

**Module 6: Community Health**  
**Topic 3 Content: Substance Abuse**

**Introduction**



Substance abuse is defined as the excessive use of drugs, including alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, inhalants, and medications, just to name a few. This community health issue affects local, national, and global communities. Users can develop cancer, experience changes in their brain function, have respiratory problems, develop a weakened immune system, and risk infertility. In addition, use of illegal substances can spark violent crimes and instability within communities. It is important that community members become involved in helping substance-abuse victims.

Take a moment to explore possible signs that someone is abusing substances. Click each of the markers below to view example warning signs of substance abuse.

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**Warning Signs**



Here is a list of possible signs that someone is abusing substances.

- Behaving secretly about friends, possessions, and activities
- Having a new interest in clothing, music, and other items that highlight drug use
- Demanding more privacy, locking doors, avoiding eye contact, and sneaking around
- Skipping class, neglecting school work, and getting in trouble at school
- Stealing money, valuables, or prescriptions
- Acting uncharacteristically isolated, withdrawn, or depressed
- Using incense, perfume, or air fresheners to hide the smell of smoke or drugs
- Using eye drops to mask bloodshot eyes or dilated pupils