

Prevention Pathways

Online Courses

Signs of Possible Alcohol or Drug Problems in Young People

Some of these signs are easier to spot than others. If you see them happening over and over again, chances are your friend or child needs help. If your friend or child has one or more of the following warning signs, he or she may have a problem with alcohol or other drugs.

- Getting drunk or high on a regular basis
- Lying about things (like where he/she was or who he/she was with) or about how much alcohol or other drugs he or she is using
- Avoiding you in order to get drunk or high
- Giving up activities he or she used to do, such as sports, homework
- Hanging out with friends who drink or use drugs
- Having to drink more to get the same high
- Believing that they need to drink or use other drugs to have fun
- Pressuring others to drink or use other drugs
- Drinking and driving
- Taking risks, including sexual risks
- Frequent hangovers
- Feeling rundown, hopeless, depressed, or even suicidal
- Getting in trouble with the law
- Being suspended from school for an alcohol- or other drug-related incident

You may want to:

- Tell your child or friend that you are concerned for his or her health and safety,
- Tell your child or friend that you want to be supportive and to help,
- Try not to judge your child or friend by calling his or her behavior "stupid" or think he or she can just stop anytime
- Give your child or friend as much information as you can about substance abuse prevention and counseling services in your community. You can look in the Yellow Pages under "alcoholism" or "counseling" as a start. You may want to find information on programs for parents and friends of alcoholics such as Al-Anon.
- Offer to go with him or her to an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting for the first time.

<http://www.samhsa.gov/preventionpathways>