

WHAT IS SUBSTANCE USE?

- Substance use is the use of alcohol, drugs, prescription medications, or other substances to alter the state of a person's mind and body.
- It can have a serious and harmful impact on one's lifestyle and health.
- Long-term substance use can lead to cardiac issues, stroke, STIs, depression, anxiety, chronic headaches and migraines, memory problems, or gastrointestinal distress.

WARNING SIGNS

Warning signs may appear as changes in behavior, mood, personality, hygiene and appearance, physical health, school life, or work life, as well as changes within the home or car.

BEHAVIORAL

- Withdraws from family relationships and friendships.
- Uses chewing gum or mints to cover up breath.
- Frequently breaks curfew.
- Often is out of money or has sudden financial problems.
- Drives recklessly (including car accidents or unexplained damage to the car).
- Has unexplained legal issues.
- Avoids eye contact.
- Locks doors.
- Goes out every night.
- Behaves in a secretive manner.
- Laughs at nothing.
- Makes excuses for their behavior or appearance.
- Often has the “munchies” or a sudden increase in appetite.
- Exhibits uncharacteristically loud or obnoxious behavior.
- Laughs at nothing.
- Unusually clumsy (stumbling, lack of coordination, poor balance).
- Disappears for prolonged periods of time.
- Experiences periods of sleeplessness or high energy, followed by long stretches of “catch-up” sleep.
- No longer enjoys or participates in their hobbies or favorite activities.

MOOD

- Mood changes or emotional instability.
- Loss of inhibition.
- Less motivated or unable to focus.
- Hyperactive or unusually elated.
- Sullen, withdrawn, or depressed.
- Silent or unwilling to communicate.
- Hostile, angry, aggressive, or uncooperative.
- Lying, deceitful, or secretive.
- Paranoid thoughts or fears.

HYGIENE

- Unusual odors on their clothes or breath, such as smoke.
- Messy appearance.
- Poor hygiene.
- Red, flushed cheeks or face.
- Puncture wounds or scars that are consistent with needle use or injections on arms or legs; wears long sleeves in warm weather to hide marks.
- Soot or burns on fingers.

© 2019 Recovery Bladen. All rights reserved. Recovery Bladen is a registered trademark of Recovery Bladen.

RECOVERY IS POSSIBLE

Call 910-862-6900 today to speak to someone who can help.

PHYSICAL HEALTH

- Unusually tired.
 - Slow, lethargic movements.
 - Speech is slurred, rapid-fire, or unintelligible.
 - Nosebleeds.
 - Runny nose that is not caused by allergies or a cold.
 - Frequent illness.
 - Sores or spots around the mouth.
 - Seizures.
 - Vomiting.
 - Wetting lips or excessive thirst.
- Unusually tired.
 - Slow, lethargic movements.
 - Speech is slurred, rapid-fire, or unintelligible.
 - Nosebleeds.
 - Runny nose that is not caused by allergies or a cold.
 - Frequent illness.
 - Sores or spots around the mouth.
 - Seizures.
 - Vomiting.
 - Wetting lips or excessive thirst.

SCHOOL AND WORK

- Absent from school or work.
- Fails to fulfill responsibilities at school or work.
- Loses interest in school, work, or extracurricular activities such as hobbies and sports.
- Receives complaints from teachers or supervisors.
- Reports of intoxication at school or work.

HOME AND CAR

- Disappearance of money, valuables, alcohol, cigarettes, and prescription or over-the-counter pills.
- Receives unusual packages in the mail.
- Unusual odors inside the car.
- Bottles, pipes, or bongs inside the car.
- Appearance of unusual containers or wrappers.
- Appearance of drug paraphernalia, including pipes, rolling papers, small medicine bottles, eye drops, butane lighters, or makeshift smoking devices.
- Hidden stashes of alcohol.

TAKE ACTION

If you have reason to believe that you or someone you love is abusing alcohol or drugs, the sooner you address the issue, the better the outcome.

- Reach out to your primary care physician or a mental health professional.
- Remember that early intervention is always best for your loved one's health and well-being.

Call 910-862-6900 today to speak to someone who can help.

This publication is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of an award totaling \$1,000,000 with 0% financed with non-governmental sources. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement by HRSA, HHS, or the US Government. For more information, please visit [HRSA.gov](https://www.hrsa.gov).

Resources available upon request.

©2023