

# Instructor's Guide

## Drugs: Uses and Abuses

### SEDATIVES

#### Questions

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1. In general, what do sedatives do to the body, and how?
2. Name the four types of sedatives.
3. Why might a cocaine or heroin addict use sedatives?
4. In what ways are sedatives addictive? When are they the most dangerous?
5. What are sedatives commonly prescribed for (in small and large doses)?  
In what form are they usually taken?
6. Discuss the history of barbiturates and how they are used today.
7. In small and large doses, how do barbiturates affect the body?
8. Why are tranquilizers medically prescribed, and how do they make the patient feel?
9. What are major and minor tranquilizers, and how are they used?
10. What is the most commonly prescribed tranquilizer, and why is it prescribed?
11. What tranquilizer is called "the date rape drug," and why?
12. What is the most widely used and abused drug in our society? Discuss this drug's history.
13. Describe the effects and side effects associated with alcohol consumption.
14. Describe some of the withdrawal symptoms associated with alcohol.

## Answer Key

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**1. In general, what do sedatives do to the body, and how?**

Sedatives do exactly what the name suggests: they sedate. They relieve anxiety and irritability, reduce excitement, calm nerves, relax muscles, and help people sleep. Sedatives act on the neurotransmitter called gamma-aminobutyric acid, and depress the central nervous system (that's why they are also known as anti-depressants).

**2. Name the four types of sedatives.**

Barbiturates, tranquilizers, alcohol, and narcotics. Of the four, narcotics can also relieve pain. While narcotics are a sedative, they are grouped separately and not discussed in this program.

**3. Why might a cocaine or heroin addict use sedatives?**

Many illegal drug abusers self-medicate with sedatives because sedatives counter many of the effects of illegal stimulants like crack and cocaine.

**4. In what ways are sedatives addictive? When are they the most dangerous?**

Sedatives can be both psychologically and physically addictive. The real danger occurs when one sedative is combined with another, such as alcohol with tranquilizers, because often the combination is deadly.

**5. What are sedatives commonly prescribed for (in small and large doses)? In what form are they usually taken?**

In small doses, sedatives are commonly used to relieve coughing, nausea, and emotional stress. These are the sedatives which calm. In larger doses, they're often prescribed for insomnia and pain. These are sedatives which induce sleep. They are also known as hypnotics. Sedatives are most commonly taken orally, either as a tablet or capsule (like tranquilizers), or as a liquid (like alcohol). Sedatives used during medical procedures are frequently administered intravenously.

**6. Discuss the history of barbiturates and how they are used today.**

Barbiturates were first prepared in 1864 by a German chemist as barbituric acid which has since spawned nearly 2,500 derivatives. About 15 are used in medicine today, mostly as sleeping aids, for the treatments of headaches, or as a mild sedative during medical procedures. Because of their severe side effects and potential for addiction, the barbiturates and barbiturate-like drugs are not widely prescribed today.

- 7. In small and large doses, how do barbiturates affect the body?**  
While we do not know exactly how barbiturates act on the central nervous system, small doses help us sleep. Larger doses can depress our nerve and muscle activity.
- 8. Why are tranquilizers medically prescribed. How do they make the patient feel?**  
Tranquilizers are often critical to the treatment of mental illnesses and disorders. Unlike barbiturates, they have the ability to calm and relieve tension without causing sleepiness or confusion. Patients who use prescription tranquilizers can benefit from their soothing effects while still functioning in their daily lives. They can act as muscle relaxers, sedatives, anti-anxiety agents, and anti-convulsants. In larger doses, they act like alcohol, slowing movement, impairing judgment, and slurring speech.
- 9. What are major and minor tranquilizers, and how are they used?**  
Major tranquilizers have a more intense effect. They include the anti-psychotic drugs, such as Haldol and Navane. Minor tranquilizers have a less intense effect. They refer to the anti-anxiety agents. Valium and Xanax are minor tranquilizers.
- 10. What is the most commonly prescribed tranquilizer, and why is it prescribed?**  
Valium is the most commonly prescribed. It is used as a muscle relaxant for the large muscles, an anti-anxiety agent, and has sedation effects.
- 11. What tranquilizer is called "the date rape drug," and why?**  
Rohypnol, called "roofies" on the street, is a powerful sedative ten times more potent than Valium. It is prescribed for severe insomnia. It is approved in sixty countries around the world, but ILLEGAL in the United States. It is called "the date rape drug" because when given to victims, it causes blackouts with memory loss.
- 12. What is the most widely used and abused drug in our society?**  
**Discuss this drug's history.**  
Alcohol is the most widely used and abused drug in our society. Alcohol is a distilled product of fermented fruits, grains, and vegetables. First came beer and wine. Then distillation, introduced in the Middle Ages, gave us drinks like whiskey. For thousands and thousands of years, alcohol has been used to cure illnesses, prevent infection, and kill germs. It has also played an important role in religion and society. From 1920 to 1933, the consumption and manufacture of alcohol was a federal crime in the U.S. under the 18th Amendment to the Constitution. The 18th Amendment was later repealed.

