

Substance Use

What is Substance Use?

Substance use is the excessive consumption or misuse of a substance for the sake of its nontherapeutic effects on the mind or body, especially drugs or alcohol.

Symptoms to look for:

Possible signs of substance use

- Behavioral Changes: agitation, fits of violence or anger, paranoia or depression, apathy, forgetfulness, sudden need for money, lying
- Physical Changes: any dramatic increase or decrease in weight, poor coordination, tremors, scent of substance, insomnia or hypersomnia
- Social Changes: will withdraw from friends and family, suddenly socialize with those significantly younger or older

Best Practices

Current research-based best practices tend to merge the biopsychosocial, theoretical perspective of addictive disorders. This includes supportive counseling, motivating client readiness for change and coping-skills training techniques. The goals of treatment are:

- To establish and maintain abstinence from the illicit use of all psychoactive drugs;
- To foster development of (non-chemical) coping and problem-solving skills;
- To stop and ultimately eliminate impulses to “self-medicate” with psychoactive drugs; and
- To enhance and sustain client motivation for change.

Screening Tools/Resources

Screening Tools:

Screening for Drug Use in General Medical Settings
(Quick Reference Guide)

Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ)

Resources:

National Institute of Drug Abuse

drugabuse.gov

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

samhsa.gov



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