

# PARENTS, CAREGIVERS & YOUR COLLEGE STUDENT'S ADHD PRESCRIPTION STIMULANT MEDICATION

TOGETHER WE CAN HELP PREVENT MISUSE



College students sometimes misuse prescription stimulant medication to deal with stress; the majority of the supply comes from a friend with a valid prescription.<sup>1</sup> In fact, research shows that 61.7% of college students with ADHD report having diverted their prescription stimulant medication.<sup>2</sup> Some may feel pressured to share or sell their medication, but others are sharing or selling willingly.

## POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES OF PRESCRIPTION STIMULANT MEDICATION MISUSE

Many universities consider misuse cheating, which can lead to academic probation or expulsion, for both the misuser and the diverter.<sup>3</sup> It's also a felony to share or sell a Schedule II controlled substance, like ADHD prescription stimulant medication, for any reason, which could make it harder for your student to continue their education, get into grad school or secure employment after college.

Like all prescription medications, your student's ADHD prescription stimulant medication comes with potential side effects and should only be used under medical supervision.<sup>4</sup> That's why sharing or selling isn't safe and why prescriptions need to be monitored and carefully regulated by a physician. Plus, when students who don't have ADHD take ADHD prescription stimulant medication, it trivializes the condition.

## TIPS TO HELP YOUR STUDENT PROTECT THEIR MEDICINE

- Take your medication as prescribed by your doctor
- Don't carry extra pills with you
- Keep your prescription in a safe location, preferably locked
- Take your medication when you're alone so no one can ask you to share
- Count the pills to make sure no one else is taking them between doses
- Your diagnosis is personal, and you have the right to keep it private

## WHAT YOUR STUDENT CAN SAY IF ASKED TO SHARE OR SELL

- "ADHD is a real medical condition and I need all of my medication"
- "My doctor monitors my prescription"
- "I'm running low"
- "My prescription is tailored to my needs and is unsafe to share"
- "Misusing won't improve your grades<sup>5</sup> or help you understand subject matter any better or faster"<sup>6</sup>

Finally, encourage your student to motivate friends in a positive way. Tell them to share healthy study habits, and if a friend thinks they may have ADHD, urge them to seek help.

## TALKING WITH YOUR COLLEGE STUDENT CAN HELP PREVENT THE MISUSE, ABUSE, AND DIVERSION OF THEIR PRESCRIPTION STIMULANT MEDICATION.

1. Source: McCabe SE, West BT, Teter CJ, Boyd CJ. Trends in medical use, diversion and nonmedical use of prescription medications among college students from 2003 to 2013: connecting the dots. *Addict Behav.* 2014;39(7):1176-82. doi:10.1016/j.addbeh.2014.03.008.
2. Source: Garnier LM, Arria AM, Caldeira KM, Vincent KB, O'Grady KE, Wish ED. Sharing and selling of prescription medications in a college student sample. *J Clin Psychiatry.* 2010;71(3):262-9. doi:10.4088/JCP.09m05189ecr.
3. Source: Carroll L. Conduct policy changes reflect drug abuse. *The Chronicle.* September 6, 2011. <http://www.dukechronicle.com/article/2011/09/conduct-policy-changes-reflect-drug-abuse>. Published September 6, 2011. Accessed December 19, 2017.
4. Source: Commonly abused drugs charts. NIDA: National Institute on Drug Abuse website. <https://www.drugabuse.gov/drugs-abuse/commonly-abused-drugs-charts>. Published January 2016. Updated July 2017. Accessed November 7, 2017.
5. Source: Arria AM, Caldeira KM, Vincent KB, et al. Do college students improve their grades by using prescription stimulants nonmedically? *Addict Behav.* 2016. doi:10.1016/j.addbeh.2016.07.016. Epub 2016 Jul 19.
6. Source: McCabe SE, Knight JR, Teter CJ, Wechsler H. Non-medical use of prescription stimulants among US college students: prevalence and correlates from a national survey. *Addiction.* 2005;100(1):96-106.