In the normal course of adolescence, kids often exhibit symptoms that would give any rational adult pause. However, the presence and intensity of a cluster of disturbing symptoms should be pursued.

First, rule out any physical illness with a trip to the doctor. Ask the doctor to evaluate for depression or other emotional causes as well. If there’s a clean bill of health and the symptoms are still present, follow your gut and locate a professional (psychiatrist, psychologist, or counselor) with experience in adolescent drug use.

**Signs and Symptoms Common to Adolescents Who are Using Drugs**

**Is My Child?**

- Withdrawn, depressed, tired, or neglecting personal grooming
- Hostile, uncooperative and frequently breaking curfew
- Suffering deteriorating relationships with family members
- Hanging out with a new group of friends and unwilling to introduce them
- Skipping school and experiencing dropping grades
- Losing interest in hobbies, sports and other favorite activities
- Exhibiting changes in sleeping patterns (awake at night, asleep during the day)
- Having a hard time concentrating
- Exhibiting red eyes or runny nose without evidence of allergies or a cold
- Taking household money without permission
- The possible source of any of the following items in the home: pipes, rolling papers, small medicine bottles, eye drops, butane lighters, baby pacifiers, unidentified pills, incense, drug-related books, comics, magazines, locked boxes or containers

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