

THE SYMPTOM CHECKLIST OF A SUBSTANCE ABUSING ADULT

Here is a basic checklist frequently used by counselors to see if alcohol and other drug abuse may be an issue in someone's life.

1. **Frequent intoxication**
 - Does the person report or appear to be frequently high or intoxicated?
 - Do recreational activities center around drinking or other drug use, including getting, using, and recovering from use?
2. **Atypical social settings**
 - Does the immediate peer group of the individual suggest that substance abuse may be encouraged?
 - Is the person socially isolated from others and is substance abuse occurring alone?
 - Is the person reluctant to attend social events where chemicals won't be available?
3. **Intentional heavy use**
 - Does the person use "social drugs" with prescribed medications?
 - Does the person use more than is safe in light of other medications they may be using, or because of compromised tolerance due to illness or disability?
 - Does the person have an elevated tolerance as evidenced by the use of large quantities of alcohol or other drugs without appearing intoxicated?
4. **Symptomatic drinking**
 - Are there predictable patterns of use which are well known to others?
 - Is there a reliance on chemicals to cope with stress?
 - Has the person made lifestyle changes yet the drug use has stayed the same or increased? (eg. changed friends or moved to another area)
5. **Psychological dependence**
 - Does the person rely on drugs as a means of coping with negative emotions?
 - Does the person believe that pain can't be coped with without medication?
 - Does the person obviously feel guilty about some aspect of their use of alcohol or other drugs?
6. **Health problems**
 - Are there medical conditions which decrease tolerance or increase the risk of substance abuse problems?
 - Are there medical situations which are aggravated by repeated alcohol or other drug use?
 - Did the person ever suffer an accident or disability while under the influence, even if it is denied by the person?
7. **Job problems**
 - Is the person underemployed or unemployed?
 - Has the person missed work or gone to work late due to use of alcohol or other drugs?
 - Does the person blame the drinking on work related problems?

8. Problems with significant others

- Has a family member or friend expressed concern about the person's use?
- Have important relationships been lost or impaired due to chemical use?

9. Problems with law or authority

- Has the person been in trouble with authorities or arrested for any alcohol or drug related offenses?
- Have there been instances when the person could have been arrested but wasn't?
- Does the person seem angry at "the system" and at authority figures in general?

10. Financial problems

- Is the person's spending money easily accounted for?
- Does the person frequently miss making payments when they are due?

11. Belligerence

- Does the person appear angry or defensive but doesn't know why?
- Is the person defensive or angry when confronted about chemical use?

12. Isolation

- Does increasing isolation suggest heavier substance abuse?
- Is the person giving up or changing social and family activities in order to use?