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Youth Substance Use Risk Checklist



A quick screening tool for school counselors, youth workers, or clinicians to identify potential risk factors and patterns in a young person's substance use. Not a diagnostic instrument.

Section 1 – Substance Use Patterns (Circle Yes / No for each. If unsure, select “?”)		
Question	Yes	No
Has the youth ever experimented with alcohol, nicotine, or drugs?		
Has use occurred in the past 30 days?		
Has use ever happened during school hours or on school property?		
Has the youth used substances alone?		
Has the youth used substances with older peers or adults?		
Section 2 – Risk & Protective Factors Check all that apply:		
Risk Indicators:	Yes	No
Declining academic performance		
Frequent unexplained absences/tardiness		
Withdrawal from hobbies or activities		
Association with high-risk peers		
Family history of substance use concerns		
Exposure to substance use in home or community		
Recent trauma or loss		
Risk Indicators:	Yes	No
Stable, supportive caregiver relationship		
Positive peer group		
Regular involvement in school/extracurricular activities		
Strong cultural or spiritual connection		
Skills in refusal/assertiveness		
Access to mental health or counseling support		

Section 3 – Consequences Noted <i>(Mark all that apply, if observed or reported)</i>		
Question	Yes	No
Disciplinary action at school related to substance use		
Conflicts with peers, family, or staff due to substance use		
Physical symptoms (e.g., bloodshot eyes, slurred speech, unusual fatigue)		
Risk-taking behaviors while under the influence		
Missing money or unexplained possessions		

Scoring Guide:

Low Concern: No recent use + multiple protective factors present

Moderate Concern: Occasional use, some risk factors, limited protective factors

High Concern: Frequent/recent use, multiple risk indicators, low/no protective factors

Next Steps:

- **Low Concern** → Continue observation; reinforce protective factors
- **Moderate Concern** → Brief intervention; referral to school counselor/parent meeting
- **High Concern** → Immediate intervention; referral for professional assessment