

THE PARTNERSHIP *presents*  
**BREAKING POINTS**  
 TOOLS TO TAKE ACTION

**FACT SHEET: Rx STIMULANTS and BENZODIAZEPINES**

In order to manage the stress in their lives, some teens are abusing prescription stimulants and benzodiazepines. Teens don't always see abuse of these medicines as risky but there are real dangers.

**PRESCRIPTION STIMULANTS**

**PRESCRIPTION BENZODIAZEPINES**

**Brand / Commercial Names:** Adderall, Concerta, Dexedrine, Ritalin, Vyvanse

**Street / Slang Terms:** Addy, Bennies, Smart Drug, Speed, Uppers

**Prescribed for:** Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), narcolepsy and depression that has not responded to other treatments. When prescribed by a doctor for a specific health condition, they can be relatively safe and effective.

**Abused by Some Teens to:** Focus when studying, taking tests or pulling an all-nighter.

**Dangers of Abuse:** Rapid or irregular heartbeat, delirium, panic, psychosis, decreased appetite, weight loss, high blood pressure, difficulties sleeping, intense anger, paranoia, agitation and irritability. Can be addictive in individuals who use them compulsively. At high doses, there is the potential for heart attack, seizures or stroke. Mixing stimulants with medicines used to treat depression and over-the-counter cold medicines increase the risk for developing dangerously high blood pressure and irregular heartbeat.

Ativan, Halcion, Librium, Klonopin, Valium, Xanax

Bars, Benzos, Downers, Footballs, Xannies

Anxiety, acute stress reactions and panic attacks. Also prescribed to treat seizures or insomnia.

Feel calm, sleepy or less anxious.

Sluggishness, fatigue, drowsiness, disorientation, dizziness, slurred speech, shallow breathing and dilated pupils. Higher doses can cause impaired memory, judgment and coordination; paranoia; irritability; and suicidal ideation. Continued use can lead to physical dependence and addiction. Some people can become agitated or aggressive. Combining with other substances – particularly alcohol – can slow the heart rate and breathing and possibly lead to death.

**PARENTS, PLEASE NOTE:**

- Some teens **falsely assume** that abusing prescription stimulants and benzodiazepines is not as dangerous as using street drugs because they are made in a lab and prescribed by a doctor.
- Studies have found that **stimulants do not increase learning or thinking ability** when taken by people who have not been diagnosed with ADHD.
- Relying on unprescribed Rx medicines to help “manage” life can establish a **lifelong pattern of dependency and prevent teens from learning important coping skills.**

If you are feeling overwhelmed or have a question about your child's drug or alcohol use, call our Toll-Free Helpline: **1-855-DRUGFREE (1-855-378-4373).**

**TEENS THINK IT'S OKAY TO ABUSE MEDICINE:**



**One in five teens** believes it's okay to abuse a prescription drug, as long as they weren't doing so to “get high.”

(2016 Partnership for Drug-Free Kids)

**Take the Pledge to #endmedicineabuse.**  
 Learn more at [drugfree.org/MedicineAbuseProject](http://drugfree.org/MedicineAbuseProject)

