



When Your Child Needs an Assessment for Substance Use

An ASAP assessment for substance use can help your family gather objective feedback and find opportunities for improving your child's health and life. This process can bring up strong and mixed emotions for parents, as well as for their teen. Driving this intense emotional parental experience is your desire for your child to make healthy life choices so they can live a happy and satisfying life, combined with a fear that forcing your teen to change his or her behaviors may worsen your home life even further.

What Happens in an Assessment?

Whether you are entering this assessment knowing your child is using frequently or hoping they are not, ASAP is committed to providing you and your teen with the most comprehensive evaluation available and to provide recommendations when education or treatment is indicated. At the conclusion of the ASAP assessment, your counselor will discuss their recommendation with you.

What if my Child is Resistant?

Your child may be focused on maintaining their current 'lifestyle' and use pattern regardless of the consequences. They may believe that there is no problem with their use. Many teens maintain that their parent (or another authority figure) is the problem.

Research shows that 90% of adults with Substance Use Disorders began using before age 18 (CASAColumbia 2011). This can easily become a lifelong issue. Many clients who come to ASAP are resistant to the assessment process. Most do not believe that they need treatment. We know that about 10-20% of high schoolers are using substances in a way that makes them appropriate for some type of treatment.

When Should I be Most Concerned?

Red Flags	Many teens try alcohol or other drugs once or twice during high school. If you see any of these, it's time to get help.
Regular Use 📅	Has your child been getting drunk or high weekly or more often?
Lying 🚗	Do you know (or strongly suspect) your teen is using more than they admit to?
No Fun 🚫	Does your teen prefer to be with friends who use? Have they given up activities?
Hangovers 🤢	If your child is ill in the morning, it could be a hangover, a sign of a major problem.
Risky Use 🚗	Risky use includes using alone, before school/work, or in well monitored places.
Blackouts 🍷	If your child acts uncharacteristically when using, it could be a sign of a bigger problem.

Gaining Knowledge about Alcohol and Other Drugs

Many parents have told our staff that they have limited knowledge about alcohol and other drugs. Some have worried that they aren't able to appropriately guide the discussions they have with their teens. We know that teens sometimes use pro-use "research" in the conversations they have with parents. You can use the information in our blog to help you prepare for these discussions. Having an assessment for substance use may be the beginning of helping your child live a sober lifestyle, and it can provide support for you as well as your teen.