

State Technical Assistance Team Education and Support

# Empowering Your Community Against Stimulant Use Disorders



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## EMPOWERING YOUR COMMUNITY AGAINST STIMULANT USE DISORDERS

Thank you for participating in Empowering Your Community Against Stimulant Use Disorders. This program through the collaboration of the American Heart Association and the Opioid Response Network addresses stimulant use among Black/African American and Hispanic/LatinX people. Examples of stimulants include cocaine and methamphetamine.



**This toolkit serves as a supplement to the EmPOWERED TO END OPIOID MISUSE program and contains information for your faith-based organization:**

- Why This is Important
- Stimulant Overview
- Common Stimulants
- Managing Stimulant Use Disorders
- Supporting Overdose Survivors and Family Members

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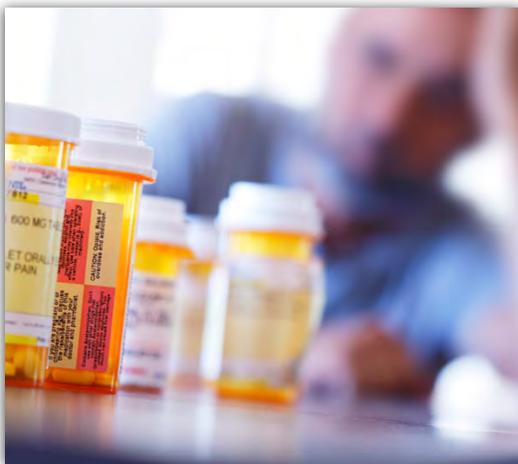
## The Why

- ❖ From 2015-2019, the prevalence of methamphetamine use disorder—not including injectables—has increased significantly, with growth of 10x of methamphetamine use disorder in African American people, 3x in white people and 2x in Hispanic people.
- ❖ 5.1 million people reported misusing prescription stimulants in the past 12 months.
- ❖ Among 8th, 9th, and 10th graders in 2021, approximately 8% reported misusing amphetamines in the past 12 months.
- ❖ More than 16,000 Americans died from an overdose involving psychostimulants with abuse potential in 2019, which was a 28% increase from the previous year.
- ❖ Repeated misuse of prescription stimulants, even within a short period, can cause psychosis, anger, or paranoia.
- ❖ Prescription stimulant misuse can lead to a substance use disorder, which takes the form of addiction in severe cases, even when used as prescribed by a doctor.

## STIMULANT OVERVIEW

### What are stimulants?

Stimulants include prescription medications used to treat medical problems



such as attentional (e.g. – ADHD), sleep problems (e.g. – narcolepsy), or medications prescribed for weight loss like Methylphenidate, Concerta, Ritalin, Adderall, Amphetamine, Dextroamphetamine, Phentermine.

Stimulants also include illegal drugs like methamphetamine, cocaine, and crack cocaine.

*See more common stimulant names on the next page.*

## How do stimulants work?

Stimulants work by targeting the central nervous system and increase the level of certain chemicals in the brain. The increased brain chemicals produce feelings of exhilaration, higher energy, wakefulness that persists longer than normal, and a loss of appetite.

## How does a stimulant overdose occur?

An overdose occurs when someone takes more opioids than the body can handle. Different people may experience overdose differently, but the main immediate causes of death are heart attack, stroke, and seizures in stimulant overdoses, which are caused by the effects of the stimulant.

## How does an addiction occur?

### Who's at risk?

People who are at higher risk for methamphetamine use include people experiencing poverty or housing instability, mental health conditions, or people coping with criminal justice involvement.

When a person uses stimulants, a flood of dopamine occurs in the brain. This "high" can overpower human rewards like relationships. A dopamine cycle of pleasure and pain ensues. The brain is hijacked, with more and more drug needed to get that same "high." Each time the person comes down, they feel worse. It's like being "stuck" in a loop where the person has to consume more and more of the drug just to feel "OK" again.

