

## How to Tell If your Teen May Have an Alcohol or Drug Use Problem

### Signs and Symptoms to Watch for:

- Physical:* Fatigue, repeated health complaints, red and glazed eyes, lasting cough, erratic sleep patterns, etc.
- Emotional:* Personality changes, sudden mood fluctuations, irritability, repeated irresponsible behavior, low self esteem, poor judgment, depression, general apathy/lack of interest.
- Family:* Frequently starting arguments, breaking rules repeatedly, withdrawing completely from family and activities.
- School:* Decreased interest, negative attitude, skipping classes, decline in grades, truancy, discipline problems.
- Social:* Changing friends to peer group pro-alcohol/drug use, problems with the law, secrecy about activities or whereabouts, lying about the same.
- Technological:* Suspicious text-messaging on cell phone or computer; references to or pictures of alcohol/drug use on *MySpace* or *FaceBook* websites.
- Other:* Presence of paraphernalia (pipes, dugouts, “one-ies”, suspicious baggies, etc.), use of incense, use of cologne or gum just prior to coming home, changes in appearance and clothing, etc.

### Signs and Symptoms for Teens to be Aware of:

- Do you lose time from school due to drinking/using?
- Do you drink/use because you are shy around other people?
- Do you drink/use to build your self confidence?
- Do you drink/use alone?
- Is drinking/using affecting your reputation? Do you care?
- Do you drink/use to escape from worries (home or school)?
- Do you feel guilty after drinking/using?
- Does it bother you if someone says you drink/use too much?
- Do you have to drink/use to go out on a date?
- Do you generally have a better time when drinking/using than when not?
- Do you spend more money than you should on your drinking/using?
- Do you have a sense of power when drinking/using?
- Have you lost friends since you started drinking/using?
- Have you started hanging out with a crowd where alcohol/drugs are easier to get?
- Do your friends drink/use less than you do?
- Do you drink/use until the supply is gone?
- Have you ever been “busted” by the police for drinking/using?
- Have you ever forgotten things you did while drinking/using?
- Do you “turn off” lectures or information about the risks of alcohol/drug use?
- Do you think you have a problem with alcohol/drug use?

### Connecting with Your Teen through Communication

- Make yourself available.
- Share your experiences.
- Admit to your own past and present mistakes.
- Tell them you love them and their health and safety is your primary concern.
- Take advantage of time in the car.
- Take turns talking (avoid lecturing).
- Try a different mode of communication.
- Choose your battles.

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