



Red Flags - Signs Your Child May Be Engaging In Drugs

Red flag warnings:

Missing household items, such as: alcohol, money, or jewelry

Behavior changes, such as:

- Overreacts when asked about plans
- Overly sleepy/energetic
- Change in friends
- Withdrawal from family (dinners, trips, conversations, etc.)
- Talking/texting in the middle of the night (check phone bill for out of town area codes)
- School: excessive tardies or absences/sudden drop in grades with a lack of care

Drug paraphernalia to watch for:

- Pieces of foil or a roll of foil in bedroom, lighters/matches
- Sudden use of candles or incense (to cover up smells from drugs)
- Bloody tissues (from cutting)

Physical changes:

- Dilated or constricted pupils
- Always wearing long sleeves/hood (to hide piercings, dyed hair, tattoos, needle marks or cutting)
- Clothes: Watch for sudden/extreme clothing changes which would indicate desire to attract a different crowd. Teens may dress “normally”, while hiding other clothing in backpacks.

Social media:

- Being blocked/unaccepted on their social media accounts can be suspicious. Require kids to provide you passwords to all of their accounts, including phone passwords.
- It's used to hook up with people to obtain drugs, party information, new drug/alcohol connections
- *Monitor* the activity, but do not participate in conversations. Don't make them feel "violated" or they will find alternative ways to communicate around you.
- Teens are very tech savvy. Try to learn more about how they spend time on their phones/computers and what the latest social media trends are.

**Be sure to see our follow up handout -
Red Flags Part 2 - How to Help and What Parents Should Do if They Suspect Drug Use/Abuse**