CHAPTER 18
Substance Misuse and Abuse
Lesson Objectives

1. Explain actions that can be taken to help prevent youth from abusing drugs and other substances.

2. Describe specific steps for preventing someone from accidentally misusing or overdosing on a medication.

3. List the steps of first aid for alcohol intoxication and alcohol withdrawal.
Lesson Objectives *continued*

4. Describe the effects of commonly abused drugs.
5. List the steps of first aid for drug abuse or overdose.
6. List the steps of first aid for medication overdose.
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The Problem of Substance Abuse

- Over 2.8 million new users of illicit drugs in 2013 – over one-half were younger than 18.
- In 2013, 22.6% of 18-20 year olds reported using an illicit drug in the past month.
- About 23% of underage persons (ages 12-20) drink alcohol. Over 14% engage in binge drinking and about 4% in heavy drinking.
- 28.7 million people, or 10.9% of persons aged 12 or older, drove under the influence of alcohol at least once in the past year.
Alcohol Abuse

- Heavy and binge drinking most common in late teens/early adult years
- A problem at all ages and all groups
- About ¼ of young adults drive under the influence, and high percentages, too, at other ages
- Drinking a large amount of alcohol in a short period of time can lead to alcohol poisoning, which may result in unresponsiveness, seizures or death
Alcohol Abuse continued

- Drinking beer causes intoxication just the same as drinking hard liquor.
- Unsafe to drink and drive at any time
- Affects automobile death rates, other injuries, medical costs:
  - Millions of victims brought to emergency departments every year.
  - Over 10,000 people die each year.
Prevention of Substance Abuse

- Substance abuse programs address key factors, such as these:
  - Risk factors for becoming an abuser
  - All forms of drug abuse
  - The problems of abuse in the local community
  - Family bonding and relationships
  - Interventions as early as preschool
Substance abuse programs address key factors, such as these:

- Target improving academic and social-emotional learning
- Combine family-based and school-based programs
- Target populations in multiple settings
- Long-term and repeated interventions
- Include teacher training
Abuse and Misuse

• Intentional and often frequent non-medical use of substance for its effects

• May involve using drug for unintended purpose or in unintentional dose

• Both abuse and misuse can lead to drug overdose.
Prevention of Drug Misuse and Overdose

- Use medications only as prescribed.
- Keep all medications in original, labeled containers.
- Organize medications for elderly or anyone whose judgment may be diminished.
- Read and follow directions and warnings.
Prevention of Drug Misuse and Overdose

continued

• Contact health care provider with any questions.
• Consult health care provider/pharmacist before mixing drugs with alcohol.
• Be aware of potential drug interactions:
  • Including with herbal supplements
• Dispose of outdated medications.
• Never share medications.
Intoxication

- Excessive alcohol consumption can lead to a medical emergency.
- Do not assume a victim’s signs and symptoms due only to intoxication.
- Drinking a lot in a short period can lead to alcohol poisoning.
First Aid: Intoxication

1. Check for injuries or illness and give first aid as necessary.
2. Stay with and protect responsive person. Give first aid as needed.
3. Put unresponsive person in recovery position. Call 9-1-1 for breathing irregularity, seizures or coma.
Injured Intoxicated Person

1. Check for injuries or illness. Do not assume alcohol is the factor or the only factor involved.
2. Because alcohol may keep the person from feeling pain, do not rely on the victim’s perception of an injury to guide you.
3. Give first aid as you would if the victim were unresponsive, based on your assessment of the signs of injury rather than reported symptoms.
Alcohol Withdrawal

- Heavy drinking over time may lead to physical dependence.
- Withdrawal may cause delirium tremens (state of altered mental status).
First Aid: Alcohol Withdrawal

1. Call 9-1-1.

2. Give first aid as for an intoxicated victim, including the use of the recovery position for unresponsive victim and monitoring breathing.
Drug Abuse

• Many effects may occur.
• Observe scene for drug paraphernalia.
• Call Poison Control Center (or 9-1-1).
Drug Abuse continued

- Victim may become violent, suicidal or act bizarrely as a result of the drug.
- Ensure the scene is safe before entering.
First Aid: Drug Abuse or Overdose

