

TAKE A



Q. I'm worried about my friend's drinking. How should I approach this?

A. This is a tough spot to be in. You have so much fun with Taylor, until Taylor gets way too drunk when you go out. Every. Single. Time. It's getting old and you're worried something bad is going to happen if Taylor doesn't cut back, yet the thought of having that conversation is daunting.

The good news is, most people who seek help claim a friend or loved one influenced their decision to do so. Here are some tips to help ease into this conversation with success.

1. **Timing is everything.** Talk to your friend or loved when you're both calm and collected. Having this conversation when a negative experience related to alcohol/drugs is still fresh in their mind is best, but avoid this discussion when either of you are under the influence.
2. **Focus on facts and consequences.** Give specific examples of their behavior and explain how their substance use is impacting your relationship. It's likely that person doesn't remember their behavior or how it made others feel. Holding your friend accountable for their drunken actions may help them realize their drinking is out of control.
3. **Avoid lecturing.** Harsh confrontation often backfires, causing resistance and denial. Show compassion and respect for your friend or loved one. Use nonjudgmental language and avoid labeling terms, such as alcoholic.
4. **Expect pushback.** Know that anger, defensiveness, and/or denial are common reactions. Don't take it personally. Once your friend or loved one has calmed down, they will likely think more about what you've said and might take your message to heart.

If you're looking for a more indirect approach, here are some ideas that might be helpful.

1. **Suggest activities that don't involve substance use.** Maverick students can take part in Not This Weekend, a 96 hour pledge to either abstain from alcohol or binge drinking for one weekend. Students who pledge can take advantage of fun events, specials and multiple chances to win great prizes. Not this Weekend begins Thursday, February 18th at noon and ends Monday, February 22nd at noon. Look for pledge tables in the CSU, by Carkoski Dining Hall, and Myers Field House. Call 507-389-3239 for questions.
2. **Hang out with friends who drink less, or not at all.**
3. **Make a pact, have a plan.** Set limits for how much you and your friend will drink and what time you'll go home.

MAYFACT:

While 94% of Americans feel it's their responsibility to intervene when a friend has a problem with alcohol/drugs, only 38% feel confident and comfortable approaching that friend. (Gallup Poll)



GOT A QUESTION

about substance use?

Email it to: healthservices@mnsu.edu

MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY MANKATO

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