



## ADOLESCENT SUBSTANCE ABUSE...WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

<p><b><u>Academic Problems</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• drop in grades/achievement level</li> <li>• sleeping in class</li> <li>• refusal to do homework</li> <li>• dropping out of sports or other activities</li> <li>• frequent suspensions/expulsions</li> <li>• all day truancy</li> <li>• frequent requests to leave the room</li> <li>• skipping classes</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Parental Complaints</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• decreased family involvement</li> <li>• increased isolation in room</li> <li>• increased fighting with siblings</li> <li>• breaking curfew, sneaking out at night</li> <li>• vague about friends and location out</li> <li>• missing money/valuables from home</li> <li>• receiving strange phone calls</li> <li>• liquor/prescription drugs are missing</li> <li>• smell of alcohol/marijuana</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Behavioral Changes</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• withdrawn behavior</li> <li>• mood swings</li> <li>• frequent temper outbursts</li> <li>• increased irritability</li> <li>• defensiveness about drug/alcohol use</li> <li>• disorientation/confusion</li> <li>• hypersensitivity</li> <li>• paranoia and/or depression</li> <li>• talk of suicide/suicide attempt</li> <li>• extremely poor hygiene</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Physical Warning Signs</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• drastic loss or weight gain</li> <li>• frequent bruises, cuts, track marks (IV use)</li> <li>• bloodshot, puffy or glassy eyes</li> <li>• dilated or constricted pupils</li> <li>• frequent use of eye drops</li> <li>• nausea and/or vomiting</li> <li>• rapid and/or slurred speech</li> <li>• nose bleeds or sores around nose</li> <li>• unsteady gait</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Social Problems</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• change in peer group</li> <li>• little interest shown for old friends</li> <li>• rebellious against authority figures</li> <li>• decrease in job performance/attendance</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Legal Problems</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DUI or drug related arrests</li> <li>• possession of alcohol/drugs/paraphernalia</li> <li>• theft and/or vandalism</li> <li>• traffic accidents, speeding/careless driving</li> <li>• selling and/or fronting drugs</li> </ul>

<p><b><u>What Youth Might Say....</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “I don’t use drugs”</li> <li>○ “I have the flu/sinus problem”</li> <li>○ “I have difficulty remembering/concentrating</li>   <li>○ “I have only used once”</li>   <li>○ “This/Life is not worth it”</li> <li>○ “I can handle it; I don’t get drunk or high”</li> <li>○ “Everyone’s doing it”</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>What It Might Mean....</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the youth might be drinking</li> <li>○ might be using heroin/snorting cocaine</li> <li>○ might be cognitive impairment due to substance use</li> <li>○ might be using frequently since youth strongly minimize their use</li> <li>○ might be suicide risk</li> <li>○ suggests increased physical tolerance</li> <li>○ suggests that using drugs is OK and/or is the norm</li> </ul>
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