

Substance Use, Abuse, and Dependence

What is it?

1. Substance use

Use of alcohol or other drugs to socialize and feel effects

2. Substance abuse

Use of alcohol or other drugs that results in failure to complete responsibilities at school or home, use in situations that are physically hazardous, interpersonal problems as a result of substance abuse, legal problems

3. Substance dependence

This is known as addiction. High tolerance to alcohol or drug, withdrawal symptoms, can't cut down on amount taken, a great deal of time committed to obtaining, using or recovering from the substance, give up activities, substance use doesn't stop despite physical or psychological problems cause by substance abuse.

Signs and symptoms

- Impaired memory
- Changes in appetite,
- Irritability
- Eyes (bloodshot, glassy, changes in pupil size)
- Euphoria
- Drowsiness/dizziness
- Impaired coordination
- Restlessness
- Changes in speech (slurred words, talking rapidly)
- Rule breaking, initiating arguments
- Lack of awareness of safety,
- Unexcused absences, less motivation,
- Withdrawal from social and family relationships or
- Changes in mood, behavior or appearance
- Drop in grades

Possible causes

- An underlying mental health disorder
- Family history of substance abuse, genetic link
- Low self-esteem, poor coping skills
- Socially isolated or unhealthy relationships

Treatment

- No single treatment is appropriate for all individuals
- Treatment should address the whole person (home life, school life, mental health problems, family communication/expectations, rehabilitation)
- Counseling (individual or group)
- Medical detoxification

Resources

Parent information/recommendations

<http://www.cbsnews.com/pictures/teen-drug-abuse-14-mistakes-parents-make/>

Website for students and parents

<http://www.drugfree.org/>

Website for students

<http://abovetheinfluence.com/#>

What's Wrong with My Kid?: When Drugs or Alcohol Might be a Problem and What to Do about It by
George E. Leary Jr

Teenagers, Alcohol and Drugs: What Your Kids really Want and Need to Know about Alcohol and Drugs
by Paul Dillon