Empowered Health Conscious & Prescription Drugs
The Wellness Alternative

HC assumes that:
(1) individuals have the desire and ability to stay conscious of their health;
(2) they recognize triggers (stimuli, symptoms, or behaviors) which place them at risk of poor health; and
(3) then they take corrective action, with protective factors or resources (e.g. Healthy Alternatives).
We must empower ourselves and others to be health conscious as a whole person (physical, emotional, occupational, social, intellectual, and spiritual).

References on request


pharmophilia


https://www.worldatwork.org/workspan/issues/january-2018
NEW TRAIN THE TRAINER COURSE

EMPOWERED HEALTH
CONSCIOUSNESS: PRESCRIPTION DRUGS
AND THE WELLNESS ALTERNATIVE

http://www.nationalwellness.org/page/wellness_alternative

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Objectives

As a result of this session, participants will be able to:
• Identify five distinct steps associated with increasing health consciousness as a protective factor for prescription drug misuse
• Explore methods for integrating these steps into their own approach to preventing Rx misuse problems
• Integrate, align, or re-align an empowered approach to personal wellness/wholeness across all dimensions of well-being

Health Consciousness (HC) is a process of increasing awareness in the face of potential risks to one’s health. HC assumes that
(1) individuals have a basic desire and ability to stay conscious of their health;
(2) accordingly, they recognize triggers (stimuli, symptoms, or behaviors) which suggest they may be at risk of poor health; and
(3) then they take corrective action, with protective factors or resources (e.g. Healthy Alternatives).
Easier said than done

Please use the grid below to identify
[1] your own level of **Desire & Ability** to stay health conscious;
[2] **Triggers** that can signal risk (pain, problems relaxing, needing energy, and anxious/tense);
[3] **Basic Alert Questions** to help increase HC across six wellness dimensions;
[4] **Healthy Alternatives** to consider when responding; and
[5] questions to consider for making **Responsible** choices.
Where in the Health Consciousness process do you do most of your work?
A) Motivating clients to stay conscious (Desire & Ability)
B) Helping them identify triggers (e.g., for relapse)
C) Giving them skills to stay alert and healthy
D) Helping them take corrective actions (identify healthy alternatives)
E) Doing the right thing (taking responsibility for their lives)

- I’m generally attentive to my inner feelings about my health
- I take responsibility for the state of my health
- Living life without disease and illness is very important to me
- When not as healthy as I could be, I seek information or advice to get well
- I can distinguish wellness products/services that are more effective than others
- I make daily efforts to stay alert to my mind-body condition
I’m generally attentive to my inner feelings about my health

I take responsibility for the state of my health
Living life without disease and illness is very important to me

When not as healthy as I could be, I seek out information to get well
I can distinguish wellness products/services more effective than others

I make daily efforts to stay alert to my MIND-BODY condition
Poll #1 (Which is your strength?)

Self-health Awareness
Personal Responsibility
Health Motivation
Informational Effort
Consumer Awareness
Routine Practice

Consciousness

Health
Consciousness is an active process through which people become aware of, and make choices toward, a more successful existence.

Wellness (well-being) is an active process through which people become aware of, and make choices toward, a more successful existence.

Consciousness is the active process of attending to the arising and passing away of sensations, observations, thoughts, and all phenomena.

Wellness (well-being) is an active process through which people become aware of, and make choices toward, a more successful existence.
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Wellness (well-being) is an **active process** through which people **become aware** of, and make choices toward, a more **successful existence**.