## How to tell if a loved one is using a stimulant/meth:

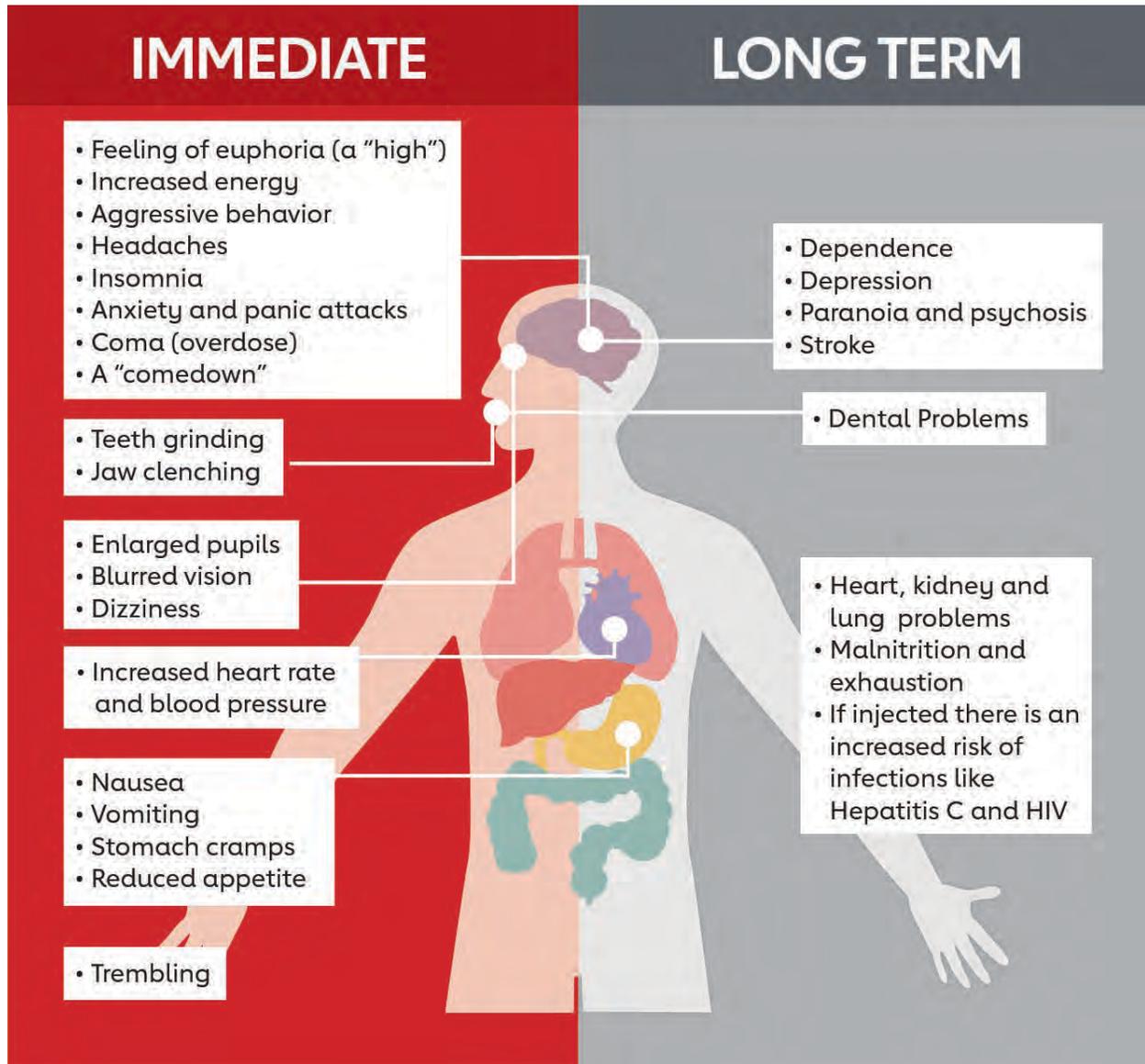
**Look for** – Are they more restless than usual? Have they been losing weight? Are they having issues with their teeth? Do they clench their jaw? Are they nauseated/vomiting? Do they seem paranoid or like they might be seeing/hearing things?

