

Introduction

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The Achieve and Learn Trust believes that nothing is more important than safeguarding the young people in our schools.

Our focus this half term is substance misuse, how to spot the signs and where to seek help for your young person or your family. We will also look at some of the parenting skills that are important in preventing the initiation and progression of drug use among young people



Types of Drugs

There are five main kinds of drugs that can change your mood or how you behave. Most of these drugs come under a law called the Misuse of Drugs Act. They are known as 'controlled drugs' and are listed in different groups called schedules. The schedules group drugs according to how useful they are and what is needed to control their use. For example, schedule one covers drugs that have no medical use – drugs such as LSD and 'designer drugs' such as ecstasy. This is different from the UK where drugs are grouped in classes (A, B, C) according to how the law deals with them.

- ◆ **Depressants**, such as alcohol, can be used to calm the mind, relieve anxiety and can cause sleepiness.
- ◆ **Sedatives** and minor tranquillisers include the benzodiazepine drugs, such as valium. These are often prescribed to calm you down or to help you sleep at night. They have the same general effects as depressants but they cause addiction in a different way.
- ◆ **Opiates**, also known as narcotic analgesics, are strong painkillers that produce feelings of euphoria (happiness) and sleepiness. The opiates include morphine, heroin and methadone.
- ◆ **Stimulants** are drugs that make you feel more awake, alert, energetic and confident. Stimulant drugs include cocaine and amphetamines.
- ◆ **Hallucinogens** are drugs that produce strange and intense visions called hallucinations. These drugs include LSD (acid) and magic mushrooms.

Depressants and sedatives are sometimes called 'downers' and stimulant drugs are sometimes called 'uppers'. Many drugs don't belong to just one type. For example, cannabis can have depressant effects as well as causing euphoria and ecstasy has both stimulant and hallucinogenic effects



Talking about Drug Use

Talking about drugs and drug use can be difficult. You may feel uncomfortable talking about drugs because you don't know enough about the subject. You may not be confident that you can talk to and influence the other person. You don't have to do this alone, you can get further information and support. If someone you know is taking drugs or you think they are taking drugs:

- ◆ Listen – it is important to understand and respect feelings
- ◆ Keep the lines of communication open; and
- ◆ Look for more information before you do anything.

Where can I get more information and support?

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has staff trained in drugs education in your area. They also have counselling and treatment services. A number of voluntary agencies also provide education, counselling and treatment throughout the country. To get information on your local services: Freephone: Drugs helpline 1800 459 459 (Monday – Friday, 9am to 5pm)
Web: www.drugs.ie Text: Drugs to 51900

Local Substance Misuse Services

Achieve Assertive Outreach Team—[Call 0161 871 2623](tel:01618712623) [Visit website](#)

The Counselling Centre—family or individual counselling for adults and young people—[Call 0161 941 7754](tel:01619417754)
[Send email](#) [Visit website](#)

Re-Solv—advice and support for solvent abuse or volatile liquid abuse—[Call 07496 959 930](tel:07496959930) - [WhatsApp/SMS](#) [Send email](#) [Visit website](#)



TALKING TO CHILDREN ABOUT PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE

15,000 people fatally overdose on prescription painkillers every year



That's more than heroin and cocaine overdose deaths combined



1 IN 4 teens

has abused or misused a prescription drug

PARENTS DON'T KNOW



6% of parents said that their teen had abused medication, but



10% of teens admitted abusing/misusing medicine in the past 6 months

...OR MAYBE DON'T CARE?



27% of teens



16% of parents

mistakenly thought that prescription drugs were safer than street drugs

PARENTS AREN'T TALKING

Only **14%** of teens said that their parents talked to them about abuse of any prescription drugs in their last talk about substance abuse

PARENTS THINK THEY DON'T HAVE ANY INFLUENCE



1 IN 5 parents of teens didn't think that they had much influence on whether their child used drugs

...BUT THEY DO

Teens that had learned about prescription drugs from their parents or grandparents were up to **42% less likely** to abuse prescription drugs than teens that didn't

Teens Abusing Rx Drugs (out of 100)



% of Teens Abusing Rx Drugs

32%

of teens whose parents cared less

24%

of teens use Rx drugs (TOTAL)

20%

of teens whose parents cared as much

Teens whose parents cared less about prescription drug abuse (compared to illegal drug abuse) were **more likely than average** to use medication without a prescription

PARENTS CAN STOP IT

42%

got the medication they abused from their parents' medicine cabinet

Parents can reduce teens' access to prescription drugs:

MONITOR prescription drugs within the home, so you know if any go missing

SECURE prescription drugs within the home, so your teen does not have access

DISPOSE of any old, unwanted medicine safely, when your teen isn't home