---

**Why is this so important?**
Poll # 2 -- Why is building health consciousness so important?

A. To stay healthy
B. Make the right choices
C. Our culture promotes consumption and addiction to things that keep us unconscious
D. The pharmaceutical industry depends upon the lack of it

**Triggers**

- Pain
- Problems
- Relaxing/Hyperactive
- Needing Energy/Focus
- Anxious/Tense

**Opioids**
- Sedatives-Hypnotics
- Stimulants
- Tranquilizers
## My Triggers

**Which trigger is a vulnerable point?**  
Do you have healthy resources and behaviors to deal with the trigger?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>EXAMPLES OF RELATED DRUGS</th>
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<td>Sedatives – Barbiturates (&quot;Sleeping Pills&quot;)</td>
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<td>You need energy, more focus, or overconcerned about weight loss</td>
<td>Stimulants – Amphetamine (Adderall)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You feel anxious, tense, or easily overwhelmed</td>
<td>Tranquilizers – Benzodiazepines (Xanax)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have or anticipate pain</td>
<td>Opioids (narcotics) – Hydrocodone (Vicodin)</td>
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### My Triggers

**Which trigger is a vulnerable point?**  
Do you have healthy resources and behaviors to deal with the trigger?

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What do you care about enough to stay on the look out?

https://youtu.be/Qo6QNU8kHxI

Heart & Stroke Foundation Canada

Make Health Last. What will your last 10 years look like?

3,256,650 views
Poll # 3
The video made me reflect on my own health

A) Yes
B) In Between
C) No

Empowerment
What do you care enough about?

[2] Triggers
Stimuli or Behaviors (can lead to misuse of Prescription Drugs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>[3] Basic Alert Questions (applied to Six Dimensions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pain</td>
<td>Am I aware of, or attuned to, the arising or presence of...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems Relaxing/Being Hyperactive</td>
<td>In this domain, do I experience difficulties with...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needing Energy/Focus</td>
<td>Do I need extra energy or can’t concentrate because...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxious/Tense</td>
<td>Do I get anxious, tense or have panic when I...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[3] Basic Alert Questions
Six Dimensions of Wellness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Emotional</th>
<th>Occupational</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Intellectual</th>
<th>Spiritual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Am I aware of, or attuned to, the arising or presence of...</td>
<td>Physical pain in any area of my body?</td>
<td>Emotional or mood states that I am avoiding?</td>
<td>Aspects of my finances, job or work setting that are difficult or &quot;painful&quot;?</td>
<td>Relationships that are difficult; grief, unresolved issues with others?</td>
<td>Thoughts, memories of an experience of pain, adversity, or trauma? (PTSD*)</td>
<td>Any sense of spiritual lack, longing, suffering, feeling disconnected?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample Healthy Alternatives

Listed suggestions are neither exhaustive nor are they prescriptions or medical advice. These are best for preventive purposes or when first experiencing the triggers listed above. These are not treatments but suggestions for a healthy lifestyle.

Six Dimensions of Wellness

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<td>Progressive Relaxation; Guided Visualizations to Relax; Yoga; Tai Chi; Qi Gong; Massage; Mindfulness; Sauna; Essential Oils; Chiropractic; Fast; Detoxification.</td>
<td>Talk with a Friend; Counseling; Coaching; Abdominal Breathing; Emotional Freedom Technique (Tai Pong); Proper Diet; Journaling.</td>
<td>Vacation; Time Away; Talk with coworkers or supervisor; Job counseling; Employee Assistance; Employee Relations; Job Crafting; Team Building; Work Retreat or Training.</td>
<td>Talk with Friend or Other Support; Counseling or Therapy; Support Groups; Grief counseling; Acceptance and Commitment Therapy.</td>
<td>Cognitive Behavioral Tools; Relaxation Techniques; Healthy Hobby; Music Therapy; Art Therapy; Physical Exercise; Connect with Nature; Digital Detox.</td>
<td>Prayer; Meditation; Talk with Spiritual Guide (Pastor, Priest, Rabbi); Journaling; Retreat; Connect with Nature; Go to Church, Synagogue, Mosque; Spiritual reading; Spiritual Cinema.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Corrective Action (Healthy Alternatives)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Mind-Body Practices</th>
<th>Pain Tx Alternatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✐ Acupressure</td>
<td>✐ Acupuncture/Acupressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✐ Breath practices</td>
<td>✐ Physical therapy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✐ Meditation</td>
<td>✐ Cognitive behavioral therapy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✐ Guided imagery</td>
<td>✐ Biofeedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✐ Progressive relaxation</td>
<td>✐ Therapeutic Exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✐ Tai chi</td>
<td>✐ Manipulative Therapy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✐ Yoga</td>
<td>✐ Cold/Heat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✐ Spinal manipulation</td>
<td>✐ Micro-stimulation (Electrotherapy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✐ Massage therapy</td>
<td>✐ Ultrasound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✐ Feldenkrais Method</td>
<td>✐ Nerve blocks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✐ Binaural or Bilateral stimulation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Am I Responsible?

