



— Signs of Possible Adolescent Substance Use Problems —

The following behaviors can be warning signs of problems related to alcohol or other substance use. These behaviors are not exclusively linked to alcohol or drug use problems. If an initial evaluation rules out substance use, further evaluation is indicated to identify and address the behaviors of concern, whatever their origin.

School Activities

- Drop in school performance.
- Irregular school attendance.
- Unexplained drop in grades.

Health Indicators

- Feelings of loneliness, paranoia, and depression.
- Frequent accidents.
- Frequent "flu" episodes, chronic cough, chest pains, and "allergy" symptoms.
- Impaired ability to fight off common infections, fatigue, and loss of vitality.
- Impaired short-term memory.
- Inexplicable mood changes, e.g., irritability, hostility.
- Change in health or grooming.

Family Relationships

- Decreased interest in school or family social activities, sports, and hobbies.
- Failure to provide specific answers to questions about activities.
- Not bringing friends home.
- Not returning home after school.
- Personal time that is unaccounted for.
- Strange phone calls.
- Unexplained disappearance of possessions in the home.
- Verbal (or physical) mistreatment of younger siblings.
- Desire to be secretive or isolated.
- Increased money or poor justification of how money was spent.

Relationships with Peers

- Dropping old friends.
- New group of friends.
- Attending parties where parents are not home to monitor behavior.

Personal Issues

- Change in personal priorities.
- Collecting beer cans or drug paraphernalia.
- Possession of "drug" materials.
- Wearing clothing or jewelry that is symbolic of the drug culture.