



Warning Signs Alert Parents Of Drug Users

By IRV EDELSON

"Drugs are symptomatic of some deep-seated underlying attitudes," Dr. George R. Ross, consultant/counselor for Straight Inc. said recently.

Attitudes of drug abusers are selfish, coupled with a certain amount of self-hate, which is symptomatic of the drug culture itself, described by Ross as a "hideous culture that is self-destructive in nature."

Usually the drug abuser has underlying attitudes that need to be changed, he says, and Straight works to change those attitudes.

But how do you recognize a child who is taking drugs? A St. Petersburg businessman whose child is in the program lists a number of warning signs. They include:

- Grades dropping in school.
- Children not wanting to go places with their parents.
- Unexplained missing money, jewelry or other items that can be easily pawned or sold.

- A tendency for a child to come home from school and want to do nothing but sleep.

- A child's turning up with expensive clothes or bicycles and saying they belong to a friend.

- A child using a lot of Visine (eye drops).

- A sudden interest in horticulture, such as "Japanese tomatoes," which may actually be marijuana plants.

"You might also watch a child's manner of dress, the language he uses, the wearing of coke spoons for necklaces, evidence of seeds or pipes in the house, and such things as watery eyes and older friends who won't come in and talk to parents," the Straight parent mentioned.

Dr. Ross points out that in 1979 the National Institute of Drug Abuse reported "one out of nine high school seniors is stoned every day. There are over 3 million teen-age alcoholics in this country."

The median age at Straight is 15½, yet, says Dr. Ross, less than 10 percent of current funding in the United States on drug abuse is spent on teen-agers.