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## **HOW TO CONFRONT AN ABUSING FRIEND**

Before you confront the friend, family member, or co-worker, think about what you might expect from the person being confronted. Below is a list of some of the typical reactions:

- Denial – that there is a problem
- Rationalizations and excuses – about his/her behavior: “It’s not *MY* fault”
- Defensiveness – feeling like he/she is being attacked
- Manipulation – of the situation or of people to make you feel like you are wrong
- Focusing on other issues – getting the focus off the real issue
- Blaming others for their problems – you, family, teacher, principal, boss, parents, etc.

### **DO’S**

1. Educate yourself on alcohol and other drug effects and how these effects impact family and friends.
2. Remember that timing is important – wait until they’re straight, sober, or not in a crisis.
3. Take the time to get your thoughts together and think objectively. Talk matter-of-factly.
4. Have at least one other concerned friend or family member with you, more if possible.
5. Use facts on amount of usage: what happened when they used, how it affected friends, family, and/or school. Suggest they get an assessment
6. Stick to the facts – be firm, tactful, and insistent.
7. Use “I care” messages and “I” statements.
8. Examine your own behavior. Focus on their *behavior*, not them as a person. Enhance self-esteem.
9. Allow the consequences of the behavior to occur.
10. Be persistent and patient. Give them hope!
11. Give them information. Challenge them to quit for 30 days. If possible, go to A.A. meetings with the abuser to get him/her started.
12. Know your limits – learn to refer the abuser to professional resources like A.A., Al-Anon, Alateen, NCADA, or local treatment centers.

### **DON’TS**

1. Don’t get high or use with the person you are confronting.
2. Don’t confront when the person is high or drunk.
3. Don’t confront when the abuser is angry, or when you are angry.
4. Don’t do it alone.
5. Don’t preach, give advice, call names, or label with words like “alcoholic or addict”.
6. Don’t say “always” or “never”; accept alibis, rationalizations, or vague answers
7. Don’t take his/her comments personally.
8. Don’t let the abuser turn the problem on you.
9. Don’t enable, make excuses, or cover up for his/her abuse.
10. Don’t give up and don’t argue, debate, or defend what you say or do.
11. Don’t think the abuser will get better on his/her own.
12. Don’t get in over your head.

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Resource from NCADA’s RADAR library. For more information visit our website at [www.ncada-stl.org](http://www.ncada-stl.org). For questions on substance use, abuse and related problems, call NCADA’s Help Line at (314) 962-3456.

## FRIENDS HELP FRIENDS

### **“Care” –Frontation = Care + What + How + Need**

#### **CARE = State the importance of the relationship to you**

Example: *“I care about our friendship, and I need to talk to you about something that is getting in the way.”* Write a care message:

#### **WHAT = Specifically state what is happening**

Example: *“Several things have happened when you drink.”* Write a what message:

#### **HOW = How you &/or the relationship is affected**

Example: *“I feel embarrassed and concerned when these things have occurred. Our relationship has Changed because of what you are doing.”* (Add some specific changes you’ve noticed.) Write a how message:

#### **NEED = What you want/need to see happen**

Example: *“I want you NOT to drink or use when you are with me”* or *“I want you to get some help with this problem.”* Write a need message:

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