

WHO'S IN CHARGE— Patients Abusing their Practitioners for Prescription Drugs

5 Warning Signs of Prescription Drug Abuse

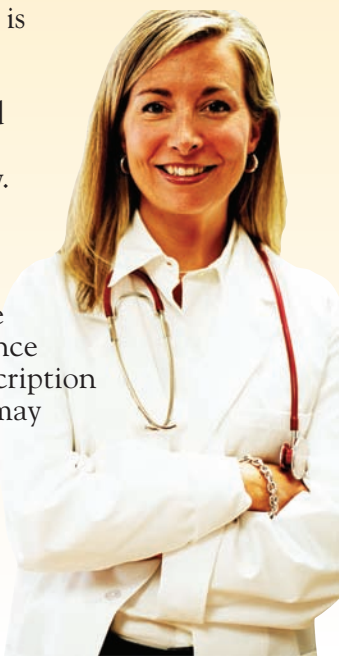
1. Increase in prescription drug use
The drugs they are taking are no longer working as effectively, so they may increase the dose without first consulting a doctor.

2. Change in personality
The afflicted may isolate themselves from loved ones or withdraw from social interaction entirely.

3. More excuses for prescriptions
Most addicted persons will complain of additional ailments to gain more prescriptions.

4. Forgetfulness
Someone who is addicted to prescription drugs is more likely to be increasingly absentminded and inattentive, given his or her lethargy.

5. Defensiveness
An addict will commonly dispute any claim of reliance on his or her prescription medications and may lash out at his or her accuser.



WHAT TO SAY TO A PATIENT WHO CONCERNS YOU

Common Statements of Addicted Patients and Possible Responses

THE PATIENT SAYS: “I am not abusing these medications, the doctors all gave them to me.”

PROVIDER RESPONSE: Avoid direct confrontation or arguing. Ask what the patient knows about the medication(s). Provide information about health consequences, then ask patient’s opinion of the information and elicit concern.

THE PATIENT SAYS: “I am using because I feel so badly and I cannot stop.”

PROVIDER RESPONSE: Empathize with feelings. Offer direct advice to change with a menu of options. Ask for past successes.

THE PATIENT SAYS: “I already tried treatment and it did not work.”

PROVIDER RESPONSE: Inform that many patients need several attempts at treatment. Provide a menu of options, not just “one way” to get better. Express hopefulness.

THE PATIENT SAYS: “I am going through a hard time, but I am sure I’ll be fine.”

PROVIDER RESPONSE: Listen for inconsistency or conflict about goals, values and current behavior. Reframe and reflect their conflict and offer help to resolve through referral.

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