



Behavioural Checklist

Signs and Symptoms of Alcohol and Other Drug Use and/or Mental Health Issues

Page One

*“Alcohol and other drugs may be used to manage underlying mental health issues,
and may precipitate an early onset of mental health problems”*

The **Behavioural Checklist** assists in the early identification of substance use problems and/or mental health issues. The following checklist has been created to help you identify the behavioural signs and symptoms of alcohol and other drug use, and/or mental health issues. The signs and symptoms of both have been included in this checklist as there is an “*overlap*” between them. Research has shown that people with a family background of mental illness and/or problematic alcohol or other drug use are more vulnerable to developing similar problems. If you are concerned about this, or have any questions and would like more information, please contact your local Addictions or Mental Health Community Services.

* **May be signs and symptoms of both Alcohol and Other Drug Use and /or Mental Health Issues.**

CLASSROOM CONDUCT

- ___ ***Changes in usual classroom behaviour:** avoids participating in class; slow in thought process, decision-making and responding to questions; has memory and concentration problems; asks for more assistance than normal and may ask for advice without a specific problem
- ___ ***Late for, or skipping classes**
- ___ ***Difficulty maintaining normal, focused conversation:** loses train of thought easily; has difficulty expressing thoughts or feelings; may change subjects inappropriately
- ___ ***Quarrelsome and suspicious:** argumentative; irritable; verbally abusive; sudden temper outburst; defiance; defensive; breaking rules; violent; extreme negativity; frequently requiring discipline; vandalism
- ___ ***Changes in personality:** silliness, outbursts of laughter or giddiness (more than usual); irritability; paranoid; nervous or hyperactive; mood swings; erratic behaviour; and may seem anxious or agitated
- ___ ***Changes in general appearance:** decline in personal hygiene; differences in body posture and movement (slower or faster)
- ___ ***Frequent trips to nurse, health room, bathroom, or may be frequently sick**
- ___ ***Lack of motivation; inattentive, lack of concentration; sleeping in class; day dreaming; time disorientation**
- ___ ***Withdrawing from relationships:** isolation, avoids eye contact
- ___ ***Changes in friends:** new friends, secretive regarding friends, sudden unexplained popularity
- ___ ***Compulsive overachieving:** preoccupied with academic or other success; perfectionism; difficulty accepting mistakes; obsessive



Behavioural Checklist

Signs and Symptoms of Alcohol and Other Drug Use and/or Mental Health Issues

Page Two

*May be signs and symptoms of both Alcohol and Other Drug Use and /or Mental Health Issues.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

- *Requesting more help
- *Decline in quality of work
- *Incomplete work or work not handed in
- *Drop in grade or failing

OTHER BEHAVIOURS

- borrowing money, stealing or suspected involvement in the sex trade**
- *physical signs and symptoms of intoxication:** smell of marijuana or alcohol on or “around” person; red, glassy eyes; burns around the mouth; sores on body; picking at skin; droopy eyelids and acts slightly sedated; slurred speech (different than usual); staggering; obsessive and repetitive behaviours; hallucinations; sudden weight loss; depression
- preoccupation with alcohol or other drugs:** brags and talks freely or overhear comments or jokes by other people directly or indirectly about alcohol or other drug use; associated with known users
- possession of alcohol and other drug paraphernalia:** pipes, eye drops, rolling papers, needles, burnt spoons or knives, lighters, roach clips, foil, small bottles, bags
- selling, delivering**
- *fear of school contact with parents or other authority figures**

- About 18% of children and youth in BC have a mental health problem
- 50% of individuals diagnosed with schizophrenia have a substance use problem
- 60% of individuals with a diagnosis of depression have a substance use problem
- “Within populations of concurrently disordered youth, in 90% of cases the mental health problem precedes the substance use problem”
- “The median age for the development of early mental health problems is 11 years old”
(Children’s Commission 1999 report)

People commonly have BOTH alcohol and other drug problems and mental health issues