

Friends are an essential part of our lives and naturally, we are concerned when any of them fall prey to undesirable practices like drug abuse. It may not always be obvious if someone has been consuming drugs because there are tools such as needles and foil that could easily be hidden away from view. However, there are also tell-tale signs on the body that drop hints on that person's involvement with drugs.



HELP!

IS MY FRIEND TAKING DRUGS?

SOME IMMEDIATE SIGNS TO LOOK OUT FOR:

- Burnt foil that may have been used to smoke heroin
- Small plastic sachets lying around that may have been used to contain drugs
- Discarded and used syringes
- Pipes or plastic bottles that have been pierced or tampered with

It may be difficult to comprehend why your friend is taking drugs especially if you know about the devastating consequences that follow. It may also be hard to understand the changes in a person's mood when drugs overwhelm him. Drug abusers often exhibit behaviour that is defensive and they sometimes go into conflict with the people who care about them.

Apart from physical signs, other clues that you can look out for in friends whom you suspect of drug abuse include unexplained and regular absenteeism from class, and a general lack of energy. You may also notice a marked increase in them borrowing money for obscure reasons. This could be to finance their insatiable appetite for drugs that they are hooked on to.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE PHYSICAL SIGNS THAT I SHOULD LOOK OUT FOR?

Easily agitated or unusually restless

Extreme changes in mood, that is, mood swings

Attempts to conceal red, teary eyes from the effects of drug consumption (E.g. By wearing sunglasses even in non-glaring environments)

Behavioural changes such as withdrawn personality or inactivity



KNOW A FRIEND IN TROUBLE?

If you are aware that a friend is experimenting with drugs, you have to organise your thoughts before approaching the person about the problem. Drug abusers may react negatively when confronted so it is important to stay calm and reasonable. If you are unsure of how to express your concerns, it is best to consult an adult like your teacher, parent or a health professional who specialises in such issues.

A FRIEND IN NEED IS A FRIEND INDEED. KEEPING QUIET ABOUT A FRIEND WHO IS TAKING DRUGS WILL ONLY CAUSE YOUR FRIEND FURTHER HARM.

If you notice a friend behaving strangely and the signs match those of drug addiction, immediate help must be rendered. You may contact the following helplines:

- 1) Singapore Anti-Narcotics Association (SANA)
Tel: 1800-733-4444 (Mon-Fri, 8.30AM – 6.00PM)
- 2) Samaritans of Singapore (SOS)
Tel: 1800-221-4444 (24 hours daily)
- 3) Teen Challenge (Singapore)
Tel: 6793 7933 (Mon-Fri, 9.00AM – 6.00PM)
- 4) National Addictions Management Service (NAMS)
Tel: 6732 6837 (Mon-Fri, 8.30AM – 10.00PM)

If you have been approached to try drugs or wish to report any information, please call the CNB hotline at 1800-325-6666

LIFE DOES NOT REWIND. SAY 'NO' TO DRUGS.

Visit these links for more information on drug abuse:

- LiveItLoud blog: <http://liveitloud.sg/>
- Life Does Not Rewind Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/lifedoesnotrewind>
- CNB website: <http://www.cnb.gov.sg/>



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