

Signs and Symptoms of Adolescent Drug Use

A Library and Resource Center on Alcohol, Tobacco, Other Drugs, Mental Health and Wellness

In the normal course of adolescence, kids often exhibit symptoms that would give any rational adult pause. However, the presence and intensity of a cluster of disturbing symptoms should be pursued.

First, rule out any physical illness with a trip to the doctor. Ask the doctor to evaluate for depression or other emotional causes as well. If there's a clean bill of health and the symptoms are still present, follow your gut and locate a professional (psychiatrist, psychologist, or counselor) with experience in adolescent drug use.

Signs and Symptoms Common to Adolescents Who are Using Drugs

Is My Child ?

- Withdrawn, depressed, tired, or neglecting personal grooming
- Hostile, uncooperative and frequently breaking curfew
- Suffering deteriorating relationships with family members
- Hanging out with a new group of friends and unwilling to introduce them
- Skipping school and experiencing dropping grades
- Losing interest in hobbies, sports and other favorite activities
- Exhibiting changes in sleeping patterns (awake at night, asleep during the day)
- Having a hard time concentrating
- Exhibiting red eyes or runny nose without evidence of allergies or a cold
- Taking household money without permission
- The possible source of any of the following items in the home: pipes, rolling papers, small medicine bottles, eye drops, butane lighters, baby pacifiers, unidentified pills, incense, drug-related books, comics, magazines, locked boxes or containers



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