

SUBSTANCE ABUSE SIGNS & SYMPTOMS



CHANGES IN SCHOOL & COMMUNITY BEHAVIOR

- Sudden or gradual drop in grades and achievement levels (reason unclear)
- Skipping classes, entire days or class tardiness
- Disrespect/defiance towards teachers, rules & regulations
- Present in classroom, but inattentive
- Frequent fights, suspensions, expulsions
- Shoplifting
- Delinquent behavior
- Difficulty studying or working a job
- Denies knowledge of or ownership of paraphernalia
- Possession of alcohol or drugs at school
- Suspicion of being under the influence at school

CHANGES IN PHYSICAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL CONDITION

- Easily upset (emotional state changes rapidly)
- Weight changes (drastic loss or gain)
- Burns on hands or clothing; Self-mutilation
- Changes in speech pattern (slurred speech)
- Withdrawal from peers and others
- Very defensive attitude
- Stumbling, confusion, disorientation
- Mood and/or personality changes
- Obsession and preoccupation with chemicals
- Denial, minimizing, blaming, rationalizing
- Attention span shorter
- Blackouts
- Wearing clothes with drug symbols
- Unreasonable anger and resentment

CHANGES IN FAMILY & COMMUNITY BEHAVIOR

- Changes in attitude toward rules, parents, brothers, sisters
- Isolating (staying in room, etc.)
- Breaking curfew, sneaking out, becoming secretive (excuses for late hours)
- Lying (blaming others for irresponsible behavior, actions)
- Violence (physical and verbal)
- Erratic sleeping/eating habits (too much, too little)
- Vagueness about company kept and where time was spent
- Strange telephone calls (parties hang up or refuse to be identified); Strange email
- DUIs, unusual car accidents, extreme wear and tear on car
- Unreasonable resentments
- Suspicion of money or alcohol missing from parents or siblings
- Stealing and/or selling possessions for money (hocking clothing, CDs, gifts, etc.)
- Manipulating parents; Playing one against the other
- Seems to have money, but no job; Has job, but always needs money
- Value conflict: lying, stealing, etc.; Stops going to church/temple, family functions, meals, etc.

CHANGES IN FRIENDS & PEER GROUP

- Changes in peer group with little interest in old friends
- Peers with drug user reputation
- Parents don't know friends; Can't get names
- Begins to associate with an older crowd

**These are not all encompassing signs of use.
You know your child and you know when their behavior is different.
Check in with your children often, do things together
and develop a relationship where they feel safe telling you about their difficulties and fears.**