

# HOW TO HELP A FRIEND SUBSTANCE USE

When you are helping a friend who is struggling with alcohol or drug use,, it is important to know that behavior change may take time.

Continue to support your friend as they shift their behaviors and begin to create a healthier relationship with substances.

**ZAGS**  
=help=  
**ZAGS**

## WARNING SIGNS

- Discussing their substance use most of the time
- Spending an increasing amount of money on drugs/alcohol.
- Drop in attendance and performance at work/school; decreased motivation
- Using incense, perfume, air freshener to hide smell of smoke or drugs
- Periods of unusual hyperactivity, agitation, or anxiety.

## WHAT TO SAY

- Talk about specific behaviors, not the person. Also, avoid labels such as "alcoholic."
- Prepare a list of specific behaviors that have occurred.
- Be honest about how the behavior has impacted you.
- Have the conversation in a private setting.
- Have the conversation while you and your friend are both sober.
- Engage in a dialogue. Ask your friend how they view their behavior and what they might need.
- Encourage your friend to consult with a professional and seek ongoing support.

- If you notice concerning behaviors, please reach out for help.
- Friend or peer cannot stop or limit their substance use.
  - They feel a sense of compulsion to take the substance.
  - Decreased participation in class, extracurricular activities, or other events.
  - Continued use of alcohol or drugs despite acknowledgement of harmful consequences.

**WHEN TO  
REFER**

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REFER**

  
**GONZAGA**  
Center for Cura Personalis  
509-313-2227

Case Management  
729 E. Boone Ave.  
Wellness & Prevention Ed.  
1111 N. Cincinnati St.

Health & Counseling  
Services  
704 E Sharp Ave.  
509-313-4052