Worried about a Friend?

Use this questionnaire to review your friend’s drinking behavior. Although the questions refer to a friend’s drinking, they can apply as well to a family member. If you would like to speak with a health professional about your concerns, please check the box under “Questionnaire Interpretation” before returning this form to a screening staff person.

How Can I Recognize Signs of an Alcohol Problem in Someone I Care About?

Please check all that apply:

- Drinking to calm nerves, forget worries or boost a sad mood
- Guilt about drinking
- Unsuccessful attempts to cut down/stop drinking
- Lying about or hiding drinking habits
- Causing harm to oneself or someone else as a result of drinking
- Needing to drink increasingly greater amounts in order to achieve desired effect
- Feeling irritable, resentful or unreasonable when not drinking
- Medical, social, family or financial problems caused by drinking
- Spending a great deal of time getting alcohol and drinking alcohol
- Drinking in risky situations such as before driving or before engaging in unwanted/unprotected sex

Source: Adapted from Greenfield, S. Educational Lecture for National Alcohol Screening Day. 1999. Updated by Richard Saitz, MD, MPH.

Questionnaire Interpretation

If you checked any of the circles above, please consider talking with a health professional today or getting a referral to speak with a professional at a later date. Help is available both for you and for your friend.

Would you like the opportunity to discuss your concerns with a health professional today? ☐ Yes  ☐ No

What to do if you think a friend may have an alcohol problem:

✔ Let your friend know that risky drinking, including binge drinking, can lead to more severe alcohol problems including alcohol dependence (alcoholism), as well as injuries and unwanted/unprotected sex.

✔ Seek out resources on campus to help your friend. Talk to a clinician at the health or counseling center, or a residence hall staff member. Ask the health center staff what resources are available for your friend and how to motivate him or her to use them.

✔ Use the resources. Do what you can to encourage your friend to use the resources you identify but remember the only person you can change is yourself. If you think you need help due to a friend’s drinking don’t hesitate to seek it.

✔ Don’t make excuses for your friend’s behavior. Many people try to protect a friend from the consequences of his or her drinking behavior by making excuses to others. Making excuses allows your friend to avoid changing for the better.

✔ Choose a good time to talk with your friend, such as soon after an alcohol-related problem has occurred. Choose a time when he or she is sober, when both of you are calm and when you can speak privately.

✔ Be specific. Tell the friend that you are concerned about his or her drinking and want to be supportive in getting help. Back up your concern with examples of the ways in which his or her drinking has caused problems for both of you, including the most recent incident.

✔ Keep in mind you are not alone. There are many people and resources on campus that can support your effort to help a friend. Seek them out. (See below for details.)

Resources

- Campus Health or Counseling Center
- Residence Hall Staff
- National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (301) 443-3860, www.niaaa.nih.gov
- Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters U.S.: (888) 425-2666 Canada: (613) 723-8484 www.al-anon.alateen.org
- Alcoholics Anonymous World Services (212) 870-3400, www.alcoholics-anonymous.org