

# DISASTER



## Signs of Alcohol Abuse, Depression and Suicide

When family members experience continuing stress over a long period of time, they may be vulnerable to excessive use of alcohol, depression or suicidal thoughts. Keep the following in mind as signs or symptoms of distress.

### Signs of Alcohol Abuse

Early signs: Sneaking drinks, gulping first drinks, unwillingness to discuss drinking, guilty feelings about drinking, more frequent memory blanks.

Addictive signs: Conspicuous drinking, aggressive flashes, grandiose or showy behavior, personal relationships devalued, decreased sexual drive, loss of friends, unreasonable resentments, marked self-pity, behavior becomes alcohol-centered.

Chronic signs: Regular morning drinking, tremors, prolonged binges or continuous drinking impaired thinking, loss of alcohol tolerance.

### Signs of Depression

Appearance: sad face, slow movements, unkempt look, weight loss or gain.

Physical problems: sleeping problems, decreased sexual interest, fatigue.

Unhappy feelings: feeling sad, hopeless, discouraged, listless, empty inside.

Negative thoughts: "I'm a failure." "No one cares." "It's hopeless."

Reduced activity: "Doing anything is just too much effort." "I give up."

People problems: "I don't want anyone to see me." "I can't talk to anyone."

Guilt and low self-esteem: "It's all my fault." "I should be punished."

### Signs of Suicidal Intent

Anxiety or depression: Severe, intense feelings of anxiety or depression.

Withdrawal or isolation: Withdrawn, alone, lack of friends.

Helpless and hopeless: Sense of complete powerlessness, a hopeless feeling.

Alcohol abuse: Alcoholism and suicide are frequently linked.

Previous suicidal attempts: There may have been previous attempts without success.

No options: Likely to feel he or she can no longer cope with problems and that suicide may be the only way out.

Cries for help: Making a will, giving possessions away, making statements such as "I'm calling it quits" or "Maybe my family would be better off without me." ALL cries for help should be taken seriously.

This information was developed by the Cooperative Extension Service, Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas.

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