

# COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF ADOLESCENT DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE OR ABUSE:

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## ILLICIT BEHAVIORS

- Drug or alcohol use (*this is not a mistake; denial often obscures the obvious signs*)
- Theft
- Disappearance of possessions, money, clothes
- Possession of drug-related paraphernalia
- Possession of weapons
- Drug- or alcohol-related posters, signs, tee shirts, etc.
- Use of goldenseal or other OTC herbs

## ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

- Marked drop in grades
- Lack of concern about grades
- Little or no investment in homework, studying, etc.
- Poor concentration
- Poor memory
- Marked drop in classroom participation
- General loss of interest in school
- Excessive procrastination / avoidance
- Frequent lates or cuts
- Loss of interests in sports, activities, school events
- *Improved* behavior and *appearance* of focus

## DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIORS

- Frequent lying, and excuses that are plausible but suspicious
- Excessive sleeping or drifting
- Defiance of rules
- Verbal or physical abuse
- Mood swings
- Excessive talking
- Non-communicative

## **SOCIAL BEHAVIOR**

- Change in friends
- Change in hangouts
- Unknown friends who avoid parents
- Always out of the house with no particular destination
- Secretive / suspicious phone conversations
- Hang-up phone calls
- Callers who refuse to identify themselves
- Significantly older or younger acquaintances
- Isolation
- Argues that drug use is alright
- Argues that teachers / parents don't understand drug use
- Lives day-to-day with no long-term planning or commitments (apathetic)
- Extreme avoidance of family / extended family functions
- Use of street vocabulary
- Demands / steals money from siblings, parents, friends, classmates

### **Warning signs of possible PRESENT intoxication:**

**Lingering alcohol, marijuana, or strong chemical odor**

**Slowed or labored breathing**

**Impaired thinking; disorientation or confusion**

**Excessive sleeping, inability to arouse**

**Loss of muscular coordination**

**Slurred, rapid or rambling speech**

**Unexplained happiness, giddiness, laughing**

**Unexplained or uncharacteristic aggression**

**Dilated, red, or unusual eye appearance**

**Uncharacteristic hyperactivity**

**Dizziness or vomiting**

**Extreme anxiety, agitation or tremors**

**Paranoid or psychotic behaviors**