



Hope & Recovery

Strengthening our Services in Time of Need

Possible Alcohol and Substance Abuse Indicators

The following indicators or warning signs are associated with alcohol and drug addiction, as well as a variety of physical and mental disorders. These are offered to raise a general awareness of the need to focus on alcohol and drug use within a crisis counseling session. They are not meant to substitute for a screening or qualified clinical assessment.

Personal Attitude/Behavior Indicators

- ▶ Has one or more arrests for DUI; for drug use in public places; or for possession, delivery, or sale of illegal drugs
- ▶ Arrives for appointments, interviews, or meetings intoxicated
- ▶ Talks about getting high, uses vocabulary typical among drug users
- ▶ Frequently goes "on and off-the-wagon"
- ▶ Behaves in an uncharacteristic, impulsive, or inappropriate manner
- ▶ Is increasingly angry or defiant
- ▶ Over-reacts to ordinary circumstances and problems, advice and criticism
- ▶ Is uncharacteristically isolated and withdrawn
- ▶ Is secretive concerning behaviors or whereabouts
- ▶ Denies, lies, or covers up
- ▶ Loses interest in hobbies and activities
- ▶ Takes unnecessary risks or acts in a reckless manner
- ▶ Breaks or bends rules, cheats
- ▶ Has increasing financial problems (may borrow or steal from family and friends)
- ▶ Has increasing legal problems/arrests (e.g., domestic abuse, disorderly conduct, assault arrests, or outstanding warrants)
- ▶ Misses interviews, appointments, or meetings
- ▶ Fails to comply with program requirements without easily verifiable reasons (may be verbally uncooperative to disguise the problem or divert attention)

Cognitive/Mental Indicators

- ▶ Has difficulty concentrating, focusing, or attending to a task
- ▶ Frequently appears distracted or disoriented
- ▶ Makes inappropriate or unreasonable choices
- ▶ Has difficulty making decisions
- ▶ Experiences short-term memory loss
- ▶ Experiences blackout
- ▶ Often needs directions repeated
- ▶ Has difficulty recalling known details
- ▶ Needs repeated assistance completing ordinary paperwork (e.g. application forms)



Physical/Emotional Indicators

- ▶ Has smell of alcohol on breath or marijuana on clothing
- ▶ Has burned fingers, burns on lips, or needle track marks on arms
- ▶ Slurs speech or stutters, is incoherent
- ▶ Has difficulty maintaining eye contact
- ▶ Has dilated (enlarged) or constricted (pinpoint) pupils
- ▶ Has tremors (shaking or twitching of hands and eyelids)
- ▶ Is hyperactive and overly energetic
- ▶ Appears lethargic or falls asleep easily
- ▶ Experiences sleep disturbances (e.g., insomnia, chronic fatigue)
- ▶ Exhibits deteriorating personal hygiene, grooming, and posture
- ▶ Exhibits impaired coordination or unsteady gait (e.g., staggering, off balance)
- ▶ Speaks more rapidly or slowly than normal
- ▶ Has frequent injuries or bruises and seeming unreasonable explanations
- ▶ Has chronic illnesses requiring doctors visits or hospitalization
- ▶ Experiences wide mood swings (highs and lows)
- ▶ Experiences general change in mood toward a more depressed and negative or critical outlook
- ▶ Appears fearful or anxious; experiences panic attacks
- ▶ Appears impatient, agitated, or irritable
- ▶ Experiences ongoing depression
- ▶ Has paranoid thoughts

On the Job Indicators

- ▶ Demonstrates periods of extreme high or low productivity
- ▶ Makes frequent performance mistakes
- ▶ Gives questionable excuses or blames others for poor performance
- ▶ Has difficulty adhering to schedules and timeliness
- ▶ Misses meetings and scheduled activities
- ▶ Lodges numerous complaints or grievances
- ▶ Is frequently tardy
- ▶ Uses excessive sick leave with poor excuses
- ▶ Takes long lunch hours and breaks
- ▶ Returns to work after breaks in a noticeably changed condition
- ▶ Avoids supervisors and coworkers
- ▶ Violates company policies and procedures

If You Need More Information

▶ NYS OASAS Downstate Field Offices:

Bronx: 646-728-4544
Brooklyn: 646-728-4546
Queens/StatenIsland: 646-728-4595
Upper Manhattan: 646-728-4566
Lower Manhattan: 646-728-4561
Long Island: 631-434-7263

▶ NYS OASAS Upstate Field Offices:

Mid-Hudson: 518-485-1484
(Albany-based)
Mid-Hudson: 845-359-1000 x 3720
(Blaisdell ATC-based)
Central: 315-428-4113
Finger Lakes: 585-454-4320
Northeastern: 518-485-1660
Western: 716-885-0701