Taking Corrective Action with Conscientiousness and Moral Consciousness

Moral consciousness means awareness that our actions are or are not aligned with our standards: what we consider to be right or wrong.

Ask yourself if your corrective action is good or helpful

(1) for you;
(2) for others;
(3) for the environment;
(4) all of these.

Responsibility (examples)

• Do the right thing:
  • Maintain your HC Quotient
  • Only take Rx as needed and prescribed
  • Only receive from Dr. minimum amount
  • Dispose of properly
  • Never share
  • If work requires reporting, please do so
  • Manage exposure at home
  • Work with physician
  • Empower yourself to ask questions
WAKE UP
GROW UP

Am I Responsible?
Taking Corrective Action with Conscientiousness and Moral Consciousness
Moral consciousness means awareness that our actions are or are not aligned with our standards: what we consider to be right or wrong.

Ask yourself if your corrective action is good or helpful (1) for you; (2) for others; (3) for the environment; (4) all of these.
• If our corrective action is always only good for us, consider another perspective.
• Our response to triggers may seem entirely private and personal. However, Health Consciousness can both influence and be influenced by your family, community, and society.
• As we become more conscious we see how our environment, society, culture, and technology shapes our corrective actions.

• If we are parents, teachers, or role models, our choices can also influence others.
• For example, when we have pain, we may receive advertising, products or recommendations for what is “best for us.” If we share medications with others, we may put them at risk.
• Use this grid to reflect on what YOU THINK IS BEST for you, for others, and society. Always consider your own conscience along with other’s advice or messages.
Where in the Health Consciousness process do you do most of your work?

A) Motivating clients to stay conscious (Desire & Ability)
B) Helping them identify triggers (e.g., for relapse)
C) Giving them skills to stay alert and healthy
D) Helping them take corrective actions (identify healthy alternatives)
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The

OPIOID EPIDEMIC

A TEAM-BASED APPROACH TO PREVENTION

BY JOEL BENNETT, PH.D., ORGANIZATIONAL WELLNESS & LEARNING SYSTEMS (OWLS)
We are in the grips of an opioid epidemic. You only need to peek under the surface to see that the pain giving rise to addiction is both psychological and societal. National studies show increases in suicide rates, alcoholism, depression, sleep, fatigue and stress. Now add in the rise of stress-related disorders, positive drug-test rates and social polarization, and it’s clear the effect on worker health and productivity is serious.

In the past three decades, research has shown that some of the best predictors of employees’ well-being are how much support they feel from co-workers and direct supervisors, how fairly they feel they are treated, and how much they are respected by others to do their jobs. Collectively, these factors can outweigh the negative effects of high-stress jobs, according to a 2015 article in The Atlantic. These stressors are strong predictors of poor health outcomes and contribute significantly to health-care costs. Conversely, a workaholic climate in which supervisors suggest “pushing through the pain” leads to greater disease risk and less use of mental health resources/employee assistance programs (EAPs).

But most wellness solutions are skewed toward individual-level data and focus on reducing individual health risk. They ignore the work climate and environmental factors that amplify, and even cause, those risks. In my experience, there’s more success using a team or “culture of health” approach.

Evidence-Based Solutions

In the past 20 years, through research and public health initiatives, numerous evidence-based programs have been developed that have reduced employee substance-use risk. Many of these programs emphasize wellness and well-being, as described in the 2002 American Psychological Association’s “Preventing Workplace Substance Abuse: Beyond Drug Testing to Wellness.”

