



Signs & Symptoms of Substance Use and Abuse

Many of the following behaviors can be a symptom of normal adolescence; however, take a couple together, and your student/child may have a problem.

Teacher and parental instincts can be a valuable guide

Grades

- ✓ Lower grades – lower achievement
- ✓ Academic failure
- ✓ Falling behind in class work
- ✓ Lack of motivation, apathy

School Attendance

- ✓ Absenteeism
- ✓ Tardiness
- ✓ On absence list but in school

Suspension

- ✓ Frequent schedule changes
- ✓ Frequent counselor visits

Extra Curricular Activities

- ✓ Loss of eligibility
- ✓ Decreasing involvement
- ✓ Dropping out

Physical Symptoms

- ✓ Staggering or stumbling
- ✓ Smelling of alcohol or marijuana
- ✓ Vomiting
- ✓ Glassy, bloodshot eyes, dark glasses
- ✓ Lack of coordination
- ✓ Slurred speech
- ✓ Bad hygiene
- ✓ Sleeping in class
- ✓ Physical complaints
- ✓ Physical injuries
- ✓ Older social group
- ✓ Time disoriented
- ✓ Inappropriate responses or behavior
- ✓ Depression
- ✓ Defensiveness
- ✓ Withdrawn, loner
- ✓ Rapid weight loss or gain
- ✓ Discolored fingers
- ✓ Dilated pupils

Criminal/Illegal Behavior

- ✓ Selling drugs; exchanges of money
- ✓ Possession of drugs or paraphernalia
- ✓ Involvement in thefts or assaults
- ✓ Carrying weapons
- ✓ Smoking

Disruptive Behavior

- ✓ Defiance of rules, constant discipline problem
- ✓ Cheating
- ✓ Irresponsibility, blaming, denying
- ✓ Verbal or physical abuse of others
- ✓ Throwing objects
- ✓ Obscene language or gestures
- ✓ Dramatic attention-getting
- ✓ Crying
- ✓ Constantly in the wrong place at the wrong time
- ✓ Extreme negativism
- ✓ Hyperactivity, nervousness

Atypical Behavior

- ✓ Sitting in the parking lot
- ✓ Talking freely about drug use
- ✓ Avoids contact with others
- ✓ Erratic behavior changes on a day to-day basis
- ✓ Change in peer group, friends

Home Problems

- ✓ Family problems
- ✓ Running away
- ✓ Job problems
- ✓ Medicine in home is missing
- ✓ Alcohol in home is missing
- ✓ Money of of parents or siblings is missing
- ✓ Belongings of parents, siblings, or youth's own belongings are missing, though they may have been lent to friends.

from: Parent Resource Guide. Alcohol and Drug Services of Gallatin County; Adolescent Resource Center. www.adsgc.org/parentguide.htm

Contact the Adolescent Resource Center: 406-586-5908.