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**Methods and Mindsets
of
Drug Seeking Individuals**

Program Objectives

1. Define the Desperate, Opportunistic, and Professional drug seekers.
2. Explain how perception can relate to your clinic being targeted by drug seekers.
3. Identify safeguards that can help protect your practice from drug seeking individuals.

Overall Objective

To make sure legitimate patients can receive the medication they deserve.



Criminal Street Gangs and Organized Criminal Activity





National Drug Intelligence Center National Drug Threat Assessment 2010 (2009 stats) Released February 2010

900,000 criminally active gang members

20,000 Gangs

2,500 Cities



Source: National Drug Intelligence Center's
National Drug Threat Survey 2009.

Motivation

**Understanding Motivation
Helps
Select Effective Safeguards**

Categories

Desperate

Opportunistic

Professional



The Desperate Drug Seeker

Desperate Drug Seeker

Mindset/Motivation

Majority:

Obtains medication to consume

Minority:

Obtains and sells meds to:

- ✓ Pay bills
- ✓ Help family, etc...

Duress


- ✓ Obtains meds for others to avoid assault/abandonment

Desperate Drug Seeker

Prescription Fraud:

Most likely candidate to commit Prescription Fraud (altering a prescription sheet)

Desperation Scale

1		Overall Mindset
2		
3		The most important issue in their
4		life!
5		
6		During the examination
7		
8		Desperate people do desperate
9		things!
10		

Desperate Drug Seeker

Method

Relies heavily on:

- ✓ Past experiences or what they have been told
- ✓ Selects a symptom and acts out the part

Clinic Selection

Clinic selection based on:

- ✓ Pure chance or
- ✓ What patients say about the clinic

Desperate Drug Seeker

Flags/Indicators

They may:

- ✓ Display aberrant behavior
- ✓ Exaggerate symptoms
- ✓ Provide excuses to avoid pill counts/urine testing/physical therapy/weight loss/procedures/etc...
- ✓ Request change of medication to avoid withdrawal and/or try to get the medication they want
- ✓ Disagree with changing the medication they want
- ✓ Subconscious verbal and non-verbal indicator will likely present.

Desperate Drug Seeker

Safeguards – Pre-examination

1. Query the state PDMP* the day before the examination.
 - ✓ If you identify any negative information, verify the information prior to confronting the patient.
 - False information can be found in a PDMP query.

* If applicable in your state.

Desperate Drug Seeker

Safeguards – Pre-examination

2. Utilize numbered prescription sheets only.
 - ✓ Numbered prescription sheets cause every sheet to be unique making prescription fraud much easier to prosecute.
3. Utilize an indelible ink pen to write and/or sign prescription sheets.
 - ✓ This makes it next to impossible to wash the writing off the sheet.

Desperate Drug Seeker

Safeguards – General

1. Utilize effective risk assessment tools during new patient intake:
 - a. Assess potential risk of abuse
 - b. Assess potential risk of diversion

Desperate Drug Seeker

Safeguards – General

2. Utilize Urine Drug Testing During:

- a. New Patient Assessment
- b. Random at appointment
- c. Random “call to clinic”
- d. For cause

3. Utilize Laboratory Confirmations for UDTs

- a. Point of care (POC) tests may provide a false positive or false negative result.
- b. Information to falsify UDT (POC) outcomes are readily available on the internet.
- c. Laboratory confirmations are much more accurate than point of care results.

Urine Drug Testing

A valuable tool in assessing:

- ✓ Presents of medication/drugs
- ✓ Lack of expected medication
- ✓ The patient's veracity

Desperate Drug Seeker

Safeguards – General

4. Utilize Pill Counts

- a. Random at appointment
- b. Random “call to clinic”
- c. For cause

Note: Be sure UDTs and Pill Counting is a part of your patient agreement:

- ✓ When UDTs and Pill Counts will be requested
- ✓ Who will actually count the patient’s pills

Desperate Drug Seeker

Safeguards – General

5. Updated Patient Agreement that covers:

- a. Failing to take part in the treatment plan
- b. Use of alcohol, other drugs
- c. Selling, trading, lending, borrowing medication
- d. Seeing other doctors
- e. Doctor Shopping Issues
- f. Using one pharmacy
- g. Providing UDTs/Pill Counts
- h. Potential outcome of UDTs/Pill Counts
- i. Refusing UDTs/Pill Counts
- j. Destroying medication
- k. Many other issues

Desperate Drug Seeker

Safeguards – General

6. Promote an open rapport with your patients.
7. Keep a good balance between stating your intention to enforce your opioid agreement and encourage your patients to identify problems they may be experiencing.
8. Observe (and understand) the patient's body language.
9. Consider requesting that the patient include their wife or significant other in their treatment and clinic visits.



