

## **Question – What Are the Signs and Symptoms Your Teen Is in Trouble?**

It can be hard to see these but we need to be aware. These are taken from real experiences from parents who have had a son or daughter with addiction. These are their reports of the first signs or symptoms early on - firsthand knowledge, current reports from parents in this county who have gone through this with their teen/young adults.

*The Secrets. It wasn't just him trying to be "independent", it was dangerous secrets about People, Places, and Things. Sneaky and avoidance.*

*Alienation in a bedroom/long periods of time in the bathroom, loss of friends, lack of motivation, missing spoons . . . lies, inconsistent stories and excuses, anger.*

*Agitated when started smoking pot, different than hormones agitation.*

*Stealing from family members.*

*Lack of motivation.*

*Stealing is a sign of a more serious drug problem above and beyond experimentation, (usually mean opiates and/or cocaine abuse/addiction)*

*Drop in grades is a first sign.*

*Explosive anger*

*Lying*

*Money going missing*

*Locking bedroom door*

*Rolling a towel up and putting it against the bottom of the bedroom door*

*Being in the bathroom forever.*

*Broken writing pens*

*Tin foil in room*

*Cut straws*

*Butane, sticky black/brown stuff on dresser and bathroom sink (wax).*

*Always sick, like had the flu.*

*The start of it for my son was talking about anxiety and how "people say" pot helps with it.*

*Talking about things to make parent focus on the wrong problem, roping parent in to consign and usually trying to team up with one parent vs the other parent on that, then the parent would become focused on worrying about anxiety and*

*convincing him that pot wasn't the answer instead of making clear the boundaries and that it just wasn't acceptable.*

*Friends were a big clue (hindsight).*

*Playing the doctors. Knowing exactly what to say to get medications they wanted!  
It's easy for them when there is dual diagnosis!*

*Wearing long sleeves all the time, even when warm out.*

*Having to leave suddenly for a short period of time (to pick up drugs)*

*Longer bathroom trips*

*Nodding off, drowsy.*

*Paraphernalia, straws, Q-tips, cotton-balls, belts, candle lighting, spoons,*

*Hiding spots (clothes pockets, shower curtain headers, inside of speakers, electrical covers, taped on the drawers (outside part where rollers are) on bathroom vanity.*

*Hid inside vitamin bottles, folded socks in drawers*

*No motivation (not to be confused with normal teen laziness)*

*Pens with ink cartridges missing*

*Gatorade bottles with hole in cap*

*Leaving with a backpack*

*Weight loss*

*Not wanting to participate with family*

*Whatever those round bolt things (sockets) are that are in tool box found in room*

*"Friend who I knew went 'away' for eating disorder.*

*Stating things had been stolen like laptop or iPad but really it was because they were pawned for money*

*Leaving and coming back loopy either high or drunk.*

*Constantly trying to "educate" us on how weed was natural and why we should support it. Also, heard the argument, "at least I'm only smoking weed because everyone else is doing much worse." Another tactic was telling us what all other kids were doing (harder drugs) whenever we would confront them with their behaviors and signs of drug use.*

*If it was not a problem why would one be trying to debate this topic. They wouldn't even be focused on this issue if it was not a problem. It's become problem if you try to convince your parents that it is ok.*

*When the consequences (major ones like health and legal not loss of phone or car privileges) offered sufficient reason to stop to avoid more consequences and it wasn't enough.*

*Inconsistencies in everything - lying, hiding, justifying*

*Telling parent he tried a friend's medication for ADHD with such great results*

*Extreme mood swings*

*Pupils constricted if opiates/ heroin and dilated if cocaine/ meth/ stimulants.*

*Sleeping a lot or extremely loving and animated.*

*Excessive amount of time in bathrooms everywhere, not just at home, in restaurants/ going to the movie/ always having to go to the restroom,*

*Pawn slips*

*My son was never without his backpack for years (he was out of school)*

*Having that gut instinct as a parent that something is not right*

*Sometimes the change in friends is subtle. They start hanging with "friends of friends." My biggest clue (that I missed) was that she was spending the night out rather than having friends over here.*

*The change in friends' thing and meeting new "friends" one night and then going to hang out with them the next few nights.*

*Asking for money, even small amount of money at a time*

*Sneaking out at night*

*Stealing the car*

*Cutting class*

*Change in interests, in sports or other activities*

*Cutting (self-harm)*

*Pot in his room by himself...not with friends as part of a social scene.*

*Paper and scissors under his bed.*

*Empty cough medicine bottles in the trash.*

*Very irritable and depressed.*

**Conclusion:**

If you are seeing **2 or more of these signs or symptoms** going on and if these signs are symptoms are going on at the same time then odds are your teen does have a problem.