



Knowing When a Friend has a Drinking Problem

Teens can be educated to look for warning signs of problem alcohol use. Treatment is available if you know a friend with a drinking problem, or if you have one yourself. Make sure you call 911 immediately if you see someone pass out after drinking alcohol. As a teen, you can look for the following signs:

Getting drunk on a regular basis

Has your friend been getting drunk weekly or more often? Some teens think it is normal to drink every weekend. Most teens do not drink weekly, and even fewer drink heavily when they do drink.

Lying about how much alcohol he or she is using

Have you caught a friend telling you he has only had a couple of drinks when you know it was much more? Some people think that they can get away with drinking more if they lie about it to others (and themselves).

Believing that alcohol is necessary to have fun

How does your friend like to have fun? Does she only suggest activities involving substances? Try to find sober activities your friend would enjoy.

Having frequent hangovers

Hangovers are a big sign of consuming too much alcohol. They are your body telling you that you didn't behave responsibly.

Feeling run-down, depressed, or even suicidal

Alcohol is a depressant, which means for some people, it causes them to feel depressed or less energetic. Even for those who don't normally feel this way when drinking, drinking too much or drinking frequently can cause consequences that lead to these feelings.

Having "blackouts" — forgetting what he or she did while drinking

Blacking out is different than passing out. Blacking out means that a person's brain is no longer creating new memories. The person may begin acting in a way that is completely different than when sober. This can lead to feelings of guilt, embarrassment, or other negative experiences.



What can you do to help someone who has a drinking problem? Be a true friend.

Would you be willing to lose a friend to save a life? Can you encourage your friend to stop drinking and seek professional help like ASAP? Can you see yourself telling your friend's parents? If you can, you are a true friend.