

How Can I Tell If a Friend or a Loved One Has a Problem With Alcohol, Marijuana, or Other Illicit Drugs?*

Sometimes it is tough to tell. Most people won't walk up to someone they're close to and ask for help. In fact, they will probably do everything possible to deny or hide the problem. But, there are certain warning signs that may indicate that a family member or friend is using drugs and drinking too much alcohol.

If your friend or loved one has one or more of the following signs, he or she may have a problem with drugs or alcohol:

- getting high on drugs or getting drunk on a regular basis**
- lying about things, or the amount of drugs or alcohol they are using**
- avoiding you and others in order to get high or drunk**
- giving up activities they used to do such as sports, homework, or hanging out with friends who don't use drugs or drink**
- having to use more marijuana or other illicit drugs to get the same effects**
- constantly talking about using drugs or drinking**
- believing that in order to have fun they need to drink or use marijuana or other drugs**
- pressuring others to use drugs or drink**
- getting into trouble with the law**
- taking risks, including sexual risks and driving under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs**
- feeling run-down, hopeless, depressed, or even suicidal**
- suspension from school for an alcohol- or drug-related incident**
- missing work or poor work performance because of drinking or drug use**

Many of the signs, such as sudden changes in mood, difficulty in getting along with others, poor job or school performance, irritability, and depression, might be explained by other causes. Unless you observe drug use or excessive drinking, it can be hard to determine the cause of these problems. Your first step is to contact a qualified alcohol and drug professional in your area who can give you further advice.**

* From "Straight Facts About Drugs and Alcohol." www.health.org/govpubs/rpo884. October 2001