

- ✓ Encourage them to attend recovery and support groups.
- ✓ Personally abstain from alcohol in their presence.
- ✓ Get support for yourself through friends, family and support groups.

KEEP IN MIND

Helping an alcoholic loved one is a vital yet difficult journey. Consider reaching out to your health care provider and engaging other counseling resources for guidance on next steps.

What steps will you take today to help them be well and live life more fully?



Helping a Friend with a Drinking Problem
Substance Use/Addictions Recovery

Helping a Friend with a Drinking Problem

If you don't extend care
and concern to your friend,
WHO WILL?

*Imagine for a moment how much more enjoyable
and productive life might be for your friend or
loved one in the absence of excessive drinking.*

Alcoholism has a domino effect.
Inevitably alcoholics hurt friends,
family members, coworkers, and
others, including themselves.

When your loved one has a
drinking problem, you may feel
overwhelmed and unsure how
to help. It's tempting to try and
minimize or ignore the problem.
However, this inaction only hurts
everyone involved.

COMMON MYTHS ABOUT ALCOHOLISM

There's no simple solution when it comes to
alcoholism; it's a complex problem often fueled
by myths and misunderstanding.

- **Myth: Alcoholics drink every day.**
 - Actually, alcoholism isn't defined by the amount or timing of drinking. The effects of drinking upon the individual determine alcoholism.
- **Myth: You can't be an alcoholic and do your job well.**
 - The truth is that some high-functioning alcoholics do exist.
- **Myth: Unless the alcoholic wants to stop, there's nothing you can do.**
 - This is false. Loved ones often play a key role.
- **Myth: An alcoholic must hit rock bottom before change is possible.**
 - In reality, early intervention is incredibly powerful.

SIGNS OF A DRINKING PROBLEM

How can you tell if your loved one is struggling
with alcoholism? Look for any of the following
warning signals:

- Are they lying about their drinking habits?
- Have other friends or family members expressed concern?
- Do they blackout regularly or forget what's happened while drinking?
- Is it difficult for them to limit the amount they drink?
- Do they feel they need alcohol to relax?
- Has drinking caused them legal, relational, or work problems?

WHAT TO AVOID

Knowing what not to do is just as important as
taking the right actions. Steer clear of pitfalls
such as lecturing about the problem, bearing
responsibility for their behavior, or inadvertently
encouraging them by sharing a drink with them.

ACTION STEPS

Taking action is a brave and courageous step.
Consider these suggestions to help your loved
one get the help they need:

- ✓ Learn about substance abuse by consulting with your health care provider.
- ✓ Be honest and give specific examples to your friend as to how drinking causes problems.
- ✓ Don't take their response personally; they may put blame on you and others.
- ✓ Understand that promises to cut back on their drinking probably won't happen.