Why would someone sell Rx pain medication on the street?

Earnings Potential

Street Dealer Clandestine Narcotics

Example:

Purchase \$500 of cocaine

Add baking soda, etc.

Sell total content for approx. \$1,000

Earnings Potential

Professional Drug Seeker

Example:

Common Abusable Drug

120 tablets

X \$15

\$1800 Street Value

- \$600 Pay off

- \$25 Office Visit

- \$25 Rx co-pay

\$1150

\$1150 X 20 doctors = \$23,000.00 per month

\$276,000 per year



The Opportunistic Drug Seeker

Opportunistic Drug Seeker

Mindset

Gain schedule II and/or III medication because:

- ✓ Rx medication is safer to use.
- ✓ They like the effect.
- ✓ It is easy to sell on the street to make extra money.
- ✓ There is less risk of going to jail.

Opportunistic Drug Seeker

Mindset

“If I get it great, if I don’t, no big deal.”

They don’t mind getting caught

But

*They do not want to go to **JAIL***

Opportunistic Drug Seeker

Mindset

If they believe there is a chance of being charged with a criminal offense, they will likely walk away.

Opportunistic Drug Seeker

Not uncommon for an opportunistic drug seeker to:

- ✓ Work with a professional drug seeker
- OR
- ✓ Become a professional drug seeker.

Desperation Scale

0
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10



NOT desperate at all!

Apathetic

They just take advantage of an opportunity.

Opportunistic Drug Seeker

Clinic Selection

They will look for signs of weakness:

- ✓ Clinic's location
- ✓ Clinic's appearance

They may select their target clinic based on what patients say about their clinic.

Opportunistic Drug Seeker

Method

1. They will make up a symptom and act out the part.
2. They will try to fit in.
3. They will not call in early for refills.
4. They will go along with treatment.

Opportunistic Drug Seeker

Attitude

The doctor works for me –
I'll tell them what I want to tell them. Prove I'm not
in pain.

OR

They may appear very friendly.

They may bring gifts!

Opportunistic Drug Seeker

Flags/Indicators

1. May ask for specific prescription
2. May request a change of medication (hoping to get the medication they really want)
3. May appear controlling or friendly
4. May bring gifts
5. Verbal and non-verbal cues may present.
6. Less intense than a desperate drug seeker

Opportunistic Drug Seeker

Safeguards – Pre-examination

1. Query the state PDMP the day before the examination.

Opportunistic Drug Seeker

Safeguards - General

1. New Patient Risk Assessment
2. Utilize UDTs/pill counts
3. Utilize lab confirmations
4. Enforce your patient agreement
5. Open rapport with the patient
6. Observe and understand body language
7. Include family if possible (in treatment)

Opportunistic Drug Seeker

Safeguards – General

Consider placing a sign in your lobby that states: “Illegal drug seeking behavior will be reported and prosecuted by this clinic.”



The Professional Drug Seeker

Professional Drug Seeker

Five (5) types

1. Those who Counterfeit or use stolen prescription sheets
2. The Roamer tactic
3. Those who use Insurance Fraud as a tactic
4. The Recruiter tactic
5. The Doctor Shopper

Professional Drug Seeker

The Counterfeit Tactic - Method

1. Obtains names and DEA numbers of doctors
2. Uses stolen prescription sheets or makes counterfeit sheets that look official
3. Displays a telephone number on the sheet to call for verification
4. Uses scapegoat to pass the prescription sheet to the pharmacy
5. Scapegoat passes prescription sheet during high traffic periods

Professional Drug Seeker

The Counterfeit Tactic - Safeguards

- ✓ You cannot stop this from happening.
- ✓ If you find out that someone is passing counterfeit prescriptions call:
 - DEA
 - Your local law enforcement agency

Professional Drug Seeker

The Roamer Tactic

Two (2) Types

1. Non-confrontational
2. Charismatic

Professional Drug Seeker

The Roamer Tactic - Non-confrontational Method

1. Obtains vehicle license plates and vehicle descriptions by driving or walking through the parking lot of the clinic
2. Uses a “public records” website to obtain the address of the owner of the vehicle
3. Burglarizes the patient’s home or sells the information to someone who will

