

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

# PRESCRIPTION DRUG MISUSE

AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS



## PREVALENCE

- Approximately 3.2% of college students reported using one or more types of prescription drugs (i.e., stimulants, sedatives, or opioids) non-medically within the last three months (3.5% of men and 2.9% of women).
- In 2023, college students had a higher likelihood of misusing prescription stimulants than their peers not in college (3.6% vs. 2.6%).
- Some students begin the non-medical use of prescription stimulants, often referred to as “study drugs,” in the belief it will benefit their academic performance, but the non-medical use of prescription stimulants has not been proven to improve academic performance.

Source: Monitoring the Future Panel Study annual report: National data on substance use among adults ages 19-65, 1976-2023; American College Health Association – National College Health Assessment (Spring 2024)



## CONSEQUENCES

- Depending on which prescription drug is misused, negative outcomes include:
  - ✓ Drowsiness, slowed breathing
  - ✓ Inability to concentrate
  - ✓ Psychosis, hallucinations, paranoia
  - ✓ Slow or rapid heartbeat
  - ✓ Nausea and vomiting
  - ✓ Addiction

Source: Drugs of Abuse: A DEA Resource Guide (2022 edition). Drug Enforcement Administration



## THINGS YOU CAN DO TO PREVENT PRESCRIPTION DRUG MISUSE

- Work with physicians and law enforcement personnel to inform students about the physical, academic, and legal costs and consequences of prescription drug misuse.
- Get educated:
  - ✓ Parents – be able to talk knowledgeably about prescription drugs with your children
  - ✓ Faculty members and staff – be able to recognize the signs and symptoms of prescription drug misuse, and know the on- and off-campus resources to refer someone for help
  - ✓ Students – learn the facts and talk to your parents or another trusted adult (e.g., professor, coach, friend) about concerns you have about prescription drugs.
- Don't share your prescription drugs – they were prescribed to you, not someone else.
- Dispose of unused or expired medications properly. For more information, go to <https://go.usa.gov/xmTnr>.
- Get involved! Join your campus's or local community's coalition to prevent drug misuse.

## HELPFUL RESOURCES



- **DEA Website:** [www.campusdrugprevention.gov](http://www.campusdrugprevention.gov)
- **DEA Publication: Drug Fact Sheets:** [www.campusdrugprevention.gov/content/drug-fact-sheets](http://www.campusdrugprevention.gov/content/drug-fact-sheets)