

The Power of Communicating

If someone you care about is abusing alcohol and/or drugs, you have good reason to be concerned. You may feel helpless, fearful and even ashamed, but you CAN do something. You can try a variety of ways that will make the individual's drug use less appealing. It is important to note that getting help for the person is a process, never an event. This means that you will have to try a variety of techniques over time while never giving up. Below are ideas and tips for you to review as you begin the process of engaging the person you care about in the process of getting help. Most importantly you should educate yourself about the disease of addiction and seek support for yourself during this process.

Knowledge Is Power

- If you believe an individual is abusing alcohol and/or drugs, remember knowledge is power. The more information you have about discussing substance use, the more comfortable and prepared you will be. Finding the right time when you are both available to discuss your concerns is the first step toward a positive discussion. Be ready for **avoidance** and **denial**. Prepare for some questions about your own use.
- It is important to note any significant changes in an individual's physical appearance, personality, attitude or behavior. The key is noticing changes.
- Visit the NYS OASAS Kitchen Table Toolkit, Video Part 1 at www.combatheroin.ny.gov for what to look for.

What to Look For

Physical Signs

- Loss or increase in appetite; unexplained weight loss or gain
- Inability to sleep or unusual laziness
- Smell of substance on breath or clothes
- Nausea, vomiting, sweating, shaking of hands, feet or head
- Red, watery eyes; pupils larger or smaller than usual; blank stare, thick tongue, slurred speech

Behavioral Signs

- Change in attitude/personality/friendships
- Change in activities, hobbies or sports
- Changes in work performance
- Isolation and secretive behavior
- Moodiness, irritability, nervousness, giddiness

Steps You Can Take

- Talk to the individual when he/she is not under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs.
- Express concern not blame.
- Express concern over a particular incident and relate this to the substance use.
- Be factual and specific.
- Describe how you feel.
- Share if you are seeking help yourself (Al-Anon, Counseling).
- If the individual needs treatment, or additional help, seek professional assistance. Health care professionals are trained to assist with referrals to trained counselors who can properly assess an individual's substance use disorder.
- Keep in mind, treatment is voluntary, and the individual may refuse to accept help.

- Remember that it is important to care for yourself and use resources available to you to support you during this difficult time.

- Visit the NYS OASAS Kitchen Table Toolkit, Video Part 2 at www.combatheroin.ny.gov for tips on how to have a discussion about substance use disorders.

Widely Used Drugs

- Tobacco
- Alcohol
- Prescription Painkillers (Opioids)
- Heroin
- Marijuana
- Inhalants - (Spray paint, computer duster)



Office of Alcoholism and
Substance Abuse Services

Looking for help: OASAS Treatment Dashboard:

<https://bi1.oasas.ny.gov/analytics/saw.dll?Dashboard>

Resources

New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services

www.oasas.ny.gov | 518-473-3460

- Combatheroin.ny.gov
- Talk2Prevent.ny.gov



Find help and hope
for alcoholism, drug abuse or problem gambling

Call or Text
1-877-8-HOPENY
Text: HOPENY (467369) 1-877-846-7369

Available 24 hours / 7 days

 Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services
www.oasas.ny.gov

The Partnership at Drugfree.org

www.drugfree.org | 855-378-4373

Parents. The Antidrug

www.theantidrug.com | 800-662-HELP

American Council for Drug Education

www.acde.org | 800-378-4435

Families Against Drugs

www.familiesagainstdrugs.org/

Al-Anon and Alateen

www.al-anon.alateen.org | 757-563-1600

Nar-Anon

www.nar-anon.org/

Faces and Voices of Recovery

www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org | 202-737-0690

SAMHSA's Center for Substance Abuse Treatment

www.samhsa.gov/about/csat.aspx | 240-276-1660

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services

www.samhsa.gov | 877-SAMHSA-7

National Institute on Drug Abuse

www.nida.nih.gov/nidahome.html | 800-662-HELP

National Council on Alcohol & Drug Dependence

www.ncadd.org | 800-NCACALL

