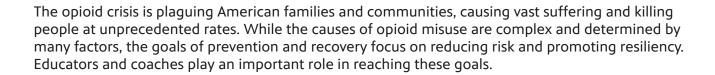


Combating the Opioid Crisis:

Guidance for Educators and Coaches



How you can help:

- Understand the <u>risk factors</u> for abuse of painkillers: stress over school, sports, home life demands and pressures, trouble with friends, depression, and anxiety.
- Talk with students and parents about the risks and dangers of prescription painkillers, especially opioids and narcotics.
- Encourage students and parents to ask healthcare professionals for non-narcotic alternatives if pain requires medical intervention.
- Let students and parents know you will stand by them and offer support if they need it.
- Review your school policies on drug use and encourage administrators to consider updating policies to include use and/or abuse of opioids and other prescription drugs. Know how to follow through if you suspect a student is abusing drugs.
- Watch students for signs of addiction.







Be alert for these warning signs:

- Acting withdrawn, depressed, hostile, or fatigued for no reason
- Showing a decline in school performance or attendance
- Consistently coming late to school
- Switching to a "new" group of friends
- Changing relationships with family and friends
- Nodding off in class

Because children who experience adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) may be at risk for substance abuse, be especially aware of the vulnerability of children with a history of any of the following:

- Physical, emotional, or sexual abuse
- Physical or emotional neglect
- Mental illness of a household member
- Alcoholism or illegal drug use of a household member
- Divorce or separation of a parent
- Domestic violence towards a parent
- Incarceration of a household member

Coaches, if you suspect your athlete is at risk:

Coaches may be in a unique position to pick up on other signs that their athletes may be at risk. In addition to the general signs mentioned above, pay attention to an athlete who is:

- Showing a decline in practice, game performance, or attendance
- Consistently coming late to practice and/or games
- Becoming distant from you or other team members

What you can do:

- Talk with athletes and parents about the risks and dangers of prescription painkillers, including opioids and narcotics.
- Encourage parents and athletes to ask healthcare professionals for non-narcotic painkiller alternatives if an athlete's pain requires medical intervention.
- Let parents and athletes know you will stand by them and offer support if they need it.
- Review your school and athletic program policies on drug use and encourage administrators and other coaches to consider updating policies to include use and/or abuse of narcotic painkillers.
 Know how to follow through if you suspect an athlete is abusing drugs.
- Watch athletes for signs of addiction.