DRUGS DON'T HAVE TO BE ILLEGAL TO BE LETHAL
Who is this storybook for?

This storybook has been developed in response to concerns raised by Aboriginal communities dealing with the impacts of pharmaceutical misuse. It aims to provide practical and useful information to support our Mob in dealing with loved ones misusing pharmaceuticals and keeping our community safe.

This storybook also provides advice for our people who are currently misusing pharmaceuticals and seeking support to quit.

We would like to acknowledge all of the people, services and communities that contributed to the development of this resource from across NSW.

Thank you for sharing your stories and knowledge.

For more information please visit www.police.nsw.gov.au/notourway
You comin to the party?

Sure, have to tell mum I'm at yours.

Mate, got us something for the party!

What you mean 'something' like drugs?

Yeah, took some of Nan's tablets, she got them for her back.

I don't know brah.

Come on brah! She got them from the doc, so what's the prob?

Yeah, I guess. Look, I'll see you later?
Medicines can be dangerous if they are not used as instructed.

They can also be misused by other people including friends and family.
Keep your medicines safe.

Put them away and out of reach of children and others.
Mixing pharmaceutical drugs with other drugs or alcohol is dangerous, you could overdose and die.

Look, I got those tablets, you want some?

Nah, I’m alright.

Seriously, brah?

Serious brah you’re drinking, mixing it up… do ya know what they are anyway?

Jai, what’s with Dylan? He’s an idiot, he’s lost it man!

Sorry shay, probably had too much.

If he doesn’t sort it, I’m gonna get my brother to chuck him out.

Don’t worry I’ll make sure he’s ok and get him home.
Brah, how ya doing, haven't seen ya around?

I'm OK, been around.

You look a bit rough, you've not been at school or at footy and when I see you around, it's like you're not with it brah?

Nah, I'm good. Anyway my mum wasn't happy after Shay's party, she ripped into me!

Brah, you crashed out, I had to drag you home, you gotta think about what you're taking. It's dangerous.

Well, ain't getting anymore from Nan, she's locked her stuff away, anyway she got them from the docs, so not like doing H or ice, is it?

Brah, Aunty Mags says just cos it comes from the doc, don't make it safe.

I'm OK, anyways there's other places to get stuff than Nan's, just need some cash, I know people!

3 months after the party...

Something's not right...
Dylan, we just want to talk, we love you, but there is money and stuff missing. Worse, Nan was missing some of her tablets from the doctor.

I get so much pain, I should have kept my tablets locked away.

That's good love, haven't seen you hang with him lately.

Sorry I'm late, hadn't seen Jai for a while, just yarning.

We hardly see you either, you leave so quick we get no time to talk.

Ah ya know Nan, things to do. How you feeling Nan, better?

I'm better love, look, I'm worried about you my boy.

What ya talking about Nan?

What's going on Dylan, we can go speak to someone, get some help....

What, am I the only one in the house? I ain't taken no tablets and I haven't been near no money, I don't have to listen this crap, leave me alone.

You're not you love, you're sleepy and moody, no friends that I see, school calling cos you're never there....

Dylan, we just want to talk, we love you, but there is money and stuff missing. Worse, Nan was missing some of her tablets from the doctor.

Ah ya know Nan, things to do. How you feeling Nan, better?

I'm better love, look, I'm worried about you my boy.

What ya talking about Nan?

What's going on Dylan, we can go speak to someone, get some help....

What, am I the only one in the house? I ain't taken no tablets and I haven't been near no money, I don't have to listen this crap, leave me alone.
Hey Mick, how ya doing?
You know, up and down.
You were a legend on the field man, gutted when ya did your leg in.
Yeah, got into some trouble after that, got on the oxies, got busted, done some time, I’m up now, got some money coming in.

Thought you’d know where I can get some patches, the fentanyl stuff?
Whoa, careful, you start taking stuff like that, you’ll get in trouble.
Come on man, I got money.
Yeah, I can get em, but you get caught buying or selling, it’s the same as any other drug. You’ll end up doing time like me.

Just want something for next week, what’s the prob man?
You get the dose wrong, you could overdose. Leave the patches alone.

It’s illegal to sell and/or use medicines that are not prescribed to you.
You could be charged with supply and possession.
1 MONTH LATER...

Saw Dylan the other day, he’s lost a lot of weight, seemed vague, looked half asleep.

