



# HOLISTIC WELLNESS CHALLENGE



## PRESCRIPTION DRUG MISUSE RISKS IT ALL

**CHALLENGE** your Service members to adopt at least one of the recommended resources to prevent prescription drug misuse.

### PROTECT YOURSELF & OTHERS

When taken as directed, prescription drugs can manage or relieve symptoms, like pain or sleeplessness. **When misused, prescription drugs can cause harm or lead to death.** Use these tips to protect yourself, family (especially children), and pets from accidental or intentional misuse:

- Dispose of unused medications, so you aren't tempted to take or share them; and others don't accidentally swallow them.
- Promptly treat injuries or illnesses to reduce long-term prescription drug use.
- Know how and when to take medications, and when to stop.
- Talk to a doctor about non-drug alternatives, like acupuncture or physical therapy.
- Safely store drugs in a medication lock box.

### FACTS & FIGURES: DID YOU KNOW?

- 6% of Americans over the age of 12 misuse prescription drugs<sup>1</sup>
- 12% of prescription drug misusers are addicted<sup>1</sup>
- Prescription drugs are the third-most abused substance after marijuana and cocaine<sup>1</sup>
- The types of prescription drugs people abuse most are painkillers, stimulants, sedatives, and tranquilizers<sup>1</sup>

### PRESCRIPTION DRUG MISUSE IMPACTS WELL-BEING



#### Physical

- Sudden weight gain or loss
- Bloodshot eyes
- Tremors
- Slurred speech



#### Behavioral

- Sudden mood swings or agitation
- Lack of motivation
- Hyperactivity
- Paranoia



#### Social

- Sudden change in activities or interests
- Legal problems
- Financial difficulties
- Relationship issues

### SUPPORT THOSE IN NEED



Addiction is a condition due to a combination of social, biological, and psychological factors. If someone can't stop taking a medication despite experiencing the signs and symptoms of misuse, they may have an addiction and should **seek immediate help by dialing 988 then press 1.**

Addiction is a physical need, not a weakness. It often leaves people feeling alone in their struggle. Anyone can offer support by:

- Listening without judgment
- Being patient and encouraging
- Respecting privacy and setting boundaries

### CONTACT US

For more information on prescription drug misuse or other topics, email us at: [ng.ncr.ngb.mbx.resiliency-branch@army.mil](mailto:ng.ncr.ngb.mbx.resiliency-branch@army.mil)



## PREScription DRUGS SHOULD HELP NOT HARM

### What does it mean?

- Prescription drug misuse can mean one of three things:
  - Not following a provider's directions, like taking more at a time or using more frequently than prescribed.
  - Taking someone else's drug even if for minor issues, like pain or sleeplessness.
  - Using a drug for a reason other than its prescribed use, like taking ADHD (attention deficient hyperactivity disorder) meds to stay awake.

### Why does it matter?

- Misuse can cause physical and mental harm, lead to a discharge or separation from the military, or result in accidental death or suicide.

### What can you do?

- Proactively reach out to Service members showing signs and symptoms.
- Create a safe environment for them to talk openly and seek help.
- Discourage drug sharing and emphasize the need to follow doctors' orders.
- Know when and how to safely dispose of medications.
- Recommend medication lock boxes to store drugs safely and easily.
- Stress that struggling with misuse or addiction is not a sign of weakness and asking for support shows true strength.

## MISUSE & THE WORKPLACE

Drug misuse is an unhealthy behavior that can create an unsafe environment putting Service members and the mission at risk.

Service members are encouraged to take the Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) to assess command culture.

Reminder, the DEOCS must be initiated by OCT 31 to meet the NOV 30 deadline.



## RESOURCES TO RECOMMEND



Too Much to Lose shares information and free promotional materials related to prescription drug misuse <https://toomuchtolose.org>



Army Directive 2021-21 outlines use of prescribed controlled medications [https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR\\_pubs/DR\\_a/ARN32521-ARMY\\_DIR\\_2021-21-000-WEB-1.pdf](https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR_pubs/DR_a/ARN32521-ARMY_DIR_2021-21-000-WEB-1.pdf)



Air Force Instruction 44-121 outlines the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment Program [https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af\\_sg/publication/afi44-121/afi44-121.pdf](https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af_sg/publication/afi44-121/afi44-121.pdf)



Military OneSource offers 24/7 access to free, confidential support <https://www.militaryonesource.mil>



Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration provides 24/7 free and confidential treatment referral and support <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-support>



National Prescription Drug Take Back Day is October 28, 2023; search for a local collection site/event <https://www.dea.gov/takebackday>



Search for a year round drug disposal site near you [https://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug\\_disposal](https://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal)



Consult the flush list of meds that can be disposed of in the toilet or instructions for discarding in the trash <https://www.fda.gov/drugs/safe-disposal-medicines/disposal-unused-medicines-what-you-should-know>



Operation Supplement Safety contains the DoD Prohibited List and other tools provided by the Uniformed Services University <https://www.opss.org>



## SPOTLIGHT: CONNECTEDNESS AND RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION (CARE)

- CARE builds trust between leaders and subordinates to develop ready and resilient Service members.
- The training helps leaders identify and mitigate risk factors for substance misuse to protect Service members from experiencing adverse outcomes.
- For more information, email: [ng.ncr.ngb-arng.mbx.ngb-jl-partnerships@army.mil](mailto:ng.ncr.ngb-arng.mbx.ngb-jl-partnerships@army.mil)

## REFERENCES:

1. National Center for Drug Abuse Statistics, <https://drugabusestatistics.org>