

# ALCOHOL ABUSE CONVERSATION TOOLKIT



## STARTING THE CONVERSATION ABOUT ALCOHOL ABUSE.

While drinking may seem like a normal thing to do, it's a behavior that can be dangerous to your health and safety. As a young person, alcohol affects your brain development, and you're more likely to develop an addiction quicker than an older adult. **TALKING TO JUST ONE TRUSTED PERSON** is a simple way to start understanding what you're going through and getting the help you deserve. If you're concerned about your alcohol use, now is the time to do something about it—before the habit gets worse. The longer you wait to address the issue, the more likely you'll experience long-term damage, or risk getting into trouble.

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**WARNING SIGNS OF ALCOHOL ABUSE.** You may think that you have your drinking under control, when really it's becoming a problem. It's especially difficult to change your behavior if friends or family are drinking around you. However, the sooner you recognize the signs of abuse or addiction, the sooner you can get treatment. Ask yourself the following questions. **If you say "yes" to even a few of them, then it's a good idea to talk to someone.**

YES  NO // Do I have a family history of alcoholism?

YES  NO // Have I been experiencing low energy, blood shot eyes, or slurred speech?

YES  NO // Have I been having memory lapses, blackouts, or trouble concentrating?

YES  NO // Have I lost interest in my favorite activities?

YES  NO // Do I need to drink to have fun, relax, or feel normal?

YES  NO // Have I been arguing more with family and friends?

YES  NO // Do I need to drink more to feel buzzed or drunk?

YES  NO // Do I drink by myself or try to hide it?

## HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT PERSON TO TALK TO.

No matter how alone or isolated you feel, there is always someone that is ready and willing to help. If you don't feel ready to talk to a substance abuse counselor, that's perfectly fine. Start by telling one trusted person you feel comfortable with and you know will be a good listener.

The right person doesn't have to have personal experience with alcohol abuse—he or she just needs to take your thoughts, feelings, and concerns seriously, and help you take the next step.

### YOUR TRUSTED PERSON MAY BE A:

FAMILY MEMBER

SCHOOL COUNSELOR

TEACHER

CHURCH LEADER

COACH

CLOSE FRIEND

**HOW TO START THE CONVERSION.** There's no right or wrong way to tell someone that you have an issue with alcohol abuse. But there are steps you can take to make the conversation easier to start and more productive.

**FIND A COMFORTABLE PLACE AND TIME.** This could be a coffee shop, school, home, or anywhere that you can have some privacy away from distractions.

**PLAN WHAT YOU WANT TO SAY.** Write down how you're feeling or practice the conversation in front of a mirror.

**BE READY FOR QUESTIONS.** The person you're talking to will probably want more information on your situation. Be honest and share as much as you feel comfortable.

**DON'T RUSH THE CONVERSATION.** This topic may be challenging for the person you're talking to, so give them time to listen and process what you're saying.

**DON'T TRY TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM ALL AT ONCE.** Remember, this is just the start of the process.

**BE PROUD.** It takes courage to tell someone you may have a drinking problem.

### WHAT YOU CAN SAY:

"I think my drinking is getting out of control, and I don't know what to do."

"This is hard for me to talk about, but I think I have an alcohol addiction."

"I'm worried that my drinking is getting worse."

"My drinking is getting in the way of my life. I think I may need help."

**WHAT TO DO AFTER THE CONVERSATION.** Hopefully after your first conversation, you'll feel a sense of relief and hopefulness. Be sure to keep things moving in a positive direction.

**1 Stay in touch** with your trusted person and keep him or her updated on how you feel.

**2** If the first conversation didn't go the way you had hoped, **don't worry or give up.** Try finding another trusted person that may be better suited to help.

**3 Make healthy lifestyle choices** such as diet, exercise, and sleep.

**4** If you're ready to take the next step to receive a diagnosis and treatment, **talk to a substance abuse professional or organization.**

Visit [JustTellOne.org](https://www.JustTellOne.org) or call 716.245.6JT1 to find available services in your area.



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