

# SUBSTANCE ABUSE

## Alcohol, Drugs, and Trouble



### HELP!

*"I just found that my teen is using drugs/alcohol!"*

#### Symptoms of Substance Abuse

**Marijuana** - red eyes, reduced concentration, drowsiness, talkativeness, laughter, hunger, euphoria, relaxed, disoriented behavior and dramatic change in lifestyle.

**Alcohol** - Intoxication, watery glazed eyes, mood swings, slurred speech, unsteady walk, and loss of appetite.

**Cocaine** - Bright, staring, shiny eyes, excitement, euphoria, high pulse, higher blood pressure, restlessness, insomnia, appetite loss, dramatic mood change and runny nose.

**Methamphetamine** - Dilated pupils, bright shiny eyes, excitement, alertness, talkative, increased pulse rate and blood pressure, anxiety, insomnia, appetite loss, confusion, paranoia, and sweating.

**Depressants** - Constricted pupils, slow breathing and heart rate, slurred speech, disorientation, and drunken-like behavior.

**PCP** - (Phencyclidine) - Wide staring eyes, hallucination, poor perception of time and distance, paranoia, irritability, panic, confusion, anxiety, slurred speech and loss of memory. May be drowsy or hyper; impaired coordination.

**LSD** - (Lysergic Acid Diethylamide) - Dilated pupils, hallucinations, poor perception of time and distance; mood will be altered, may experience panic, confusion, and anxiety.

**Narcotics/Opiates** - Pinpoint pupils, euphoria, drowsiness, head nodding, slowed breathing, and apathy.

**Inhalants** - "Wild" eyes, dilated pupils, psychosis, paranoia, violent actions, paint on face, loss of memory function, and odor of glue or paint.

**Steroids** - Edginess, excitability, anxiety, anger, panic, depression, poor concentration, shorter attention span, insomnia, swelling or bloating of the face and/or body, pimples on face and back, and increased muscle bulk. threatening or escalating anger in relationship, more bad times than good times in relationship.

### ACTION STEPS

- **This is a crucial time for clear messages.** Don't overreact and lose your temper, but your teenager needs a strong message that drug and alcohol use is not okay. A parent support group like Families Anonymous may prove very useful.
- **Become aware of the drugs that teens use, what their effects are, and what your adolescent is likely to look like when under the influence.** Check out a website like [www.notmykid.org](http://www.notmykid.org) or [www.drugfreeaz.com](http://www.drugfreeaz.com).
- **Get to know your kid better. Find out how they see themselves, where they want their life to go, and what's important.** Determine what drugs and alcohol do for them. Don't lecture, be clear and keep your message short and to the point. Spend time with your kid in recreation and family activities.
- **Find out the names, addresses, and phone numbers of your teen's friends. Get to know the kids if possible.** Form a network and keep in touch with the parents of their friends. Don't be put off if other parents don't share your concern about substance abuse. Don't be too shocked if you find that another parent is using drugs with them or is supplying the kids with drugs and alcohol.
- **When you allow your teen to go out at night, have them check in from a land-line (corded) phone and use caller ID and anonymous call rejection on your home phone to help insure they're honest regarding their whereabouts.**
- **If you allow your teen the privilege of a cell phone, consider purchasing one that is GPS-enabled and provides a "teen tracking" ability so you can monitor their whereabouts. Similar GPS devices are available for cars.**

- **If teen behavior is unacceptable, use discipline that is most apt to be effective.** Restrict or eliminate use of a car, restrict texting, take away cell phones, and limit unsupervised free time unless your teen is committed to being ‘clean and sober.’ Set clear, firm, and reasonable limits. Be consistent.
- **A quick review of the contents of your teen’s room or their social media profiles may tell a lot about their values and behavior.** Check their room at night. Are they there?
- **Sleep-overs and teen parties are often a problem.** Check to be sure that the other parent will be home and determine if they have the same curfew, values and expectations as you do. Kids often select homes of absent or permissive parents for sleep-overs and all-night drug/alcohol parties.
- **Consider having your son or daughter involved in a twelve-step self-help support group like A.A., C.A., or N.A. (young people’s group), or a support group offered by the guidance department at your teen’s school.**
- **If other family members have a drinking problem, abuse medication, or use illegal drugs, these issues must be dealt with as well as your teen’s use.** Get rid of all of the alcohol in your house and remove any mind-altering drugs from the medicine cabinet.
- **Be aware of their internet use, consider checking their website “history” and monitor their involvement on social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.**
- **Kids dealing with substance abuse need to avoid the people, places and events that have been associated with their use.** Your teen is not apt to stay sober if they attend unsupervised ‘parties’ where drugs and alcohol are available. Help them locate sober activities.
- **Determine how they pay for their drugs/alcohol.** If it’s from your ATM card, wallet, or pocketbook, keep them out of reach. Consider the amount of money that you provide for allowance, lunches, movies, etc.

You may be financing their habit! Find out if your teen is selling drugs while using.

- **Do drug and alcohol testing in home. Buying several dozen tests via the internet will send your kid a message that you are very committed to their sobriety.** Become aware of how kids can “fake out” drug tests. Don’t get conned!
- **If you decide to work with a professional or program for counseling, be sure to check their credentials and experience.** Most counselors and psychologists are generalists who do not have specific expertise in substance abuse and they may make the problem worse by addressing the wrong issues. Strongly consider the use of random drug and alcohol testing to help ensure progress.

## WARNING SIGNS

- A drop in grades
- Moods are up and down
- Dishonesty and manipulation
- Early cigarette smoking
- Parental defiance
- Red, watery or glassy eyes
- Uses eye drops to hide red eyes
- Poor achievement
- Has delinquent friends
- Withdrawal from family activities
- Late or unexplained hours
- Rejection of parental values
- Possession of drug paraphernalia
- Disappearance of money
- Possessions have vanished
- Defensive about drug use
- Antisocial behavior
- Has drug-using friends
- Draws pot leaves or drug symbols

## RESOURCES

### HelpGuide.org -

Teen Depression [www.helpguide.org/mental/depression\\_teen.htm](http://www.helpguide.org/mental/depression_teen.htm)

**Community Information & Referral Services**  
(602) 263 8856

**Suicide/Crisis (Maricopa County)**  
(480-784-1500)

**First Check** [www.firstcheckfamily.com](http://www.firstcheckfamily.com)

**notMYkid** [www.notMYkid.org](http://www.notMYkid.org)

**www.PsyNow.com** (psychotherapist locator)

<http://www.psynow.com> Mark Rohde, PhD.

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