

The Silent Clues of Teen Substance Abuse

Early indicators to teen substance abuse can often hide in everyday behavior, but when behaviors repeat, they tell a story.

Here are commonly overlooked symptoms:

1. Abnormal sleep patterns (Insomnia, erratic sleep, or daytime drowsiness)
2. Longtime friends have been abandoned for new groups they won't discuss
3. Secretive phone use and reluctance to share daily activities
4. Use of eye drops, heavy cologne, or perfume
5. Declining grades
6. Loss of interest in favorite activities
7. Irritability, anxiety, mood swings
8. Changes in appearance and hygiene
9. Missing money or valuables



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Isolated, these signs may seem minor, but together they warrant concern. By staying engaged and keeping conversations open, you'll improve the chance for earlier intervention.

Want to learn more?

Join EAP February 10th for our live Health Bites session [Health Risks and Impacts of Vaping](#) to explore vaping trends on young adults.

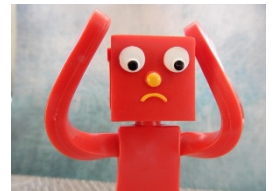
Read more: [What parents should know about teen drug and alcohol use](#)

Decode Your Triggers: What Your Stress Is Telling You

Ever feel like stress sneaks up on you out of nowhere? One minute you're fine, and the next you're spiraling into frustration. Fortunately, stress triggers are predictable and with a bit of effort, you can learn to neutralize them.

Start by keeping a stress diary to help you keep track of moments triggering irritability, a looming deadline, unexpected expenses, or communication challenges with loved ones. You can neutralize these triggers by first recognizing your reaction. Having self-awareness of your emotions creates ease to take control of your responses.

Once you can identify your triggers you can experiment with techniques to help your response. Here are different strategies you can try to calm your system:



- Count to ten
- Take a walk
- Laugh it off
- Reframe the problem
- Deep breaths

These small shifts can make a big difference. You'll feel more in control, your relationships will improve, and life will feel a little lighter.

Prevent the Afternoon Crash from Carbs

A mid-afternoon snack is not only delicious but can improve mental focus. If you find yourself looking for a snack to hold you over until dinnertime, here are some healthy bites that taste good and make you feel even better.

- 1) Nuts and seeds like almonds, walnuts, or pumpkin seeds deliver protein, healthy fats, and magnesium.
- 2) Greek yogurt with berries. The protein and antioxidants in Greek yogurt fuel the brain.
- 3) Hummus and carrot sticks, bell peppers, or cucumber provide fiber and healthy fats.
- 4) Apple slices with nut butter offer complex carbs, fiber, and fat to prevent sugar spikes.
- 5) Whole-grain crackers with cheese or turkey deliver protein and carbs.
- 6) Small amounts of 70% dark chocolate can boost mood and alertness.
- 7) Hard-boiled eggs supply protein and nutrients to support memory and cognition.

Dehydration often explains grogginess, so drink water to stay hydrated to maximize alertness.

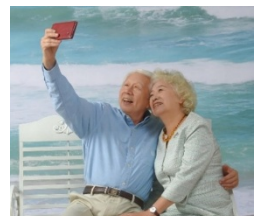
For a deeper dive into how your relationship with food fuels your health, join us for the Health Bites session on January 13, 2026: [“Becoming Eating Competent” with Barbara Lohse](#).

Learn more: [Top 10 Brain Food Snacks: Boost Focus and Productivity](#)

Aging Gracefully

Ever wonder what people in their 60s, 70s, and 80s would tell their younger selves about staying healthy? Research on aging reveals valuable lessons from those who've been there, offering “insider wisdom” on how to age well and live fully.

Here are common insider tips to healthy aging:



- **Joint care matters:** Strength training, flexibility, and early treatment for pain can make a big difference.
- **Balance and fall prevention:** Small steps now can help you stay steady and independent later.
- **Don't delay vision or hearing care:** These senses are key to staying connected and mobile.
- **Stay on top of screenings:** Early detection of conditions like diabetes, high blood pressure, or cancer can lead to better outcomes.
- **Nurture friendships:** Social connections are just as important as physical health.
- **Plan your space:** A home that supports aging-in-place can offer comfort and safety.
- **Embrace support tools:** Mobility aids can enhance freedom-not limit it.

These reflections aren't about regret; they're about sharing the "secret sauce" to aging with strength, connection, and confidence.

Empathy's Power in the Workplace

Empathy plays a vital role in creating a psychologically safe and productive work environment.

What does empathy look like at work?

- How well do you recognize when a coworker is struggling?
- Can you sense unspoken concerns?
- Do you adapt your communication to meet others where they are?



If your empathy skills are strong, chances are your coworkers will feel more comfortable sharing ideas, admitting mistakes, and trusting your guidance.

Tips to strengthen empathy:

- Be genuinely interested in building positive relationships.
- Slow down and give your full attention.
- Avoid interrupting or planning your response while someone is speaking.
- Ask clarifying questions and reflect what you've heard (e.g., "I heard you say...")

This kind of active listening helps others feel understood and valued and can lead to deeper connections and more meaningful work experience.