

Warning Signs of Substance Abuse

- Neglecting responsibilities:
 - Skipping school; a decline in grades
- Neglecting hygiene and overall physical appearance
- Major change of mood and behavior:
 - Might include paranoia, blackouts, depression or instability; may become hyper-aggressive; restlessness, insomnia, anxiety, fatigue, irritability, anger, hostility
- Apathy
- Low self-esteem
- Change of priorities:
 - Decreased interest in family and family activities; decreased interest in school or sports
- Missing or skipping school; not returning home from school on time
- Increase in starting arguments
- Home possessions disappearing (stealing)
- Having an increase in money or poor justification for how the money was spent
- Disorientation
- Hurried ingestion (such as pounding beers)
- Excessive sweating or nausea
- Frequent flu-like episodes such as chest pains, chronic cough or “allergy” symptoms
- Increase of infections
- Increase in lying or dishonesty
- Increased tolerance (being able to drink more or use more drugs)
- Avoiding eye contact
- Changing groups of friends
- Excessive use of eye drops
- Red-glazed eyes, dilated or restricted pupils
- Obtaining certain items: extra mouthwash to cover up alcohol, wrappers for hand-rolled cigarettes (joints), pipes or ‘cookers’
- Becoming more secretive:
 - Overprotective of ‘personal space’ and personal items (hiding areas), putting new lock on bedroom door
- Increase in illegal activities or charges (probation violations, stealing, shoplifting)
- Increase in fights
- Short-term memory loss
- Inconsistent sleep schedule (awake for two days then sleeps for two days or excessive sleeping)