Professional Drug Seeker

The Roamer Tactic - Non-confrontational Safeguards

Considerations:

- ✓ Security camera to record parking area
- ✓ Fake security camera
- ✓ Signs indicating that security camera is in use

Professional Drug Seeker

The Roamer Tactic – Charismatic Methods

1. Enters the waiting room and poses as a patient or someone waiting for a patient
2. Strikes up a conversation with a patient
3. Utilizing a high level of social intelligence, will obtain information about the patient, their medication and the pharmacy they use

Professional Drug Seeker

The Roamer Tactic - Charismatic Safeguards

Considerations:

- ✓ Monitor the waiting room
- ✓ Educate patients not to share their PHI
- ✓ Place a sign in the waiting room:

“Because we care about our patients, any discussion regarding your personal information, your medical condition or the medication you are taking will not be permitted while in the waiting room.”



Greatest Threat to Clinician

Professional Drug Seeker

Greatest Threat to Clinician

The Insurance Fraud Tactic

Methods

1. Locates someone desperate for money who has health insurance
2. Pays for the use of their insurance card
3. Obtains fake ID or Driver License and become the insured party
4. Gains access to pain specialist through primary care by way of referral

Uses different fake name and insurance card at each clinic.

This makes them untraceable!

Professional Drug Seeker

Greatest Threat to Clinician

The Recruiter Tactic

Methods

1. Identifies people who have health insurance and want to make extra money
2. Teaches the recruited person what to say and how to act to gain a referral to a pain management specialist and to gain the correct type of drugs
3. Pays the recruited person for the full bottle of medication to sell on the street

Professional Drug Seeker

Greatest Threat to Clinician

The Doctor Shopper

Methods

1. Uses a fake ID or Driver License (no insurance); cash pay patient
2. Claims to live somewhere close to the clinic
3. Claims to have lost insurance and cannot obtain insurance due to cost or pre-existing condition
4. May drive into rural areas – perceives doctors to be less aware of their tactics

Professional Drug Seeker

Greatest Threat to Clinician

Overall method/mindset

- ✓ **Makes a living** selling prescription drugs
- ✓ **Not desperate**
- ✓ **Stays focused**
- ✓ Looks at job as a **challenge**
- ✓ Willing to **invest money and time** to accomplish objective
- ✓ **Patient, deliberate, and methodical**
- ✓ May **work 30 to 50 doctors** a month

Professional Drug Seeker

Greatest Threat to Clinician

Once in the Clinic the drug seeker will:

- ✓ Be **on time** for each appointment
- ✓ **Not call in early** for refills
- ✓ **Go along** with treatment plan
- ✓ **Present themselves as other** patients do
- ✓ **Not draw attention** to themselves
- ✓ Plan on **staying in the practice** for years

Professional Drug Seeker

Greatest Threat to Clinician

Clinic/Target selection

Location

Distance from other targets

Perception

Clinic - Appears professional

Professional Drug Seeker

Greatest Threat to Clinician

Clinic/Target selection

Information from existing patients

- ✓ How much time does the clinician spend with you?
- ✓ Does the clinician push procedures?
- ✓ Do you have to sign a patient agreement?
- ✓ Are you required to provide urine for testing?
- ✓ Do you hear about the results that day or later?
- ✓ Does the clinician require pill counts?
- ✓ How often are urine tests and pill counts required?
- ✓ Is it hard for you to convince the clinician to change or increase the dosage of your medication?
- ✓ Does the clinician ever talk about your hobbies or personal life?

Professional Drug Seeker

Greatest Threat to Clinician

Safeguards

- ✓ Verify the authenticity of the patient's ID or DL.
- ✓ Verify all medical records delivered or faxed.
- ✓ Verify all referrals.
- ✓ Utilize an abuse assessment and a diversion assessment during new patient intake.
- ✓ Provide a urine drug screen upon new patient intake.
- ✓ Utilize and enforce a comprehensive patient agreement.
Explain the agreement to the patient.
- ✓ Enforce a patient accountability protocol of randomly urine drug screening and pill counting patients.
- ✓ Provide eye-to-eye conversations with your patients.

Professional Drug Seeker

Greatest Threat to Clinician

Safeguards

- ✓ Query your state PDMP a day prior to each patient's appointment.
- ✓ Take a digital photograph of all patient's during new patient intake.

Conclusion

Due to different laws throughout the United States, if this information causes you to change **ANY** of your policies and/or procedures, always gain legal counsel first.



Questions?

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