What You Need to Know About Prescription Stimulants

When used as prescribed by a doctor, prescription stimulants safely and effectively help kids with ADHD. But misuse can be very dangerous. Share the article “What You Need to Know About Prescription Stimulants” to help students understand the very real health risks of misusing these drugs. Then assign the “Important Facts About Addiction” activity sheet, and guide students to synthesize what they have learned by creating an eye-catching infographic for other teens.

Remote Learning Suggestions
• Send students links or print copies of the student article and student activity, and instruct them to read independently. (For striving readers, record yourself reading the article aloud and instruct them to follow along with the recording.)
• Use videoconferencing to discuss the reading comprehension questions together as a class.
• Have students complete the student activity on the next page, then create an online folder so they can share their infographics with the class.
• Wrap up the lesson with an online or phone discussion synthesizing what they have learned about the importance of prescription stimulants, but also the dangers of misusing them. What facts did they learn from their classmates’ infographics?
Important Facts About Addiction
Learn about this disease, then create an infographic to share facts with other teens.

STEP 1: GATHER INFORMATION

Read the passage below and take notes as you read.

What Is Addiction?
When people use drugs over and over—despite the harm to their body and mind, as well as to others—it’s an addiction. People with an addiction may end up damaging relationships with family and friends and may find it difficult to stay in school or keep a job. They may also stop enjoying activities they once loved.

Who Is at Risk?
There’s no one “type” of person who is at risk for drug addiction. However, certain risk factors increase a person’s chance of addiction, including:

- Using drugs at an early age. (The brain continues to develop until a person’s mid-20s.)
- Mental health problems, such as depression
- Having family or friends who use or misuse alcohol or drugs
- Trauma or stressful situations: friends in crisis, extreme hunger, family issues, unsafe housing, financial insecurity

On the other hand, protective factors decrease the chance that a person will develop addiction. These include:

- Strong family bonds
- Future goals (e.g., college, career, marriage and family, travel, etc.)

Getting Help
Addiction is treatable. Behavioral therapies and, in some cases, medications that treat the symptoms can help manage the disease. If you or someone you know needs help, visit findtreatment.samhsa.gov or call 800-662-4357 to find addiction treatments in your area.

STEP 2: CREATE AN INFOGRAPHIC

Studies show that some teens put themselves at risk of addiction by misusing prescription stimulants and other drugs. How can you help?

- Create an eye-catching infographic that explains the risks to teens
- Include a mix of text and visuals, such as diagrams, graphs, and images

From Scholastic and the scientists of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services