**Youth Substance Abuse Warning Signs**

**Top 10 indicators** that your teen could be misusing drugs or alcohol

1. **Mood swings**, including unexplained elation, unprovoked laughter and deep depression.
2. **Change in appearance**, such as flushed cheeks, pinpoint pupils, bloodshot eyes, needle marks, long sleeves in hot weather and poor personal grooming.
3. **Irresponsibility**, including poor academic performance, neglect of chores and failure to meet commitments.
4. **Deteriorating health**, including dramatic weight fluctuation, frequent illness, irregular sleep and uncharacteristic sweating.
5. **Aggression**, such as sudden hostility, temper outbursts, verbal abuse and physical violence.
6. **Altered social life**, including entirely new groups of friends, social isolation, disregard for personal relationships and frequent nighttime outings.
7. **Caginess**, such as deceit, defensiveness, avoidance of eye contact, paranoia, demand for privacy and secretive behavior.
8. **Fluctuating energy levels**, including lethargy, drowsiness and abrupt hyperactivity.
9. **Disinterest**, including decreased motivation, poor concentration, and abandonment of hobbies, sports and group activities.
10. **Motor tics**, such as frequent scratching, shakes or tremors, and teeth clenching.

**Hiding in Plain Sight**

Common places teens might hide drugs and drug paraphernalia among their personal belongings.

1. **Makeup and personal hygiene items**
   - Toiletry containers like lipstick tubes, deodorant sticks and shampoo bottles can all be emptied and used to conceal drugs.
2. **Candy containers and wrappers**
   - A lot of edible drugs look like candy, so it’s easy to camouflage them in a candy wrapper. Altoids tins and other candy containers look so ordinary, they don’t raise suspicion.
3. **Furniture and decorations**
   - Under the mattress, behind a poster or wall hanging, in an air vent, in a desk or dresser drawer, or on the backside of a desk or headboard, “all” serves as inconspicuous hiding spots.
4. **Writing instruments**
   - The caps of highlighters, markers and pens can be used to stash small pills and powdered substances.
5. **Empty soda cans**
   - It’s easy to remove the bottoms of empty soda and energy drink cans and use them to store drugs.
6. **Stuffed animals and plush toys**
   - Teens hide drugs among the fluff inside their lovable, cuddly stuffed friends who look innocuous adorning a bed.
7. **Clothing**
   - Drugs can be stashed in the toes of shoes, in the pockets of pants and coats, and even in belt buckles that come with a secret compartment.
8. **Books**
   - Books don’t raise suspicion, so teens hollow out the insides and hide drugs in them.
9. **Electronics**
   - Electronics like speakers, alarm clocks and game consoles have battery compartments and other nooks and crannies that can conceal drugs.
10. **Cars**
    - The interior and exterior of cars provide numerous places to hide drugs, including under seats, under carpets, in the glove box and under the hood.

**Sources:** Addiction Center, BAART Programs, Blue Cross Blue Shield NC, Partnership for Drug-Free Kids, Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation

**Sources:**
1. Partnership for Drug-Free Kids
2. Get Smart About Drugs (Drug Enforcement Agency)
4. The Recovery Village