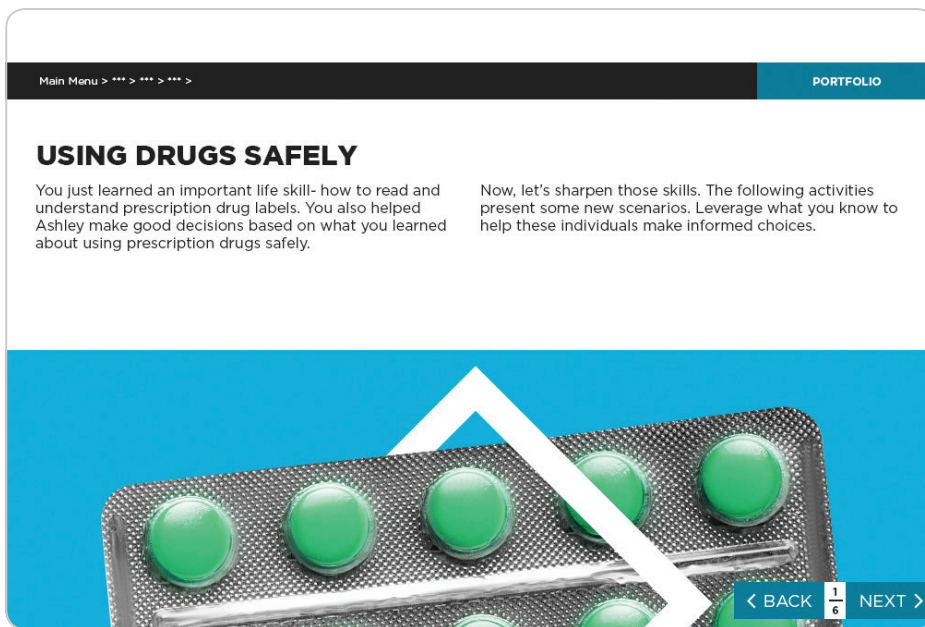


# LEVERAGING EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES

FOR PRESCRIPTION DRUG  
ABUSE PREVENTION



PRESCRIPTION  
DRUG SAFETY  
NETWORK



Images in this guide book are from EVERFI's *Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention* course.

## CHOOSING A PREVENTION PROGRAM: WHERE DO WE BEGIN?

Access, visibility, and promotion of prescription medications in the United States have collectively contributed to one of our nation's most critical public health challenges: the misuse and abuse of prescription drugs.

Educating our youth is more important than ever in order to combat the risks and harms associated with prescription drug misuse and abuse. But how should schools and organizations go about choosing an effective prevention program?

The best approaches are grounded in evidence that has been validated by existing research on effective prevention practice. Such an approach utilizes relevant behavior change theories and frameworks to guide program design and implementation, blending established research with innovative approaches for maximizing engagement and impact.

## ABOUT EVERFI

Our mission at EVERFI is to equip students with the skills they need for success beyond the classroom and drive lasting large-scale change on important health and safety issues..

We help K-12 schools, institutions of higher education, and industry partners make transformative impact on the health and wellbeing of the communities they serve through online education, data, and services.

# EVERFI'S APPROACH TO PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE PREVENTION

EVERFI's *Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention* course was developed in collaboration with leading professionals and researchers in the field of prescription drug abuse. The course curriculum is informed by the same evidence-based strategies incorporated in the development of EVERFI's *AlcoholEdu* program, the most widely-used, proven-effective alcohol and other drug prevention program in the country.

*Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention* utilizes social norms theory to engage the healthy majority of students who do not misuse or abuse prescription drugs and challenge misperceptions about the prevalence and social acceptance of prescription drug misuse and abuse. Bystander intervention strategies are incorporated in order to help students recognize the signs of prescription drug misuse and abuse and build self-efficacy to assist someone who may be struggling with such issues or could be at risk of an overdose.

Interactive content is designed to provide an inclusive experience that recognizes the unique needs and experiences of a diverse population of learners. Data from course surveys and assessments can help to identify ongoing focus areas and inform additional education and prevention strategies. For EVERFI's college courses, in-course customizations direct learners to appropriate campus and community resources and policies.