**Listen** – Are they breathing quickly? Are they grinding their teeth?

**Look** – Do their pupils look large? Do they have injuries from picking their skin? Do they look shaky?

**Touch** – Are they warm to the touch?

## How stimulants/meth affect the body:



*Adapted from Methamphetamine: Factsheet – Positive Choices*

## What happens during a stimulant/meth overdose?

Different people may experience overdose differently, but the main immediate causes of death are heart attack, stroke, and seizures in stimulant overdoses, which are caused by the effects of the stimulant/meth.

**A stimulant overdose requires immediate medical attention.**

**Call 911 right away!**

## COMMON STIMULANTS

People who misuse stimulants are at increased risk for addiction and overdose. It's important to be aware of brand names, common generic names, and common street names for stimulants.

### Brand Names

Concerta  
Ritalin  
Dexedrine  
Daytrana  
Focalin  
Methylin  
Metadate  
Vyvanse  
Didrex  
Bontril  
Preludin  
Lomaira  
Fastin  
Adipex P  
Ionomin  
Meridia

Sources: [National Institutes of Health](#),  
[National Institute on Drug Abuse](#),  
[Drug Enforcement Agency](#), [Cleveland Clinic](#)

### Common Generic Names

Methylphenidate  
Amphetamine  
Dextroamphetamine  
Lisdexamfetamine  
Benzphetamine  
Phendimetrazine  
Phenmetrazine  
Phentermine  
Sibutramine

Sources: [National Institutes of Health](#),  
[National Institute on Drug Abuse](#),  
[Drug Enforcement Agency](#)

### Common Street Names

Addys  
Bennies  
Beans  
Black Beauties  
Crosses  
Hearts  
Ivy League Drug  
Pep Pills  
Speed  
Uppers  
Diet Coke  
JIF  
Kiddie Coke  
MPH  
R-Ball  
R-Pop  
Skippy  
Study Buddies  
The Smart Drug  
Vitamin R Sources: [National Institutes of Health](#),  
[National Institute on Drug Abuse](#)

**If you're concerned about your stimulant use, don't wait!**

Talk with a health care professional.

**If you're concerned about family members or friends, urge them to talk to a health care professional as well.**

## MANAGING SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER

### What are options for treating substance use disorder?

Multiple treatment options can help you reach your goals. No single treatment is right for everyone. Talk with your health care professionals and family to learn more about the possible treatment options and decide which ones are best for you.

**Medications:** Medications aren't used for all substance use disorders. For people with addictions to drugs like stimulants, no medications are currently available to assist in treatment, so treatment consists of behavioral therapies. Treatment will need to be tailored to address each individual patient's drug-related issues. However, there are medications to treat addiction to drugs like alcohol and nicotine.

## SUPPORTING OVERDOSE SURVIVORS AND FAMILY MEMBERS

While many factors can contribute to stimulant use, often there are underlying issues like anxiety or depression which may initially drive use, and which may still exist even as people enter recovery for substance use disorders.

Most need the support of family and friends to take the next steps toward recovery. People struggling with substance use have challenges that impact their relationships, both with family and friends. Thus, family interventions may be helpful in the context of addiction treatment.



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## REFERENCES

1. [Nonfatal Overdoses: All Stimulants | Drug Overdose | CDC Injury Center](#)
2. [Other Drugs | Drug Overdose | CDC Injury Center](#)
3. [Prescription Stimulants DrugFacts | National Institute on Drug Abuse \(NIDA\) \(nih.gov\)](#)
4. [Teenage Drug Use Statistics \[2022\]: Data & Trends on Abuse \(drugabusestatistics.org\)](#)
5. [Treatment and Recovery | National Institute on Drug Abuse \(NIDA\) \(nih.gov\)](#)
6. [Methamphetamine: Factsheet - Positive Choices](#)
7. Han B, Compton WM, Jones CM, Einstein EB, Volkow ND. Methamphetamine Use, Methamphetamine Use Disorder, and Associated Overdose Deaths Among US Adults. JAMA Psychiatry. 2021 Dec 1;78(12):1329-1342. doi: 10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2021.2588. PMID: 34550301; PMCID: PMC8459304.
8. For more training and education submit a request to [opioidresponsenetwork.org](https://opioidresponsenetwork.org) at NO COST.

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