

BASES Bulletin: 10-06 Generation RX

Today's teenagers are referred to as Generation RX due to the increasing numbers of adolescents using and abusing prescription and over the counter medications. There are a variety of substances on the market that are aimed at people of all ages to treat diagnosed medical or behavioral conditions. "Nearly one in five teens (19% or 4.5 million) report abusing prescription medications to get high; and one in ten (10% or 2.4 million) report abusing cough medication to get high." Source: *The Partnership for a Drug Free America*. In the past 5 years there has been a steady increase in the advertisement of prescription medications through the media. From anxiety to bi-polar to lack of sleep and feeling stressed out there is something on the market to address the issue. "Today's cohort of parents is the most drug experienced in history, but they do not understand this new drug abuse behavior among their teens," Roy Bostock, chairman of the Partnership. Parents/grandparents/guardians/foster parents, whoever you are, educate yourself on the latest trends in adolescent substance abuse.

What you need to know:

- The term Pharming: getting high using pharmaceuticals (prescriptions of others) and over the counters
- Internet access: pay attention to the sites you child visits or view their My Space page if they have one.
- If they have access to a credit card check the list of purchases.
- Discuss the risks associated with using prescription medications. Adolescents have a false sense of security believing that if it's prescribed it can't be that harmful.
- Look for prescription (pain relievers, tranquilizers, stimulants, sedatives), inhalants (over the counter aerosols, propellants, glues, etc.), and over the counters (cough medications, antihistamines, etc.) in your child's room or other places in the house.
- Taking a prescription medication without proper authorization or under a doctor's supervision can be dangerous. Drug interactions can and do occur. Mixing medications such as a prescription with an over the counter can cause chemical reactions in the body from hives to shortness of breath to death.
- Different prescriptions have different effects on people. A medication prescribed by a doctor helps the sick get well. It can have the opposite effect on someone it is not intended for.
- Pills often have a similar appearance. Dosage and the type of drug can have a mild to lethal outcome. Seek immediate medical attention if necessary.

Individuals need to take their prescriptions as medically directed by their health care provider.