## EXTERNAL SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS



**Thomas Fontana, LCMHC, LADC**  
*BASICS Program Coordinator*  
University of Vermont



**Cynthia Kuhn, PhD**  
*Professor of Pharmacology and Cancer Biology*  
*Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences*  
Duke University  
School of Medicine



**Thomas Hall, PhD**  
*Director of Alcohol and Other Drug Programs, Student Health Services*  
University of Central Florida



**Wilkie Wilson, PhD**  
*Research Professor of Prevention Science*  
Social Science Research Institute  
Duke University

**Note** Subject matter experts' involvement in course development does not imply an endorsement of the course by these individuals or their respective institutions.

## BEHAVIORAL OUTCOMES

As the adage goes, “knowledge is power,” but when it comes to prescription drug abuse prevention, knowledge is only part of the equation. *Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention* is designed to also achieve several key behavioral outcomes for all students.

Each of these behavioral outcomes is supported by a set of learning objectives. The learning objectives are linked to individual-level factors that influence behavior, which can be grouped into eight categories derived from three seminal behavior change theories: the Health Belief Model, the Theory of Planned Behavior, and Social Cognitive Theory.

STUDENTS WHO DO NOT	STUDENTS WHO DO	ALL STUDENTS
currently misuse or abuse prescription drugs will:	currently misuse or abuse prescription drugs will:	
Continue to not misuse or abuse prescription drugs	Consider discontinuing their misuse or abuse	Learn how to be an informed consumer of prescription drugs Provide assistance for a friend who may be experiencing a problem with prescription drugs Seek medical assistance for someone who may be experiencing a drug overdose

**Knowledge:** Especially important points of knowledge include the seriousness of prescription drug misuse and abuse, including a focus on physical, academic, and legal consequences; benefits of prescription drugs when used appropriately and under the care of a physician; the availability of resources; and other key facts (e.g., types of drugs and their side effects, warning signs of drug overdose).

**Attitudes:** Positive or negative reactions and feelings about a new behavior are grounded in a set of supportive or non-supportive beliefs (e.g., “Prescription drugs must be safe because they are prescribed by a doctor.”).

**Perceived Outcomes:** In general, people will be more likely to engage in new behaviors that provide more benefits than costs. Potential benefits are more motivating when they are highly valued and more likely to occur.

**Personal Norms:** People are more likely to engage in new behaviors that are consistent with their personal values or with their self-image.



**Social Norms:** People are greatly influenced by the perceived expectations of other persons or groups in terms of approval or disapproval of a particular behavior. Perceptions of social norms are highly prone to error: students tend to overestimate the extent to which their peers endorse negative behaviors and underestimate the extent of endorsement of positive behaviors. Correcting these misperceptions has been shown to positively influence behaviors.

**Behavioral Skills:** People are more successful in changing their behavior if they have self-assessment and self-management skills. Certain behaviors may require more specific skills, such as knowing how to intervene when another student may be in trouble due to prescription drug abuse.

**Perceived Behavioral Control:** People are more likely to engage in behaviors when they believe they are capable of doing so at particular times and places, and when they can call upon learned strategies to overcome possible barriers.

**Cues to Action:** Internal or external cues can serve as reminders to engage in a new behavior. This is especially important when trying to change behaviors around drug misuse and abuse.

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### THE BASIC FACTS ABOUT OPIOIDS

Click on each of the topics to learn more

Medical Use	How It Works	Additional Possible Effects
If Take Too Much At Once/Mix	Potential for Dependence and Addiction	Brand Names and Slang Terms/Street Names

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### A COMPLEX ISSUE

Addiction is an important public health issue that impacts our society on multiple levels. Addiction doesn't discriminate and can impact people of all ages, races, and economic groups.

Most of us are generally aware of what "addiction" is, but probably don't fully understand how or why it happens. If you, a family member, or close friend has had an addiction, then you may have a greater sense of how it impacts someone's life and the lives of those around them.

Some people may think that a person could just stop using drugs or alcohol, if they really wanted to. The reality is much more complicated.

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# MAPPING LEARNING OBJECTIVES TO BEHAVIORAL OUTCOMES

Developers of the *Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention* course have created a set of learning objectives for each of the behavioral outcomes. With this information, school administrators can build upon course content by creating additional programming that further reinforces the key learning objectives for their students.

Below is one example of how learning objectives are mapped to behavioral outcomes throughout the course.

## BEHAVIORAL OUTCOME

Students who **DO NOT** currently misuse or abuse prescription drugs will continue to not misuse/abuse

### Learning Objectives

#### Knowledge

- Identify the attributes of the most common prescription drugs
- Describe the benefits of prescription medications when used as directed and under the supervision of a physician
- Describe the risks associated with prescription drug misuse and abuse
- Cite the laws and policies relevant to prescription drug use

#### Attitudes and Beliefs

- Agree: Prescription drug misuse and abuse is dangerous.
- Agree: My academic performance might suffer if I misuse or abuse prescription drugs.
- Agree: I could face legal trouble if I misuse or abuse prescription drugs.
- Agree: I will support others' decisions not to misuse or abuse prescription drugs.

