

Name _____

Prescription Drug Abuse: Understanding the Dangers

Open-Ended Response Answer Key

1. Prescription drug abuse involves taking prescription medications in a way that was not intended by a healthcare provider. This can include taking higher doses than prescribed, using someone else's prescription medication, or using the medication for non-medical purposes, such as to get high. Examples of behaviors that constitute misuse include taking a friend's pain medication for recreational purposes or increasing the dosage of a prescribed stimulant to enhance alertness.
2. Prescription drug abuse can have serious health risks, including the development of addiction, the risk of overdose, and adverse health effects. For example, misuse of opioid pain relievers can lead to physical dependence, withdrawal symptoms, and a heightened risk of overdose, which can be fatal. Stimulant misuse can result in increased heart rate, high blood pressure, anxiety, and even psychosis. Depressant misuse can lead to respiratory depression, sedation, and the potential for addiction.
3. Proper disposal of unused or expired medications is essential to prevent misuse and reduce environmental impact. Medications should not be flushed down the toilet or thrown in the trash, as they can contaminate water sources and harm wildlife. Instead, individuals should follow community guidelines or participate in drug take-back programs to ensure safe and responsible disposal.
4. Open communication with healthcare providers is crucial in preventing prescription drug abuse because it allows individuals to discuss their concerns, questions, or potential misuse of medications. Healthcare providers can provide guidance, adjust treatment plans if necessary, and offer resources for addiction treatment or alternative medications when needed. This communication fosters a safer and more responsible approach to prescription medication use.