Recognition of a problem often means noticing how we, as a group, tolerate concerns, and that tolerance can take many forms:

- Routine use of alcohol as the way to socialize with co-workers
- A tendency to stigmatize substance abuse as a “they” or “them” problem
- The belief that seeking help is a weakness
- Blind acceptance of a “suck it up” workplace attitude
- Ignoring and pushing through one’s own stress
- Looking the other way when witnessing harassment and bullying
- Ignoring the lonely or withdrawn co-workers who need encouragement
- Working next to someone who doesn’t make it safe for a worker to express himself or herself.

Any one factor by itself may be the cause of, or an excuse for, covering up some form of psychological pain. Since the 1988 Drug Free Workplace Act, workplace levels of substance abuse have, at best,

Scenario: A business owner fired a key supervisor after the supervisor repeatedly asked her direct reports to share their pain medication with her.

Scenario: A group of co-workers ignored a colleague with a prescription-addiction problem out of a fear of tattling. That colleague later caused an accident that nearly killed someone.

Scenario: A friend’s niece was murdered because her addiction to pain medication brought her into contact with an ex-convict. The tragedy resulted in weeks of grief and time away from work to support the family.

Scenario: A director of workforce development consistently cannot place employees in local businesses because they cannot pass the opiate drug test.
Tips for Taking a Team Approach

Following are tips for treating opioid addiction in the workplace with a team approach:

• **Customize.** Each workplace has its own set of policies, including human resources, benefits, safety and wellness, and others. When training the team, always remind them of these policies and integrate them into your message.

• **Psychological safety.** You cannot do the type of team training advocated here without setting guidelines for confidentiality and anonymity and getting unanimous agreement from all.

• **Engagement.** The best way to engage employees is to really listen to them. Do this right, and the distinction between teaching, facilitating and coaching fades. Many employees need to know detailed information about their EAP benefit and coverage for treatment. Others are well-respected co-workers who can become ambassadors and peer-referral agents. Instead of focusing on adhering to a training protocol, focus on the varied needs and capacities of each participant.

• **Expose the tolerance norms.** We use fictional, scenario-based group exercises, presenting different case studies of at-risk co-workers. In addition to the colleague who comes to work with a hangover or the employee who asks to share pain meds, we include a variety of health-related (e.g., obesity, diabetes) and behavioral (e.g., bullying, gossip) cases. Discussion centers around asking how each person would handle the situation and getting the group to reach consensus. These exercises always create a lively and engaging discussion. We always reintroduce policy, the EAP or employee relations as a “go-to” resource to prepare workers for similar situations in the real world.

• **Team resilience.** Throughout training, it is essential to be attuned to the current, ongoing, multiple or cumulative stressors of participants. Once you show that you are paying attention, participants have either revealed the stressors they face or are willing to talk about them.

• **Real listening.** There are dozens of exercises that guide good communication skills. I am continually delighted when workers realize how such listening is a stress-relaxation tool and how much they learn about each other, even though they may have worked together for many years.

• **Nudge.** This is a specialized skills training in how to compassionately encourage others to get help, if needed. Based on motivational interviewing, employees learn how to recognize readiness for change in co-workers, roll with resistance and make a referral to the EAP.

The OPIOID EPIDEMIC

Stayed the same, according to a May 2017 article on the EHS Today website. And they’re getting worse in several industries. Drug testing may be a deterrent, but it’s not a prevention tool. And it can end up keeping good people out of work. Past programs haven’t worked, so what now?

**The Team-Based Process**

For the past 20 years, my colleagues from OWLS, Texas Christian University and other organizations and I have worked on a science-based, culture of health, peer-to-peer approach to address worker drug issues. As a collective of researchers, consultants and trainers, we have received nearly $5 million in federal funding to design, implement, evaluate, disseminate and commercialize prevention.

We’ve learned from our experience not to refer to this approach as “substance-abuse prevention” because the problem, whether it’s alcohol, drugs or prescription medication, typically is a symptom of a deeper source of issues. These issues exist in a worker’s personal background, lifestyle and biology, as well as in the social norms that stigmatize those who seek help. The workplace often ignores, tolerates, condones and sometimes even enables co-workers who are at risk.