- 13. Describe the effects and side effects associated with alcohol consumption.**  
Alcohol works by depressing the central nervous system. It causes sedation, drowsiness, lower inhibitions, impaired speech, impaired vision, and impaired judgment. It is extremely addictive.
  
- 14. Describe some of the withdrawal symptoms associated with alcohol.**  
Blood vessels constrict when alcohol leaves the body. Withdrawal symptoms include tremors, insomnia, headaches, queasiness, delirium tremens, anxiety, sweating, and often hallucinations.

## Discussion Starters

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1. What do you think are some of the social dangers involved with drinking alcohol?
2. Why do you think people drink alcohol?
3. Do you think the wide acceptance of sedative use in our society makes it more or less dangerous, and why?
4. If you or a close friend had a problem with a sedative of any type, who would you turn to for help?

## Additional Resources

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**www.streetdrugs.org—barbiturates**

[www.streetdrugs.org/barbiturates.htm](http://www.streetdrugs.org/barbiturates.htm)

**The Effects of Prescription Drugs are Painfully Obvious®**

[www.painfullyobvious.com](http://www.painfullyobvious.com)

**College Drinking—Changing the Culture**

[www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov](http://www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov)

**Al-Anon/Alateen Family Group Headquarters, Inc.**

[www.al-anon-alateen.org](http://www.al-anon-alateen.org)

**National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD)**

[www.ncadd.org](http://www.ncadd.org)

**SAMHSA's National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information**

[www.health.org](http://www.health.org)

**National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)**

[www.drugabuse.gov](http://www.drugabuse.gov)

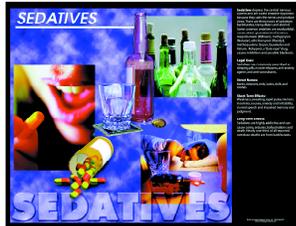
**The Partnership for a Drug-Free America®**

[www.drugfree.org](http://www.drugfree.org)



**Drug Posters**

- **Eight 17" x 22" posters (available laminated or unlaminated)**
- **Order # 10901**



This series of brightly illustrated, attention-grabbing posters explains, in detail, the harsh realities of substance abuse and the life-threatening decisions kids make today. With compelling up-to-date factual information, these posters cover the most popular drugs in teenage society. Use them to inform, explore myths, and promote valuable discussions. Posters include Hallucinogens, Inhalants, Narcotics, Phencyclidine (PCP), Sedatives, Steroids, Stimulants, Marijuana. A Cambridge Educational Product. © 2000.

**Teen Danger Zone: Teens at Risk**

- **VHS/DVD**
- **Close captioned**
- **Preview clip online at [www.films.com](http://www.films.com) (Search on 36248)**
- **Correlates to educational standards**
- **Order # 36248**

Combining hard-hitting personal stories with cold facts, the first six segments of this chaptered program report on some of the most common drugs currently being abused by teens: OxyContin, PMA, Special K (ketamine), the methamphetamine Ice, inhalants, and, in the form of binge drinking, alcohol. The final segment focuses on hazing, a frequently outlawed form of initiation that, like substance abuse, speaks directly to the teenage desire to fit in with peers—sometimes at any cost. Recommended for high school. (46 minutes) © 2006.