#### Perceived Outcomes

- Agree: My decision not to misuse or abuse prescription drugs will help me accomplish my personal goals while at my school.
- Agree: I will have a richer and more fulfilling experience if I continue not to misuse or abuse prescription drugs.
- Agree: I will feel well physically if I continue not to misuse or abuse prescription drugs.

#### Social Norms

- Agree: I am part of a community where the majority of students do not misuse or abuse prescription drugs.

- Agree: Students at my school will respect my decision not to misuse or abuse prescription drugs.
- Agree: Personal relationships may suffer if I choose to misuse or abuse prescription drugs.
- Agree: Misuse and abuse of prescription drugs is not common among other students.
- Agree: Most students do not think it's okay to misuse or abuse prescription drugs.

### **Personal Norms**

- Agree: Prescription drug misuse and abuse is not consistent with my academic or career goals.
- Agree: I will have greater respect for myself if I continue not to misuse or abuse prescription drugs.

### **Behavioral Skills**

- Demonstrate how to use non-confrontational responses to turn down an offer to use a drug that hasn't been prescribed to me
- Demonstrate how to refuse requests from others to use my personal prescription medications

### **Perceived Behavioral Control**

- Agree: I can successfully turn down an offer to use a drug that hasn't been prescribed to me.
- Agree: Nobody will care if I turn down an offer to use a drug that hasn't been prescribed to me.
- Agree: I can take steps to protect my personal prescriptions from being taken and used by others.
- Agree: I am comfortable asking questions of a prescribing healthcare professional as needed.

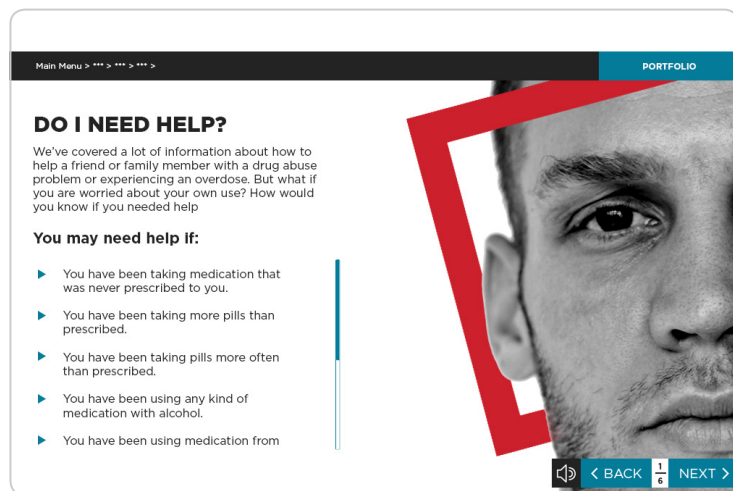
### **Cues to Action**

*Note: These are not introduced in Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention, but can be incorporated as part of other prevention strategies.*

- Help organize a drug take-back or disposal program
- Create a calendar reminder for when personal prescription medications need to be refilled
- Take a photo of the label on my prescription bottle and keep it on my smart phone so that I can reference it when needed
- If needed, seek out resources that can assist me with improving my study skills or addressing any mental health concerns so that I can address these challenges without misusing prescription drugs

## THE IMPACT OF AN EVIDENCE-INFORMED APPROACH

*Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention* delivers accurate information about prescription drugs in order to help students make informed decisions about their personal use of medication, as well as identify risks and assist those who may be misusing or abusing prescription drugs. Through a curriculum grounded in behavior change theory and the incorporation of evidence-based practices, this online course is intended to engage the majority of students who are making healthy and safe decisions to create a culture that discourages misuse and abuse of all substances. It provides the motivation that ALL students need to protect their health and safety, as well as that of their friends. The data generated from student surveys will assist organizations and educators in identifying challenges specific to their school or district, and inform prevention strategies to effectively address prescription drug misuse and abuse in their community.



**TO LEARN MORE ABOUT  
EVERFI'S PREVENTION  
COURSES, PLEASE VISIT  
[WWW.EVERFI.COM](http://WWW.EVERFI.COM)**