

SYMPTOMS OF TEENAGE SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Adolescence is a time of change and growth sometimes with unusual behavior which is often justified as "finding oneself" or "finding where I fit." It is important to note that adolescence is a growing and maturing process, not a destructive and negative time in life. Many of the following symptoms are part of "normal" adolescence; however, when you see a pattern or repeated symptoms, it may show a need for a professional evaluation to determine the problems and what type of services can help.

FAMILY

- Changing (negative) attitudes toward rules and regulations
- Avoiding or refusing family activities
- Isolating, staying in room much of the time while at home
- Breaking curfew, sneaking out at night
- Stealing items from home - money, pills, alcohol, etc.
- Lying - blaming others for troubles
- Overt anger and outbursts
- Unexplained appearance and disappearance of clothing and money
- Unpredictable behavior
- Lack of ambition and drive
- No motivation - apathy, an "I don't care" attitude
- Lack of accountability for blocks of time
- Missing cleaning, aerosol, white-out products.

FRIENDS

- Change in friendships, peers uncomfortable in your home
- Little or no information about friends/hangouts
- Phone conversations become extremely private
- Callers who refuse to identify themselves
- Hang-up phone calls
- Friends who are old enough to buy alcohol and are known to have police records.

SCHOOL

- Grades fall, poor school performance
- Skips classes or entire days
- Constant tardiness to school
- Sleeps in class
- General loss of interest in school
- Complaints about class conduct and attitude
- Dropping out of organized activities
- Suspensions or expulsions
- Dropping out of school

LEGAL

- Thefts, assaults, arrests
- DWI's, MIP's

- Speeding or driving recklessly
- Vandalism, trespassing

PERSONAL HEALTH

- Change in personality, mood swings
- Weight loss/gain
- Erratic sleeping and eating habits
- Deep nagging cough that persists
- Dilated pupils/red eyes/use of eye drops or sunglasses
- Blackouts, short-term memory loss
- Hangovers/trembling/dreamy-blank expression
- Disappearance of drugs from medicine cabinet
- Appearance of pills, bottles, and drug paraphernalia in room, car, or laundry.

WAYS TO HIDE ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG USE

- You don't trust me
- I tried it once, but I didn't like it
- I was holding it for a friend
- I'm trying to help my friend
- You don't love me

EVERYBODY DOES IT

- It's just a stage
- S/He'll grow out of it
- All kids experiment
- It's the friends s/he associates with
- The principal and I have never gotten along
- But she/he only tried it once
- I was at the party, but I didn't drink

EVERYBODY DOES IT

- My allergies are bothering me
- I'm just tired
- I didn't know it was alcohol
- A drink spilled on me
- It's a new incense
- Don't judge me by my friends
- It's no worse than your cigarettes
- You just don't understand

EVERYBODY DOES IT

If you have heard or used any of these phrases, the information in this booklet is for you. It was written by parents to help parents and concerned others understand adolescent chemical use and what can be done.

CHECK YOUR AWARENESS

YES NO

- | | | |
|-------|-------|--|
| _____ | _____ | 1. Does your child have quick, unexplainable mood changes? Do you pass this off as "puberty?" |
| _____ | _____ | 2. Does your child seem moody, depressed, withdrawn? |
| _____ | _____ | 3. Does your child have new friends whom she/he won't bring home or who don't seem to fit your family's style? |
| _____ | _____ | 4. Is your child avoiding the family and spending a lot of time alone while at home? |
| _____ | _____ | 5. Has your child suddenly lost interest in some really important hobby, sport, or activity? |
| _____ | _____ | 6. Does your child seem argumentative or rebellious? Has the conflict between your child and his/her siblings become a problem? |
| _____ | _____ | 7. Are you suddenly having problems controlling your child? |
| _____ | _____ | 8. Is your child late coming home? Is he/she secretive about the where and when plans? Is he/she sullen and private or rebellious about his/her privacy? |
| _____ | _____ | 9. Are your child's grades dropping? Are you getting calls about behavior problems at school? |
| _____ | _____ | 10. Has your child stayed out all night? |
| _____ | _____ | 11. Has your child's attitude toward school changed, with talk of dropping out, of not needing school to be successful? |
| _____ | _____ | 12. Has your child's appearance (clothes, hairstyle, makeup and jewelry) become a central issue in family arguments? |
| _____ | _____ | 13. Has your child skipped school or classes? |
| _____ | _____ | 14. Does your child have health problems such as a hacking cough, persistent acne, weight loss, colds, or other infections? |
| _____ | _____ | 15. Has your child ever run away from home, or threatened to do so? |
| _____ | _____ | 16. Has your child had trouble with the law or contact with the police? Has your child ever been arrested for minor in possession? |
| _____ | _____ | 17. Do your child's behaviors contradict what he is telling you? Has your child lied to you about his/her activities? |
| _____ | _____ | 18. Are you missing any money or objects that could be sold for money? |
| _____ | _____ | 19. Does your child blame you, friends, teachers, others for his/her problems? |
| _____ | _____ | 20. Are you concerned about your child's safety? |
| _____ | _____ | 21. Does your child lack "spiritual" or moral convictions? |