

## **WHAT TO DO IF YOU THINK A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER MAY HAVE AN ALCOHOL PROBLEM:**

- Let your friend or family member know that risky drinking can lead to more severe alcohol problems, including alcohol dependence (alcoholism), as well as injuries and unwanted/unprotected sex.
- Seek out resources on your campus or in your local community. Self-help groups like AA, Al-Anon, and Alateen, as well as mental health clinics, clergy, doctors, and substance abuse counselors are knowledgeable about alcohol problems. Don't let fear block your efforts to get help for your friend or your family member.
- Use the resources. Do what you can to encourage your friend or family member to get help, but remember you cannot control the outcome. Make sure to take care of yourself too!
- Don't make excuses for the drinker. Family members often try to protect a loved one from the consequences of his or her drinking by making excuses to others. Making excuses allows your loved one to avoid changing for the better.
- Choose a good time to talk with the drinker, such as shortly after an alcohol-related problem has occurred. Choose a time when he or she is sober, when both of you are calm, and when you can speak privately.
- Be specific. Tell the friend or family member that you are concerned about his or her drinking and want to be supportive in getting help. Back up your concerns with examples of the ways in which his or her drinking has caused problems for both of you, including the most recent incident.
- Seek out the people and resources that can support you (see below). Keep in mind you are not alone. There is hope and practical help available in your local community.