Haven’t seen much of him, yawned to his mum, he’s not home much, tried calling him but he never answers.

Might have a word with his mum, see if everything’s ok.

You know what you were saying about drugs from the doc?

Yeah.

He took something, I thought it was one time, but I think he’s still doing it. Sorry aunty, I thought he’d listen, you know.

OK love, let’s talk to Uncle Frank at the AMS. I’ll give his mum some helpline numbers and try to get Dylan to see someone.

Know the early signs of pharmaceutical misuse.
When a life is in danger, always call Triple Zero (000).

Jai bub, I’ve got something to tell you.

What?

Spoke to Dylan’s mum, he was rushed to hospital by ambos, overdose. He’s OK, he’ll be OK.

True aunty?

I didn’t know it was so bad. Wish I’d tried to help him a bit more... I’ll get the boys together, make sure he knows we’re still mates and all.

Good love, it’s going to be tough for him, but remind him he’s got good mob around him and he’ll need support.

Will do aunty, I’ll go see him as soon as I can.

It’s sad, Mick was found dead last night. They found tablets, patches, bottles of beers... he didn’t have any support, that’s why we have to help Dylan and his family through.

When a life is in danger, always call Triple Zero (000).
Fentanyl patches, when not used as prescribed, can be extremely dangerous and can cause fatal overdoses when misused.

Dispose of any used patches as directed.
Hey Frank, how's it going?

Mate, can you do a talk at the school? Seeing too many of our mob messing with meds, we need to do something.

Sure thing, seeing it every day, tough area pharmacueticals.

A lot of our mob don't know how dangerous and addictive 'pharmas' can be. That's why you need a doctor's prescription.

Yeah, no prescription might mean an arrest for supply or possession.

We gotta educate the community on how to store their medicines safely. I've got this booklet we can use.

Fact Sheet

- Don't take more than you are told
- Do not share or take drugs prescribed for friends or family
- Store your medicines out of reach of others
- Dispose of your medication safely
- Don't tell people you have these drugs
- Keep your Medicare card in a safe place.
Drugs don’t have to be illegal to be lethal.
List of characters

Dylan
Jai
Maggie
Shaylee
Nan
Mum
Mick
Robbie
Frank
Where to get help?

**New South Wales**

**Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS)**

You can call ADIS any time of the day or week for support, information, advice, crisis counselling and referral to services in NSW.

ADIS counsellors understand the difficulties of finding appropriate drug and alcohol treatment and use their knowledge and experience to assist you.

**Sydney:** 02 9361 8000  
**Regional NSW:** 1800 422 599  
A 24-hour confidential information, advice and referral telephone service.

**National**

**beyondblue** 1300 22 4636  
24 hours a day, 7 days a week  
Support for depression, anxiety and related disorders.

**Counselling Online**  
24 hours a day, 7 days a week  
Free alcohol and drug counselling online  

**Family Drug Help:** 1300 660 068  
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

**Family Drug Support:** 1300 368 186  
24 hours a day, 7 days a week  
Support for families faced with problematic drug use.

**Kids Help Line:** 1800 55 1800  
24 hours a day, 7 days a week  
Free and confidential telephone and online counselling service for young people aged between 5 and 25.

**Lifeline:** 13 11 14  
24 hours a day, 7 days a week  
Confidential telephone counselling.

**SANE Australia helpline:** 1800 187 263  
9am–5pm, Monday to Friday  
Information and referral about mental health issues.

**Stimulant Treatment Line**  
24/7 confidential service offering education, information, referral, crisis counselling and support specifically for stimulant use such as speed, ice, ecstasy and cocaine.

T: 9361 8088 (Sydney metropolitan)  
T: 1800 101 188 (regional and rural NSW, free call from a landline)

**Crystal Meth Anonymous**  
A free ‘twelve step’ group support meeting for people experiencing problems with their ice use – visit the website to find a meeting near you.  
www.crystalmeth.org.au

**Alcohol and Drug Foundation (ADF)**  
Information about ice and its effects, resources, details on ice forums in NSW and a list of help and support services in NSW.  
www.adf.org.au/breakingtheice

**Aboriginal Health and Research Council (AH&MRC)** 9212 4777  
The peak representative body and voice on Aboriginal health services in NSW.  
www.ahmrc.org.au