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5 RED FLAGS OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE

December 14, 2011 Alcohol Abuse 0 Comments

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While some people are very good at hiding a substance abuse problem, there are usually some warning signs that can alert friends and loved ones that something is going on. Addictions can so quickly take over someone's life and control everything they do. If an addiction is allowed to carry on, it can be nearly impossible to overcome. However, loved ones who are alert and aware of the warning signs of a substance abuse problem can encourage the person to seek help early. Early intervention is the best way for a person to fully recover from an addiction.

Below are the top 5 red flags that a loved one may be addicted to drugs or alcohol.

Changes in physical appearance. Sure, some changes in a person's appearance can be the result of a bad night's sleep or an exceptionally emotional day at work, but don't always overlook a loved one's haggard appearance. Someone who is on drugs or dependent on alcohol will likely have bloodshot eyes, experience sudden weight loss or weight gain, deterioration of personal grooming habits, unusual smells on breath, body, or clothing, and tremors or slurred speech.

Inability to keep up with responsibilities. We all get busy sometimes and let things slide, but someone with an addiction problem will tend to do this more and more. Maybe they aren't making it to their kids' games or performances anymore, or they call in sick to work a lot. Teens and young adults may start failing classes or drop out of extracurricular activities. All of these things occur as an addiction begins to take precedence in the person's life.

More secrecy. This one is often hard for parents of teenagers to recognize because so often teens want more privacy and time away from the family. But, if someone seems to be keeping secrets, or needing more time alone, or is unable to explain why they have financial problems or where they have been, there might be a substance abuse problem.

Unexplained change in personality or attitude. A person under the influence of drugs or alcohol will display sudden mood swings, outbursts of anger, and irritability more often. They may be more confrontational and may get into more fights, arguments, and run ins with the law.

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