

# “It started with a prescription...”



Eight times as many Americans die from opioid overdose every year than all American troops killed in Iraq and Afghanistan. Opioid overdose deaths are caused by both accidental overdose and addiction. Both of these can be prevented.

## Why does addiction happen?

Opioid painkillers such as oxycodone, hydrocodone and others, are prescribed for moderate to severe pain. Chronic opioid use causes the brain to reduce production of its own “happy hormones” and relies on the opiate to provide them. This produces powerful cravings. For this reason, people who abuse opioid painkillers are 40 times more likely to abuse the opioid heroin.

## What are the common signs of addiction?

- Euphoria (Feeling high)
- Mood Swings
- Slurred speech
- Poor decision making
- Confusion
- Drowsiness or insomnia
- Agitation
- Irritability
- Depression
- Lack of Motivation
- Anxiety
- Abandoning responsibilities

## It's always OK to get help

**Talk to your Primary Care Provider or  
St. Vrain Nurse Care Coach**

Jerri Mason - 303-702-7912

Carla Keahey - 303-702-7928

**ComPsych EAP • 1-855-699-6908**

**National Helpline • 1-800-622-HELP (4357)**

**Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services  
Administration • [www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)**

**Narcotics Anonymous • [www.na.org](http://www.na.org)**

## How can you help someone?

### ESCORT to safety: A Method for Starting the Conversation

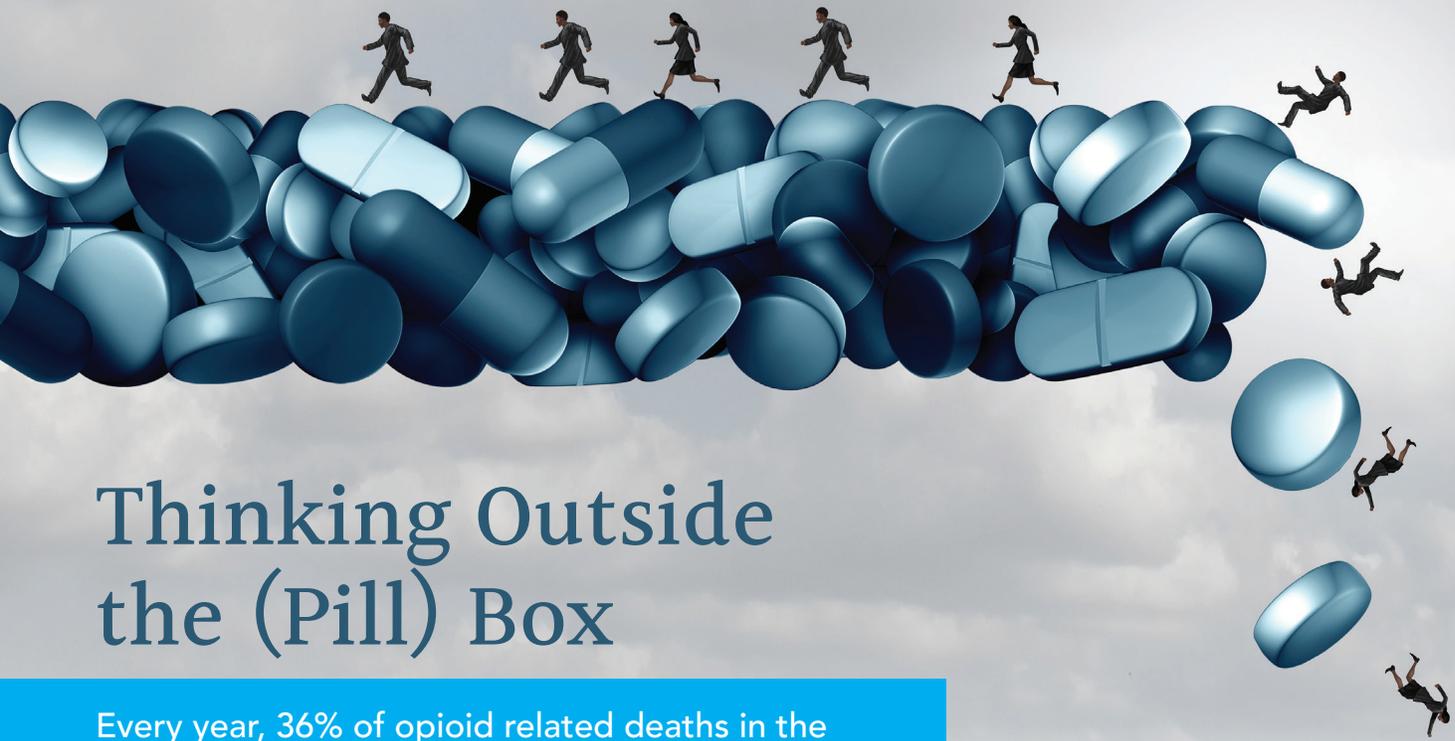
**E – Empathy:** Show empathy and compassion in the same way you would for someone with a chronic illness.

**S – Sober:** Have the conversation while they are sober.

**Co – COncern:** Show concern without judgment. Use “I” statements rather than “you.” “I feel worried about your mood.” vs. “You always seem to be in a bad mood.” Listen more than you talk.

**R – Resources:** Know some resources for recovery, even if they aren't ready yet.

**T – Tread lightly:** Stay cool.



# Thinking Outside the (Pill) Box

Every year, 36% of opioid related deaths in the state of Colorado are due to prescription opiates.

## Preventing accidental overdose and opioid addiction starts with appropriate pain management.

See your medical provider if you are unable to manage your pain with over the counter medications and conservative treatment. Your St. Vrain Nurse Care Coach can help guide you to appropriate resources.

## What are some alternatives to pain medication?

- **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)** teaches you how to retrain your brain and regain control of your pain perception.
- **Relaxation Therapy** includes repetitive focus on a word, sound, prayer, phrase, body sensation, or muscular activity. Meditation was shown to significantly improve pain in cancer patients.
- **Hypnosis** has been shown to reduce pain intensity, anxiety, and suffering.
- **Creative arts therapy** includes music, dance/movement, and art and can reduce anxiety, depression, pain, and quality of life.
- **Massage therapy** has been used to treat pain for over 2500 years. It can improve pain and sleep.
- **Acupuncture** has been declared by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as a sound medical technique for certain conditions including the treatment of pain.
- **Exercise Therapy** can include yoga and pilates, general physical fitness, aerobics, core strengthening, and physical therapy. It helps alleviate pain and improves function.
- **Spinal Manipulation** by a chiropractor, osteopathic physician, or physical therapist can provide short-term reduction of pain in many cases.

Always take pain medication as directed by your medical provider and never share your prescription with others as it is tailored specifically for you and may be dangerous to others. Don't forget to safely dispose of the leftovers.