



The E.A.S.E Model: For When a Friend or Relative Needs Help to Recover

A GUIDE TO THE PROCESS

Most people are uncomfortable with the idea of approaching someone about problem drinking. But when a child's well being is at stake, you may be the one to begin the process of reaching out to the problem drinker.

THE E.A.S.E. MODEL

EDUCATE YOURSELF

...ABOUT THE DISEASE OF ALCOHOL ADDICTION AND ABOUT LOCAL AA GROUPS AND TREATMENT FACILITIES FIRST

Find someone knowledgeable about alcohol and other drug addiction to help you find the information and skills you need to move the person toward treatment. To ask for help you can call a local treatment center or call Alcoholics Anonymous. AA is listed on the first page of any phone book and online. In addition, you will find a Fact Sheet about alcoholism immediately after this article. A simple definition of alcoholism is "continued use of alcohol in spite of negative consequences in the family or on the job."

SECOND

Know the [Three STAGEs of Change](#) and try to determine whether the person may be ready to discuss the problem

STAGE 1

THE PERSON IS NOT THINKING ABOUT CHANGING AT ALL:

*"You **don't** know what you're talking about." "You're the one with a drinking problem." "My drinking is none of your business."*

STAGE 2

THE PERSON IS THINKING ABOUT CHANGE BUT IT SEEMS THEY ARE NOT READY FOR CHANGE:

"I'm not drinking as much as I used to." "I cut back but my wife is still nagging me about it." "My son says I have a problem but what do kids know?"

STAGE 3

THE PERSON SEEMS READY TO ACCEPT THE IDEA THAT THEY NEED TO CHANGE

"I have tried to cut back but I can't." "My secretary said she is tired of covering for me." "I don't know what to do about it without losing my job."

APPROACH

...THE PERSON WITH LOVE AND ACCEPTANCE WITH STATEMENTS SUCH AS:

"You know we've been friends for 20 years..." "Everyone on the committee admires you so much..." "I've noticed that you have been in a negative mood since you started drinking more." "Remember how mad we used to get at Mom when she drank too much on the holidays?" "I wonder if you realize how you come across after your third drink?"

START

...A CONVERSATION ABOUT YOUR CONCERN FOR THE PERSON AND THEIR FAMILY

"I'm really concerned about how you look when you leave for work in the morning." "It must be hard to make it through the day feeling the way you do." "I'm worried about the kids. They love you so much, but when you've been drinking, you start yelling at them, and I see the hurt in their eyes."

EASE

...INTO THE IDEA OF GETTING HELP AT AA OR OTHER TREATMENT PROGRAMS

"How about if you go for an evaluation and find out whether you need help or not." "Did you know that Jane goes to AA? Maybe you could talk with her about it." "You know Bob went through treatment for alcoholism. Maybe we can find out where he went." "I will do anything I can to support your getting the hold alcohol has on you behind you. I'll be with you every step of the way."

DO'S AND DON'TS

DON'T be discouraged if the conversation doesn't go as you hoped it would and
DON'T take it personally.

DO understand that recovery is a process and often takes people months or years

DON'T think you have failed if the person doesn't seek effective help right away

DO contact the person who helped you with the stages of change, for suggestions about which way to go from here.

DO follow up with the person when they are ready to talk again. Let them initiate.

DON'T get into an argument with the person.

DO make statements like "I know this is hard to talk about."

DON'T criticize or come across as rejecting the person.

DO show them respect and understanding.

DO your best to support them whatever the outcome of the conversation.

DO leave them with the knowledge that they have your continued love and support.