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# Guess the Signs and Symptoms

## **Learning Outcomes:**

- To start to think about some of the signs and symptoms of drug use.

## **Equipment:**

- Signs and Symptoms sheet

## **Instructions:**

- Is it possible to tell if someone has been using a drug? As you will see from the last page of the signs and symptoms sheet (don't look yet!), many of the signs can have all sorts of other causes. Some, for example, can be considered 'normal' teenage behaviour! So, it can be quite difficult to tell – if your child's behaviour changes, try hard not to jump to conclusions! The ideal way to know what is going on is to work hard at good communication, where your child feels they can talk to you freely about what they are doing, and any worries or concerns they may have.

- With that in mind, read through the case studies on page 1 of the signs and symptoms sheet – can you guess in each case which drug the person has used? What gave you the clue?

- Now look at the answer sheet (page 2) and see if you were correct.

- Think about other signs or symptoms you might look for – make a list, maybe? (You could start with the ones you have learnt from the case study.)

- Finally, have a look at the last page of the signs and symptoms sheet – did you think of all the ones we thought of? Maybe you had ones not on our list?

- If you have concerns that your child might be using a drug, you might want to talk to them – or maybe look for more information or help. Other activities on the website will help you with this.

# Signs and Symptoms Sheet

1. "I felt confident. Stronger than everyone else and much more attractive than I did before. I really fancied someone I saw and was brave enough to go and chat to them! I know that we had sex, but I can't remember if we used a condom. This morning I feel tired, have a headache and feel a bit embarrassed about last night."

2. "I felt creative, confident and more aware of what was around me. I know I had some fascinating conversations. When I got home, I felt quite on edge and couldn't sleep. I felt low a few days later and nothing seemed to interest me. I look forward to using it again each weekend, especially as I've noticed that I've lost weight."

3. "I felt relaxed and confident. We had some really funny conversations. And in the room, I noticed this amazing picture of.... erm.... erm.... sorry. What was I saying? Why are you all looking at me? WHAT? Stop staring at me!!"

4. "I didn't really know how to do it at first, but once I worked it out, it was great! I felt all dizzy and light-headed and I couldn't walk properly. But then, I got a bit scared 'cause my heart felt weird. Everything went black and I woke up finding someone pressing my chest."

5. "After I took it nothing happened for quite some time. Suddenly, I noticed the grass growing a lot faster than normal. It was amazing. The flowers seemed enormous and their colours were so vivid I could almost taste them. But it was when the bees started flying out from the flowers that things turned bad. They seemed as big as those two-seater planes you sometimes see, and they were all coming towards me. I started running. There was a river ahead and I knew I could jump across it. Apparently, a passing man walking his dog saved me from drowning."

6. "There was a huge rush through my whole body and then I felt a warm feeling starting in my stomach and going throughout my whole body. I felt safe and protected like I had no problems. Later I needed to wee a lot and my skin was itchy. I was sweating and my nose wouldn't stop running. I felt like I couldn't cope without using it again and now there is no way I could stop."

7. "The party was great. I could have danced all night and the people were lovely. I made loads of new friends. It was really hot in there, though, and I needed to drink lots. When I got home, I found it hard to sleep at first, although later I felt absolutely knackered. Since then I haven't felt well. Just miserable and lonely."

## Answers

1. Alcohol

2. Cocaine/Amphetamine

3. Cannabis

4. Solvent (Volatile Substance

5. LSD

6. Heroin

7. Ecstasy

# Some Signs and Symptoms

- Change of behaviour
  - Loss of money
  - Loss of co-ordination
  - Secretive
  - Loss of appetite
  - Mood swings
  - Sleepy
  - Unable to sleep
  - Change in attitude
  - Loss of motivation
  - Low self esteem
  - Telling lies
  - Weight loss
  - Truancing
  - Chemical smells
  - Dilated pupils
  - Attracting police attention
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- Paraphernalia
    - finding actual drugs
    - large cigarette papers or (rizla)
    - small pieces of rolled card
    - bongs
    - discoloured knives
    - magazine paper wraps
    - tin foil
    - syringes
    - mirrors or tiles and razor blades
    - spent aerosol cans with product and no gas
    - cut straws
    - pipes or broken bottle necks

There are many different items of paraphernalia, some home-made and others bought on the high street.