

Warning Signs of Alcohol and Substance Abuse

The following indicators or warning signs are associated with alcohol and drug addiction, as well as a variety of physical and mental disorders.

They are not meant to substitute for a screening or qualified clinical assessment.

Personal Attitude/Behavior Indicators

- Has one or more arrests for DUI; for drug use in public places; or for possession, delivery, or sale of illegal drugs
- Arrives for appointments, interviews, or meetings intoxicated
- Talks about getting high, uses vocabulary typical among drug users
- Frequently goes "on and off-the-wagon"
- Behaves in an uncharacteristic, impulsive, or inappropriate manner
- Is increasingly angry or defiant
- Overreacts to ordinary circumstances and problems, advice and criticism
- Is uncharacteristically isolated and withdrawn
- Is secretive concerning behaviors or whereabouts
- Denies, lies, or covers up
- Loses interest in hobbies and activities
- Takes unnecessary risks or acts in a reckless manner
- Breaks or bends rules, cheats
- Has increasing financial problems (may borrow or steal from family and friends)

- Has increasing legal problems/arrests (e.g., domestic abuse, disorderly conduct, assault arrests, or outstanding warrants)
- Misses interviews, appointments, or meetings

Cognitive/Mental Indicators

- Has difficulty concentrating, focusing, or attending to a task
- Frequently appears distracted or disoriented
- Makes inappropriate or unreasonable choices
- Has difficulty making decisions
- Experiences short-term memory loss
- Experiences blackout
- Often needs directions repeated
- Has difficulty recalling known details
- Needs repeated assistance completing ordinary paperwork (e.g. application forms)

Physical/Emotional Indicators

- Has smell of alcohol on breath or marijuana on clothing
- Has burned fingers, burns on lips, or needle track marks on arms
- Slurs speech or stutters, is incoherent

(continued)