Our team-based training specifically targets the work group, team, crew or collection of employees from a work unit or department, and we customize the approach to each industry and organization. This approach is called Team Awareness. Recently, we adapted the program for the restaurant industry (Carlson Restaurants) and dubbed it Team Resilience. Team Readiness was used for the National Guard and Team Vigilance for the National Electrical Contractors Association.

Each of these programs has reduced substance abuse risks and stress, improved the health and well-being of workers and the overall work climate, and increased help-seeking behavior. The U.S. Department of Health and the surgeon general have confirmed that these programs are indeed evidence-based.

Overall, training objectives are focused on improving communication, social practices, leadership behaviors and policy and operational norms that surround the individual, which means we spend a lot of time beyond focusing on signs and symptoms of drug misuse.
‘You never know when a kind word or gesture, or a nudge from you to a colleague will set in motion a positive ripple effect that leads them to make a healthier choice somewhere down the line. You could save a life.’

One program motto we use is: “You never know when a kind word or gesture, or a nudge from you to a colleague will set in motion a positive ripple effect that leads them to make the healthier choice somewhere down the line. You could save a life.”

As facilitators, we do a lot of group-related exercises focused on helping employees listen to each other for what matters most to them, as explained further in “Tips for Taking a Team Approach” on page 54. This includes group assessments of risk and protective factors in the work climate, a fun and competitive team game that tests knowledge of policy, fictional scenarios of problem employees with a group discussion, personal skills training for resilience, and paired exercises for real listening, encouragement and compassion. These tools are unlike traditional approaches that inform about policy and wellness. Instead, we’ve found that employees are often the greatest resource for each other, if they are given the right tools in the right environment.

**Putting a Stop to a Business Problem**

The opioid epidemic is an escalating health and social crisis that is fast becoming a major business problem. More employees are showing up for work unprepared and employers’ hiring pools are rapidly shrinking due to required drug testing.

Given the lack of treatment options outside the workplace, employers are bearing the brunt. Unfortunately, few companies have proactive approaches in place. Those that do mainly focus on treatment, by which time the problem has become entrenched. By taking a team-based approach, companies can prevent the problem before it escalates.

Joel Bennett, Ph.D., is CEO of Organizational Wellness and Learning Systems (OWLS).
5 Steps to Solving the Opioid Crisis

By paying attention and anticipating pain (tension, need for energy, and so on), people come to “health consciousness” and are less likely to abuse prescription drugs.

I teach a course on primary prevention of prescription drug (Rx) misuse for adults. Following one class, a woman told me, “I wouldn’t even have been able to come to work today without taking my Xanax. Now I realize I needed the reminder about alternatives, exercise, talking to a counselor. I am going to get help.”

She appeared grateful, as though coming out of a fog, and her story validated my belief: We are facing an unprecedented need to reduce Rx demand in order to educate adults about prevention. While drug prevention is taught throughout primary education, the adult and aging brain needs reminders. We also need to be more
curious about the motives behind potential Rx use and
to be more alert to triggers that can lead to misuse.

Public health solutions now myopically focus on crisis
intervention. For example, last year, the National Institutes
of Health announced its strategy for the opioid crisis:
develop a better pain pill, one not as addictive as opioids. A
noble pursuit, but perhaps it’s time to rediscover our original
desire and even fascination with these drugs. It’s called phar-
mophilia, and it links the ancient search for an “immortal
elixir,” or fountain of youth, through the heyday of snake-oil
sales folk, to the promise of a pill that takes away pain, makes
you feel great, and isn’t addictive. Modern medicine and
pharmaceuticals save lives. But let’s reassess them.

In particular, consider U.S. statistics regarding the
opioid epidemic, related deaths, and increases in suicide
and alcohol disorder. Drug overdose is now the leading cause
death for people under 50. In February 2018, the annual
Gallup Well-Being Index showed the largest year-over-year
decline in well-being since the index was started in 2008.
Meanwhile, a record 21 states saw a reduction in well-being
in 2017, with pain and depression as key factors. Although
such statistics typically don’t lead to action until people are
personally affected, pretty much everyone is now affected:

You struggle with Rx use—for pain, anxiety, stress,
sleep, attention, or performance.