**Pharm Country**

- **VHS/DVD**
- **Part of the series *Drugs, Alcohol, and America's Future***
- **Close captioned**
- **Preview clip online at [www.films.com](http://www.films.com) (Search on 36238)**
- **Correlates to educational standards**
- **Order # 36238**

The snack bowl at a "pharm party" includes a mix of prescription drugs—from Adderall to Oxycontin to Xanax—and most of them come directly from the household medicine cabinet. This ABC News program examines a disturbing and rapidly growing trend in teenage drug abuse: getting high on legal drugs, often obtained through parents' prescriptions or from questionable sources over the Internet. Presenting studies showing a rapid spike in pharmaceutical abuse among students as young as eighth-graders, the program visits a Houston substance-abuse treatment center where recovering teenage addicts and their parents share their eye-opening experiences. (21 minutes) © 2006.

### **Prescription for Trouble**

- VHS/DVD
- Part of the series *Reality Matters*
- Recommended by the *Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling*.
- Order # 33244

Taking medicine is engrained in American culture. Is it any surprise then that adolescents are abusing prescription and over-the-counter drugs in record numbers? In this program, recovering teenage addicts come clean about which medications they abused, when and why they started, and how their addictions severely damaged their lives, while frontline experts from schools and the medical community—a substance abuse counselor, a child psychologist, and an adolescent psychiatrist, to name three—fill in the blanks about the effects of America's medicine mindset. A Discovery Channel Production. (26 minutes) © 2003.

### **Under the Influence**

- VHS/DVD
- Part of the series *Reality Matters*
- Order # 33244

This program sends a strong anti-alcohol message to underage drinkers and sober adolescents alike through the firsthand experiences of teens. Their collective story begins with the social, environmental, and genetic factors that led them to it; it continues through a destructive cycle of alcohol-motivated choices, such as fighting, stealing, and DUI; and ends in rehab, though their scars—for one, the knowledge that he almost killed his best friend in a drunken car wreck; for another, the awareness that she was sexually assaulted after passing out at a party—will be with them forever. A Discovery Channel Production. (26 minutes) © 2003.

### **Legal Drugs: Still Addictive, Still Deadly**

- VHS/DVD
- Part of the series *Drugs and the Brain*
- Close captioned
- Preview clip online at [www.films.com](http://www.films.com) (Search on 36367)
- Correlates to educational standards
- Order # 36367

The vast majority of drug addicts are not criminals; tobacco and alcohol, both perfectly legal in most societies, are used and abused in staggering abundance. This program details the ways smoking and drinking chemically take hold of the brain. Explaining the many reasons—besides nicotine—for tobacco's stealthy effects, the program describes the existence of thousands of other addictive chemicals in the plant. It also studies properties in alcohol, which some scientists have nicknamed the "dirty drug," that short-circuit the brain and cause considerable damage. Research by Philip Gorwood, Alain Ehrenberg, Martine Cadot, Philippe Batel, and Michel Hamon is documented. (51 minutes) © 2005.

**Painkillers: Numbing the Mind**

- VHS/DVD
- Part of the series *Drugs and the Brain*
- Close captioned
- Preview clip online at [www.films.com](http://www.films.com) (Search on 36366)
- Correlates to educational standards
- Order # 36366

The human body manufactures its own painkillers to ensure survival when injured. This program shows how opium and its derivatives, heroin and morphine, hijack that natural pain-numbing ability. Illustrating the brain's ability to alter its own chemistry when attacked by drugs, the program depicts the process by which brain receptors become desensitized and thus addicted. Tranquilizers—and the potentially lifelong physical dependency and psychological problems they can cause—are also studied. The findings of Brigitte Keiffer, Marc Valleur, Martine Cador, Emiliana Borelli, Alain Ehrenberg, and the Strasbourg Institute of Molecular Biology and Genetics are featured. (51 minutes) © 2005.

The series *Drugs: Uses and Abuses* includes

- Sedatives
- Narcotics
- Stimulants
- Psychedelics and Hallucinogens
  - Inhalants
    - THC
  - PCP and Ketamine
  - Steroids