

# POSSIBLE SIGNS OF DRUG USE

*One must emphasize the word “possible” because other factors might resemble signs of drug use. One’s ability to identify patterns of problem behavior that emerge over time will prove particularly useful.*

## GENERAL APPEARANCE

The person using substances might exhibit diminished hygiene, grooming, sense of well-being, or healthy facial *glow*. The individual might look as if she/he stayed up all night. When engaged in conversation with the individual, one might observe a higher level of anxiety or passiveness, a slower response to questions, and minimal or reduced eye contact. Specifically, one might notice the following in the listed areas.

**Face:** ..... Presence of puffiness, flushed appearance, broken capillaries around cheeks and nose, unhealthy skin color

**Eye:** ..... Dilated pupil or very small pupils, red eyes, roving eye movements, visual complaints, light sensitivity, unusual tearing

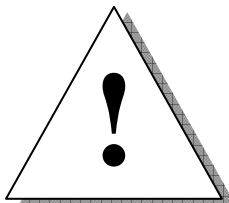
**Nose:** ..... Rhinitis, runny nose, frequent sniffing (excuse may be allergy problems); frequent nosebleeds, puffy and red nose.

**Skin:** ..... Excessive sweating, track marks, bruises, abscesses on legs and arms, excessive scratching and itching

**Nails:** ..... Gray, blue, and/or ashen-color

**Movement:** ..... Trembling hands, uncoordinated movements

One might observe, on clothes, small dots of blood from injections. In the home, one might notice unfamiliar or distinctive odors. In addition, one might notice, regarding the individual using substances, a strong or old odor of alcohol on the breath or clothes.



# POSSIBLE SIGNS OF DRUG USE (CONTINUED)

## PHYSICAL INDICATORS

- Change in appetite, erratic eating habits
- Loss of coordination
- Slurred speech
- Incoherence
- Inattention to dress and personal hygiene
- Overall changes in physical appearance
- Weight loss
- Change in vitality and sleep patterns
- Tired, lethargic
- Dreamy, blank expression
- Loss of memory
- Dilated or constricted pupils
- Needle (“Track”) marks
- Trembling
- Drug-oriented magazines
- Marijuana seeds
- Smell of marijuana
- Attempts to disguise odor of marijuana with cigarettes, incense, room deodorizer, etcetera
- Possession of drugs
- Chronic sinus problems
- Smell of alcohol on breath

## SOCIAL INDICATORS

- Changes in friends
- Unknown friends
- Association with known drug users
- Changes in hangouts
- Always going “nowhere special”
- Secretive phone conversations
- Receive calls from individuals that refuse to identify themselves
- Hang-up phone calls
- Constant lying
- Overt hostility and outbursts
- Withdrawal from family
- Stealing small items
- Disappearance of money
- Often borrowing money
- Unexplained influx of money

# POSSIBLE SIGNS OF DRUG USE (CONTINUED)

## PSYCHOLOGICAL INDICATORS

- Personality changes
- Depression or over- activity
- Mood swings
- Talkativeness
- Irritability, hostility
- Secretiveness
- Over-reaction to criticism
- Confusion
- Anxiety, paranoia
- Lack of ambition or drive, apathy
- Unpredictable behavior
- Hallucinations
- Uncharacteristic behavior for individual's personality

## WORK/EDUCATIONAL INDICATORS

- Truancy
- Frequently Skips work/class
- Constantly late
- General loss of interest in work/school
- Declining work/school performance
- Change from normal capabilities
- Poor conduct and attitude
- Dropping out of organized activities
- Quitting job or dropping out of school

## ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS

- Containers of alcohol
- Pills/drugs lying around
- Tinted windows in the home (possibly signifying a drug lab)
- Abundant known chemicals used in making drugs
- Smell of drugs or alcohol in the home
- Visible drug paraphernalia (such as syringes, razor blades, marijuana and other pipes, and other devices that facilitate drug use)
- Marijuana seeds
- Drug-oriented magazines
- Smell of marijuana
- Attempts to disguise odor of marijuana with cigarettes, incense, room deodorizer, etcetera