

Lock It All Up!

Limiting Prescription Drug Abuse by Youth

by DeAnna Pearl, A&D Prevention

I was reading a magazine that had an article on how to better get to know someone by looking in their bathroom cabinet. The article went on to state how easy it would be to do.

They are right, it is easy. If it's easy for a visitor to get access to your meds, how easy would it be for your child, niece/nephew, grandchild and cousin to gain access to them?

In recent years, addictions counselors, police and school personnel have reported their concern about an increase in youth prescription drug abuse. Prescription drugs can be helpful when used appropriately. When not used as intended or when used by individuals not prescribed the medication, prescription drugs are harmful.

Prescription Drugs and the Law

The Controlled Drugs and Substances Act states that in some cases, it's illegal to possess prescription drugs without a physician's authorization. Obtaining prescription drugs that contain narcotics without advising the physician that you have received a similar prescription within the last 30 days is called double-doctoring. If convicted of this illegal activity, sentencing can include imprisonment.

According to the police in Toledo, Ore., there has been a doubling and tripling of reported prescription drug theft. Unfortunately, the resale of individual pills is becoming an easy moneymaker for youth and adults.

How does this affect the rest of us? Some medical facilities are cracking down hard on abuse of prescription drugs

by not dispensing or limiting prescriptions because of the misuse and reselling of these drugs. The Siletz Community Health Clinic's policy states:

"... that patients presenting with requests for refills or replacement of controlled substances that are identified as lost, stolen or misplaced will be documented on the PCC and reviewed by the provider. Providers may or may not authorize a refill. If the medication is reported as stolen, the patient will be responsible for filing a police report."

Why Youth Abuse Prescription Drugs

- Availability – In the last several years, the number of prescription drugs available on the street has increased. There are reports of prescription drugs being sold in schoolyards and at recreational facilities, such as skate parks and youth centers.
- Accessibility – Youth are reporting easy access to a variety of prescription drugs.
- Peer Pressure – The misuse and abuse of non-prescribed prescription drugs is becoming more acceptable within youth circles.
- Adult Behavior – Youth model the behavior and attitudes they observe.
- Family Problems – Youth often turn to substances to cope with stresses in their family.

Many harmful side effects can occur when taking non-prescribed drugs. Regular

use can lead to physical and psychological dependence. High doses of barbiturates, for example, can result in death from respiratory arrest. Mixing prescription drugs with alcohol can be lethal.

Sadly, prescription drugs also are being used in combination with over-the-counter medications as methods to attempt suicide. According to Oregon Vital Statistics, while the use of a firearm (67 percent) is most common, the preferred option by minors in Oregon is by poisoning with over-the-counter medication such as Advil, Benadryl, ibuprofen, Motrin and Naproxen.

Actions We Can Take to Prevent Prescription Drug Abuse

- As a parent, we can ensure all prescription drugs are used and stored appropriately. Lock them up.
- As a community we can inform the police of any suspicious activity.
- As a school, we can educate our students about the dangers of prescription drug abuse. As well, we can

establish policies to help eliminate the buying and selling of prescription drugs on school property.

- As students, we can become aware of the dangers of prescription drug misuse and make the use of such substances unacceptable.

Lock up or find a more secure place to put prescriptions for safe keeping instead of a medicine cabinet.

Parents are the No. 1 deterrent of ATOD use, misuse and abuse. Talk with your kids about the importance of not sharing medication or taking medication without your permission. Know what your kids are taking and find out how often. Teach them how to read labels and warnings. Warn them to never mix alcohol with any medication.

If you would like more information on the effects of prescription drugs on the brain or how to know if your child is misusing or abusing drugs, please call me 541-444-8267 or 800-600-5599.

Happy New Year!

CEDARR

Community Efforts Demonstrating the Ability to Rebuild and Restore

Jan. 7, 5:30 p.m.

Siletz Community Health Clinic Conference Room

Hope to see you there!

TLC Attitudes of Gratitude

by Lynn Whitlow

No resolutions from me this year, again. Why waste time and energy then not follow through? If I followed through every time I said, "My resolution is to lose weight this year," I'd be model thin. Think that worked? Not!

I quit that several years ago. Now I make a new commitment each year to make as many healthy choices for my body as I can and to make my "world" a better place to be in by giving of myself and my time to causes that will make a difference.

I am committed to organizing my household belongings so they work for me. I can do this in small daily and weekly sessions. Those are "do-able" for me on a consistent basis.

This year I am going to remember to let people in my life know they are special and/or appreciated. A kind word or two can go a long way toward making the world a more positive place – one person at a time.

The residents at the TLC can always find gratitudes in their daily living. Some they have verbalized this past month include: "___ is happy to quit smoking," "My dad is OK," "Going to pow-wow," "For my new sponsor – she gives me hope!" "___ is happy for family," "For cold, crisp winter nights" and "To spend time with my sister and nephew."

Other gratitudes include: "To be able to see my family during the holidays!" "To be clean on the holidays!" "Thankful for a healthy, happy son!" Plus an appreciation for home: "To feel safe when at home," and "To be home!"

Thank you volunteers for being here most weeks. Alice McCain, Lisa Brown and Jackie Ashley: You rock! Your commitment to this place is phenomenal.

As the person who stays here when no one else does, I appreciate you more than you can know. You are part of why TLC residents feel safe when they are home.

Thank you to Bill Wheeler for giving us some pointers on operating the power washer, for those of us who figure things out better from seeing rather than reading directions that are written for people who already know what they are doing.

I hope each of you has a new year filled with many joys. May your problems be solvable and your sorrows minimal. Step outside of yourself and do something to make your world a better place for others.



Barbara Dougherty (r) and Lisa Higgins, drug-free communities coordinator for the SAMHSA grant, discuss the Siletz Tribe's partnership with Lincoln County under this grant at the CEDARR meeting in December.

Photo by Natasha Kavanaugh