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Warning Signs That Your Adolescent May Be Abusing Drugs

Adolescence is a time of life when teenagers seek independence and when they want more than ever to be accepted by their peers. While this is perfectly normal, as parents, we often wonder what types of behaviours we need to question as possible indicators that our teen is misusing or abusing drugs.

1

Change in friends and/or social activities

2

Change in sleep patterns, eating, and/or hygiene habits

3

Change in mood or attitude (irritable, shutting down, etc) with family members.

4

Change in respect for rules - for example: breaks curfew or doesn't respect consequences

5

Money, alcohol and/or prescription medication missing from home

6

Frequent calls from school/work regarding behaviour or unjustified absences

7

Difficulties with the law

8

Continuous lies about who they are with or what they are doing

9

Eye drops in their room or on their person

10

Rolling paper or other unexplained drug paraphernalia

Asking about these changes may cause conflict between you and your teen. Adolescents usually minimise the significance of these changes in behaviour or do not take them seriously. The first step is to sit down with your child and calmly discuss these changes. If your adolescent starts to shut down or becomes aggressive when you state your concerns, there may be a problem.

There are many supports in the community that you can turn to for help. Speak with your doctor, a social worker, a counsellor at your teen's school, or contact a drug rehabilitation centre such as Portage for advice on how to manage the situation and get help.



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