

## Approaching Someone about a Suspected Drinking Problem - and communicating your concerns -

The purpose of this handout is not to transform you into a counselor, but to assist you in being helpful in a time of need.

### Avoid crisis management

- Educate yourself about alcoholism and local resources before you need to use them.
- Know your feelings and attitudes toward people with an addiction. What are your motives? Do you want to preach, punish, or criticize?
- Observe and document. Prepare in advance a list of specific problems that have occurred because of this person's drinking. Include specific times, places, and behaviors.
- Choose a location and time where you can talk in private without embarrassment or interruptions. Remember that you can't talk to an intoxicated person.
- Explore whether you are the only or the best person to approach this individual.

### Raising the issue - a "CAREfrontation"

You have documented behaviors, chosen an opportunity, and are ready to share your concern for the person and relate your observations. A simple model for talking to someone about a sensitive topic consists of the following elements: "I care," "I see," "I feel," LISTEN, "I want," "I will." For example:

"Jerry, **I care** about you. I've gotten to know you a lot this semester and our friendship means a lot to me. Last night, **I saw** you yell at your best friend, get sick from drinking, and insist on driving back to campus. **I felt** worried because this is different from how you usually act."

**LISTEN** (It is important to give the person a chance to speak or ask questions and for you to show that you are concerned and willing to listen.)

"**I want** you to talk with someone about how you've been acting when you drink alcohol. I really care about you, and **I will** help you find someone who can help you."

To summarize the model:

- I care ..... describe relationship feelings
- I see ..... specific, observable behaviors
- I feel ..... how these behaviors affect you
- LISTEN ..... if he/she gets angry or provokes you remind yourself to remain calm and focused on your task.  
Remain factual and nonjudgmental.
- I want ..... it may be necessary to set some limits or firm resolution
- I will ..... indicate your support, what you are willing to do to help

Try to get the person to agree to some form of positive action. Encourage a referral to a professional when needed. Be optimistic, yet realistic (CAREfrontations do not always work.) Always be open to further involvement - never close the door.

### University services

#### Alcohol and Other Drug Office (AODO)

**333-7557**

Provides resources on alcohol and other drugs, as well as individual appointments with the Drug and Alcohol Education Coordinator.

#### McKinley Health Center

**333-2714**

#### HEALTH EDUCATION

Provides educational resources on alcohol and other drugs.

#### Counseling Center

**333-3704**

Provides individual counseling, as well as a self-assessment workshop for alcohol and drug concerns.

## Community services

Each agency provides confidential treatment for substance abuse. Alcoholics and Narcotics Anonymous are twelve-step organizations, which provide services at no charge.

### **Alcoholics Anonymous**

201 S. Neil Street  
Champaign, IL 61820  
217/373-4200

### **Narcotics Anonymous**

Champaign, IL 61820  
217/373-2063

### **Prairie Center**

122 West Hill Street  
Champaign, IL 61820  
217/356-7576

### **Prairie Center**

718 W. Killarney Street  
Urbana, IL 61801  
217/328-4500

### **The Pavilion/New Choice**

809 W. Church Street  
Champaign, IL 61820  
217/373-1700 or 217/373-1850

If you are a registered University of Illinois student and you have questions or concerns, or need to make an appointment, please call: **Dial-A-Nurse at 333-2700**

If you are concerned about any difference in your treatment plan and the information in this handout, you are advised to contact your health care provider.

Visit the McKinley Health Center Web site at: <http://www.mckinley.uiuc.edu>