

SAMHS INFO BULLETIN



Compiled by Corporate Communication

DRUG AWARENESS WEEK 25-30 JUNE

Drug abuse is often associated with alcohol abuse. As young people experience peer pressure more than adults, they can more easily fall into the trap of drug abuse. Nobody starts using drugs with the mind set of becoming addicted, most of the time was purely experimental or to live up to a challenge or for temporary stress relief.

Common signs and symptoms of drug abuse

- You're neglecting your responsibilities at school, work or home (e.g. flunking classes, skipping work, neglecting your children) because of your drug use.
- You're using drugs under dangerous conditions or taking risks while high, such as driving while on drugs, using dirty needles or having unprotected sex.
- Your drug use is getting you into legal trouble, such as arrests for disorderly conduct, driving under the influence or stealing to support a drug habit.
- Your drug use is causing problems in your relationships such as fights with your partner or family members an unhappy boss or the loss of old friends.

Physical warning signs of drug abuse

- Bloodshot eyes that is larger or smaller than usual
- Changes in appetite or sleep patterns. Sudden weight loss or weight gain

- Deterioration of physical appearance and personal grooming habits.
- Unusual smells on breath, body or clothing.

Behavioural signs of drug abuse

- Drop in attendance and performance at work or school.
- Unexplained need for money or financial problems. May borrow or steal to get it.
- Engaging in secretive or suspicious behaviours.
- Sudden change in friends, favourite hangouts and hobbies.
- Frequently getting into trouble (fights, accidents, illegal activities)

Psychological warning signs of drug abuse

- Unexplained change in personality or attitude.
- Sudden mood swings, irritability or angry outbursts.
- Lack of motivation; appears lethargic or spaced out.
- Appears fearful, anxious or paranoid with no reason.

Drug addiction and denial

One of the most dangerous effects of drug effects of abuse and addiction is denial. The urge to use is so strong that the mind finds many ways to rationalise the addiction. You may drastically underestimate the quantity of drugs you're taking, how much it impacts your life and the level of control you have over your drug use.

Denial is an unconscious defence mechanism. Minimizing and rationalizing the addiction is less scary than admitting that your drug use is dangerously out of control. But the cost of denial can be extremely high including the loss of important relationships your job financial security and your physical and mental health.