly



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration  
Center for Substance Abuse Treatment  
[www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)

## I DON'T THINK I'M ABUSING PRESCRIPTION DRUGS...AM I?

Have you ever used a friend's prescription painkiller to get rid of a headache? Taken a prescription stimulant to help you focus better the night before an exam? Or experimented with a prescription medicine to get high? If so, you've misused or abused prescription drugs.

Although most college students do use prescription drugs properly, nearly 30 percent of people aged 18 to 25 (28.7 percent) report using prescription-type psychotherapeutics drugs nonmedically at least once in their lives. The issue is real. By your sophomore year in college, about half of your classmates will have been offered the opportunity to abuse a prescription drug.

## IS IT RISKY?

**Yes.** Combining any medicines (including prescription and/or over-the-counter medicines) together with alcohol or illicit drugs can be deadly.

Remember:

- You can become addicted if you abuse prescription drugs.
- It's illegal to give someone your prescription medicine or to take a prescription medicine that is not prescribed for you.
- Prescription drugs are not safer to use than illicit drugs. All prescription drugs have risks, but can be safe and effective when used as prescribed by a doctor just for you.
- Some painkillers contain ingredients very similar to heroin – and are just as dangerous as heroin.

## WHAT COULD REALLY HAPPEN?

- You could be putting your friends at risk if you share your medicines.
- You could have a seizure or end up in the hospital with serious health problems such as respiratory failure – in 2009, more than 1 million visits to the emergency room involved the nonmedical use of prescription drugs.
- You could face criminal prosecution for possessing prescription drugs without a prescription. Illegal distribution of prescription drugs is a Federal drug violation, punishable by up to five years in Federal prison. The consequences are more severe if the illegal distribution leads to injury or death.
- Your actions now may affect your future, especially when you're trying to complete college and find a job.

Speak with your doctor or other healthcare professional about the medicines you are taking. The risks and dangers tied to abusing prescription drugs are real.

## AREN'T DRUGS JUST A WAY TO DEAL WITH COLLEGE LIFE?

Exams, classes, extracurricular activities, communal living situations, new environments – college is stressful! College-aged people have among the highest rates of prescription drug abuse. But prescription drugs should not be used to relieve stress, or taken because of peer pressure.

YOU are in control of YOUR life and YOUR medications. If you find yourself, or friends, in a situation of abusing prescription drugs, speak with a counselor, trusted teacher, or resident assistant on campus – they are there to help. You and your friends can take steps to avoid the dangers associated with the abuse of prescription drugs.

## HOW DO I KEEP PEOPLE AWAY FROM MY MEDICINES?

The potential for temptation may be in your dorm, sorority or fraternity house, or other communal living situation. People around you may be interested in taking your prescriptions, especially if they are left visible (sitting on your desk or dresser, for example). More than half of people age 12 and older who abuse prescription drugs get them from a friend or relative for free.

It may seem easy for fellow students to gain access to your prescription drugs, but you can play it safe:

- Properly store your medications in a secure place, like a lock box or in the back of your closet, where they are not easy for others to find.
- Keep track of your medicine – know how many pills you have at any given time.
- If a friend or teammate is injured, instead of “sharing” your pain reliever, make sure your friend sees a medical professional for care. It is illegal to share your prescription medicines.
- Your medicines are your business. There's no reason to tell your friends about the medicines you take.
- Do not purchase or use controlled prescription drugs obtained from illegal websites.

RECOGNIZE *the risks.*  
RESPECT *medicine.*  
Take RESPONSIBILITY.