You know a family member, friend, or coworker
who struggles.

You are stressed because your aging parent is
taking too many drugs.

You’re concerned about Rx use by your child for
ADHD or anxiety.

You’re an employer battling Rx use in your work-
force. Two recent examples: A workforce manager
cannot fill jobs “because applicants can’t pass the
[opiod] drug test”; and a CEO terminated a key
supervisor for borrowing Rx drugs from employees.

THE 5-STEP SOLUTION
How health-conscious are you? When you think of health-
conscious people, who comes to mind? These questions
suggest a common belief that health consciousness (HC) is
a trait or enduring characteristic that some people have and
some don’t. Our research suggests that HC is actually a pro-
cess that anyone can tap into. Basically, HC is the process
of paying attention to what we ingest; getting exercise and
rest; and using our body and mind together for a health-
enhancing purpose. Our 5-step exercise is designed to help
you understand HC in yourself. Harnessing HC may prevent
your own pharmophilia!

continued on page 34
Do a quick assessment of your current HC quotient. While your HC quotient may wax and wane throughout the day, just reviewing the six statements in Step 1 can act like a sparkplug to beginning the HC process.

Consider your triggers (situations, stimuli, or personal behaviors) that might put you at risk for Rx misuse. The chart shows four types of triggers, each type corresponding to a particular drug class.

How can you stay alert, given these triggers? Keep in mind that pain, anxiety, or energy needs occur across all dimensions of wellness: physical, emotional, social, and spiritual.

Explore alternatives and find the healthy alternative that is right for you or others you are concerned about.

Ask yourself: What is the most responsible thing to do?

This 5-step process is designed to prevent problems, rather than solve or treat them. Carl Jung is often quoted as saying, “There is no coming to consciousness without pain.” We invite you to consider the proactive twist on Jung: Stay alert, anticipate pain or tension, recognize your need for energy, use alternatives, and you will propel yourself into health consciousness. —JOEL BENNETT

Joel Bennett PhD is president of Organizational Wellness & Learning Systems. For 25 years, OWLS has been catalyzing healthy work cultures from the inside out with science. organizationalwellness.com

The 5-Step Solution

**STEP 1. MY HEALTH CONSCIOUSNESS QUOTIENT**

How many of these statements are true today or right now?

- I’m attentive to my inner feelings about my health.
- I take responsibility for the state of my health.
- Living life without disease and illness is very important to me.
- If I feel I am not as healthy as I could be, I seek information or advice to get well.
- I know holistic wellness products/services can be as effective as Rx drugs.
- I make an effort to stay alert to my mind-body condition.

**STEP 2. TRIGGERS**

Which trigger is a vulnerable point? Do you have healthy resources and behaviors to deal with the trigger?

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<td>You have pain or anticipate pain.</td>
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STEP 3. STAYING ALERT OR VIGILANT
In which dimension of wellness is the trigger most likely to occur? Physical, relationships, spiritual, emotional, workplace, financial?

For example, physical pain triggers are more likely with an upcoming dentist visit, surgery, injury, or cold weather. Need for energy may be more likely at work. Anxiety may occur in anticipation of social interaction or performance. A need to relax and unwind may occur after a long day of vigorous activity.

STEP 4. SELECT A HEALTHY ALTERNATIVE
For every one of the triggers, there are alternatives to Rx drugs, often based on evidence (and often described in issues of Spirituality & Health and online at spiritualityhealth.com). Consider essential oils; herbal teas; massage; mind-body practices like tai chi, yoga, qigong; or mindfulness. For pain, a variety of approaches are available, ranging from acupuncture and physical therapy to hydrotherapy and microstimulation.

STEP 5. BE RESPONSIBLE
Rx drugs, per se, are neither good nor bad. Health consciousness means being both awake and responsible. If you are using Rx drugs, only use them as prescribed, dispose of them properly, and do not share them with others. If your job requires you to report Rx drug use, do so. Most important of all, check in with yourself. Do this 5-step exercise whenever presented with the opportunity to misuse Rx drugs.