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## **SIGNS OF ADOLESCENT SUBSTANCE USE PROBLEMS**

The following behaviors are often warning signs of problems related to alcohol or substance abuse, although they are not linked exclusively to alcohol or drug use problems. If an initial evaluation rules out substance use, further evaluation is indicated to identify and address the behaviors of concern, whatever the origin.

### **School Activities**

- Drop in school performances
- Irregular school attendance
- Unexplained drop in grades

### **Health Indicators**

- Feelings of loneliness, paranoia, and depression
- Frequent accidents
- Frequent “flu” episodes, chronic cough, chest pains, and “allergy” symptoms
- Fatigue, loss of vitality, and impaired ability to fight off common infections
- Impaired short term memory
- Inexplicable mood changes, e.g., irritability, hostility
- Change in health or grooming

### **Family Relationships**

- Decrease interest in school or family social activities, sports, and hobbies
- Failure to provide specific answers to questions about activities
- Not bringing friends home
- Not returning home after school
- Personal time that is unaccounted for
- Strange phone calls
- Verbal (or physical) mistreatment of younger siblings
- Desire to be secretive or isolated
- Increased money or poor justification of how money was spent

### **Relationship with Peers**

- Dropping old friends
- New group of friends
- Attending parties where parents are not home to monitor behavior

### **Personal Issues**

- Change in personal priorities
- Collecting beer cans or drug paraphernalia
- Possession of “drug” materials
- Wearing clothing or jewelry symbolic of the drug culture

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