1. Call 9-1-1 for serious signs and symptoms or PCC if known substance.
2. Withdraw if scene is unsafe.
3. Put unresponsive victim in recovery position.
4. Check and care for any injuries.
5. Try to keep victim awake and talking.
6. Keep victim from harming self or others.
7. Ask questions about substance used, how much and when it was taken.
Opioid Drug Overdose

- Special resuscitation situation if victim is known to use opioid drugs
- Opioid overdose triad: pinpoint pupils that do not react to light, unresponsiveness and respiratory depression
- Administer naloxone to victim to counteract opioid drug’s effects.
First Aid: Opioid Drug Overdose

1. Consider opioid overdose a possible cause, especially when the person is known to use opioid medication or drugs.
2. Try to find out what drug was taken, and call 9-1-1.
3. Check for an emergency overdose kit at the scene.
4. Administer the emergency overdose medication to the victim, following the manufacturer’s directions on kit.
Auto-Injector for an Opioid Drug Overdose

1. Prepare the auto-injector for use.

2. Press the auto-injector firmly against victim’s outer thigh. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions.

3. Ensure 9-1-1 has been called. Monitor victim’s symptoms and be prepared to give BLS as needed.

4. If symptoms continue or return, administer a second dose if EMS personnel have not arrived. Follow instructions on package.
Commonly Abused Drugs

- Marijuana – elation, relaxation, dizziness, distorted perceptions, hunger, fast pulse

- Narcotics (Herion, morphine, codeine, oxycodone) – euphoria or stupor, depressant effects, dizziness, pain relief, impaired judgement, contracted pupils, etc.

- Hallucinogens (LSD, PCP, mescaline, psilocybin) – stimulant effects, hallucinations, disorientation, anxiety, paranoia, euphoria, etc.
Commonly Abused Drugs (Continued)

- Inhalants (Amyl nitrite, nitrous oxide, many solvents and common household products) – mood alterations, nausea, excitability, etc.

- Stimulants (Amphetamine, methamphetamine, dextroamphetamine, cocaine and crack cocaine, designer drugs such as ecstasy) – increased mental alertness, talkative, restlessness, dilated pupils, etc.

- Sedatives (Barbiturates, benzodiazepines, muscle relaxers) – decreased mental alertness, relaxation, slurred speech, etc.
Medication Overdose

- Overdose can result from accidentally taking too much of prescription or OTC medication.
- May be impossible to know if signs and symptoms caused by drug or other injury or illness.
- Try to determine what drug was taken.
First Aid: Medication Overdose

1. Put unresponsive victim in recovery position. Give BLS as needed. Call 9-1-1.

2. If scene not safe, call 9-1-1.

3. Try to find out what drug was taken.

4. Call PCC if minor symptoms and known substance.

5. If victim vomits, save sample.
Chapter – Opening Scenario

You are at a friend’s holiday party where some of the guests are drinking rather heavily. At the end of the evening, when most have left, you notice a young woman alone on the sofa, apparently either sleeping or passed out.

She seems to be by herself, and others are saying to just leave her alone and let her “sleep it off.” You are wondering if you should do something – if it could be a more serious problem.

What can you do?
Scenario 1

You enter a room where your Aunt is closing a medication container, saying she has just taken her prescribed daily pills. Then, she admits she was interrupted by a telephone call, and in her confusion, may have taken too many. Now she is feeling a little drowsy.

Is there reason to be concerned?

What should you do?
Scenario 2

You are at a party on campus where some of the students are drinking excessively and you suspect a few may be using drugs. A man bursts into the room from the hallway leading to the bedrooms, looking very distraught and says, “Man, Sandra’s really out of it! She’s really sick.”

No one else seems to be paying attention, so you ask him what is wrong. He is incoherent, however, repeating over and over in a slurred voice that she’s sick and you notice that the pupils of his eyes are very dilated.
Scenario 2 *continued*

You go to the bedroom and find a woman on the bed, who has just vomited. You ask if she needs help, and she seems unable to focus on you. She says nothing.

**What should you do?**
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Scenario 2 continued

You ask again if you can help and she shakes her head violently. A moment later, her eyes close and she seems to have passed out. Her breathing is slow. You try to rouse her, but cannot.

Now what should you do?
CHAPTER 18

Discussion and Questions