



# C.A.R.E.S.

COMMUNITY ADDICTION & RECOVERY  
EDUCATION & SUPPORT

## Warning Signs And Symptoms

### Warning Signs Of Substance Abuse

Certain symptoms and behaviors are warning signs for substance use in young people, although they may also indicate other mental health problems as well. Warning signs may include:

- Alcohol, smoke or other chemical odors on your loved one's or their friends' breath or clothing
- Obvious intoxication, dizziness or bizarre behavior
- Changes in dress and grooming
- Changes in choice of friends / peer group
- Frequent arguments, sudden mood changes and unexplained aggression
- Changes in eating and sleeping patterns
- Sudden weight gain or loss
- Loss of interest in usual activities or hobbies
- School problems such as declining or failing grades, poor attendance and recent discipline problems
- Trauma or frequent injuries
- Runaway / delinquent behavior (adolescents)
- Depressed mood or talk about depression or suicide; suicide attempts

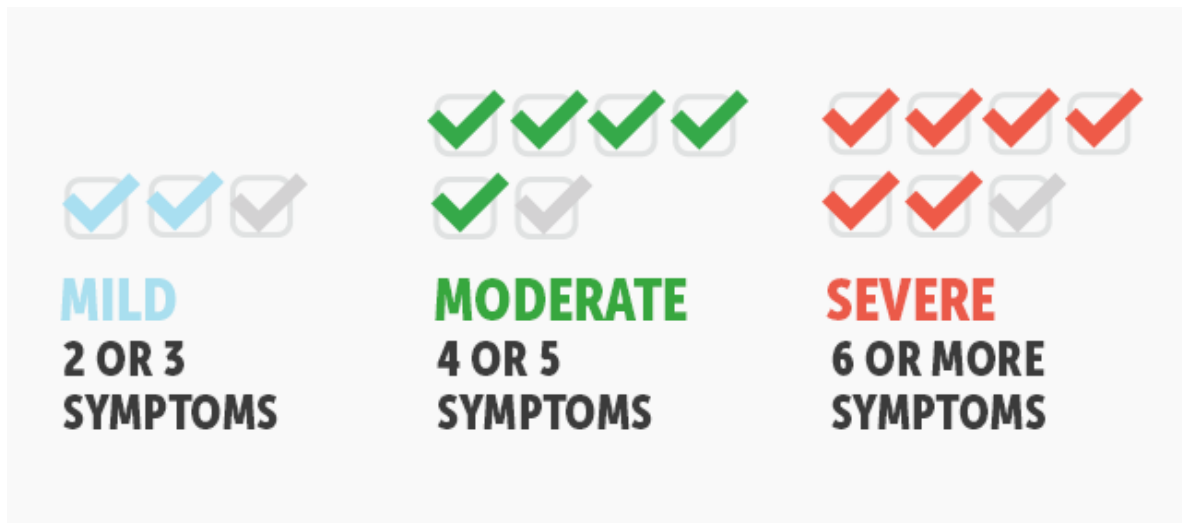
**Source:** American Academy of Pediatrics. "Substance Abuse Prevention"

### Addiction Symptoms Checklist

Addiction is possible if 2 or more of these symptoms have existed in the past year:

- ✓ Often taking more of a substance for a longer period than intended
- ✓ Ongoing desire or unsuccessful efforts to reduce use
- ✓ Great deal of time spent to obtain, use or recover from substance
- ✓ Craving the substance
- ✓ Failing to fulfill obligations at work, home or school as a result of continued use
- ✓ Continued use despite ongoing social or relationship problems caused or worsened by use
- ✓ Giving up or reducing social, occupational or recreational activities because of use
- ✓ Repeated use in physically dangerous situations (like drinking or using other drugs while driving, or smoking in bed)
- ✓ Continued use despite ongoing physical or mental health problems caused or worsened by use

- ✓ Developing tolerance (feeling less effect from the substance with continued use)
- ✓ Experiencing withdrawal symptoms after reducing use (symptoms vary by substance). Withdrawal does not happen with all substances; examples include inhalants and hallucinogens



Source: DSM-5

## Comprehensive Assessment

If an individual is suspected to have a substance use disorder (addiction), he or she should be assessed by a health care professional to determine:

- Severity
- Other co-occurring medical conditions
- Potential for complications related to withdrawal
- Presence of other factors (individual and social) related to substance use that may affect treatment – child care needs, legal problems, housing, employment and the availability of support from friends and family

Other tests, such as urine or blood tests, may be used to supplement the comprehensive assessment.

C.A.R.E.S. can assist families in obtaining a comprehensive assessment and explore treatment options.