

# Having a conversation about substance misuse concerns

*It takes courage to talk to a family member or friend about their alcohol use. These tips can help you start the conversation.*

1



## BE PREPARED

- Before you talk, take some time to accept your own feelings. It's normal to feel nervous or upset.
- Practice what you'll say. Try writing a script or roleplaying the conversation with a friend ahead of time.
- Plan to keep it brief. Try focusing on just 1 change that could help your loved one.
- Find a good time and place to talk. Wait until you're both feeling calm and can focus.

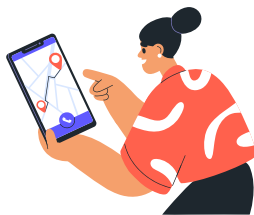
2



## KEEP IT POSITIVE

- Use positive language and avoid judging. Instead of "I wish you wouldn't drink every night," try "How about trying a few alcohol-free nights each week?"
- Focus on the benefits of making a change. For example, you can say: "It would be great to spend more time together as a family."
- Emphasize that quitting drinking or drinking less is possible. You can say: "Lots of people have struggled with alcohol. You're not alone, and it can get better."

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## GET SPECIFIC

- Give specific reasons for your concerns based on what you see and feel. You can say, "I'm worried about your drinking because I've noticed you've been missing work."
- Make specific suggestions. Try saying: "Let's do things that don't involve drinking. How about seeing a movie?"

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## OFFER SUPPORT

- Show that you understand. Say: "I know that drinking less is hard for you. How can I support you?"
- Take a break and give your loved one space if the conversation isn't productive. You can say: "I can see that you're not ready to talk about this yet. I'm here for you whenever you are ready."

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## MAKE A PLAN TOGETHER

- Work together to make a list of goals. Choose 1 goal as a first step — like taking 2 nights off from drinking each week. Make sure it's something you can measure easily.
- Set a date to talk again and see how it's going. Offer encouragement if it's going well, and set different goals if it's not working.