

WARNING SIGNS OF IMPAIRMENT

1. **Community Involvement:**

- Withdrawal from community, university, or hospital, and its social activities;
- Embarrassing behavior:
 - intoxication at social events, fighting with spouses or peers, traffic offenses, DUI/DWI

2. **Home & Family Life:**

- Embarrassing behavior covered up or explained by family or friends;
- Domestic violence;
- Child neglect or abuse;
- Personality change;
- Reckless financial ventures or hobbies;
- Financial crises, income tax problems;
- Marital or sexual problems;
- Increasing isolation
 - Drinking comes first - Avoids non-drinking friends.

3. **Occupational History:**

- Overqualified/inappropriate qualifications for job;
- Unexplained gaps in C.V./resume;
- Frequent job changes, reassignments
- Changes in training program without changes in specialty
- Vague letters of reference
- Unusual medical history.

4. **Health Problems:**

- Multiple physical complaints and illnesses, ill-defined;
- Poor hygiene, dental care;
- Frequent accidents, unexplained bruises, injuries;
- First seizure as an adult;
- Blackouts;
- Hypertension, arrhythmias, hepatomegaly.
- Frequent Ed visits, hospitalizations, AMA sign-outs;
- Morning vomiting, constipation, diarrhea;
- Gastritis, GERD, pancreatitis, hepatitis, enteritis;
- "Alcoholic facies," parotid enlargement, edema, flushing;
- Inappropriate tremulousness, sweating, yawning, "nodding," tearing.

5. **Office/Clinic Activities:**

- Retreats from inpatient practice;
- Workaholic bouts;
- Frequent office absences;
- Disorganized work schedule;
- Unreasonable behavior and demands on staff, colleagues and patients;
- Increased turnover of office staff;
- Patient complaints:
 - inattention
 - forgetfulness
 - rudeness
 - inappropriate behavior or remarks
- Excessive inventory of drugs for office use (procedural areas);
- Decreased workload/shifting work to others;
- Handwriting deterioration;
- Slurred speech and indecision.

6. Hospital Activities:

- Odor of alcohol on breath;
- Decline in fulfillment of professional responsibilities (late assignments, missed rounds, lax record keeping, skipped committee meetings);
- Nonavailability on call;
- Often late, absent, or ill;
- Poor or inappropriate orders;
- Increasingly irritable with staff and/or colleagues;
- Frequent requests for colleagues to "cover" for him or her;
- Rounding at unusual or inappropriate hours;
- Recent memory problems;
- Over-prescribing of mood-altering drugs/narcotics for patients, self, or family;
- Self-medication for anxiety/depression, narcotics;

7. Anesthesia-Specific Signs:

- Unexplained absences;
- Unexplained preference for solo work;
- Refusal to take usual breaks;
- Decline in clinical skill;
- Sloppy record-keeping;
- Change to heavily narcotic-based techniques;
- Public "wastage" of large amounts of narcotic (actually saline);
- Clinical ineffectiveness of narcotics used by relief anesthetist (saline substitution);
Long sleeves in O.R. (cover bruises/tracks).

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Physician Impairment

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