

STAND OUT

THROW IT OUT.

WHAT

YOUR

FRIENDS

THINK

ABOUT

POPPING

PILLS

You may believe that lots of your friends are abusing prescription drugs, or you may think that none of them are. It's difficult to know for sure and rumors floating around in school hallways don't give us any clarity. One of the most helpful and trusted sources for these questions are the Youth Risk Behavior Surveys conducted by the State; these numbers help us begin to understand what drug use looks like in our schools, and what our friends really think about it.

Unfortunately, many perceptions of prescription drugs are somewhat skewed. One in four teens currently believe prescription drugs can be used as study aids, and nearly one-third of parents believe that ADHD medication improves a student's academic or testing performance (even if they don't actually have ADHD).

Students in 6th grade are the highest group that misuse pain reliever prescriptions, 10th graders are the highest in misusing depressants, and 12th graders are the highest in misusing stimulants. Pain relievers make up the vast majority of overall misused/abused prescriptions; most students misuse these prescriptions at their own homes or at someone else's home. In 2019, only 14% of Idaho students have taken a prescription drug without a doctor's prescription, with the majority being girls in nearly every grade level.

The nation saw a scary spike in drug abuse when the 2020 pandemic hit as we were faced with new kinds of isolation, loneliness, and stress. Thankfully, a vast majority (98-99%) of teens are not using illicit drugs like meth, heroin, or ecstasy. They simply don't know the threat posed by prescriptions; it's time to change that.

Our friends likely don't know that prescription drugs are still dangerous. It's important to help them know.

