

HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD IF THEY THINK THEIR FRIEND NEEDS HELP

Your child may have a friend with a drug or alcohol problem, or who is experiencing a mental health condition like depression or an eating disorder. Here are some things you can suggest to your child about ways to support their friend. Let your child know that if their friend is having trouble, they may not appreciate their advice. But telling them the truth is part of being a real friend, even when it's hard to do. Further, if their friend gets into danger, your child can feel reassured that they tried their best to help.

Here is some advice you may want to give your child about how to relate to their friend:

Listen. Listen to what (s)he has to say about his drug use or mental health challenge without making judgments.

Encourage. Suggest that their friend talk to an adult (s)he trusts—a coach or teacher, a school counselor, a relative, or a doctor.

Inform. Maybe their friend doesn't see his or her drug use as a bad thing. Read about how drugs can affect their brain and body. It might open their eyes. Go to the Milton Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition's website, under the Get Educated tab, to learn more. www.milton-coalition.org

Get Them Help. When (s)he's ready to make a change and seek treatment, help him find a doctor, therapist, or support. If they are under age 18, most likely they will need parental permission. Call the Interface Referral Helpline (free to Milton residents) at 888-244-6843

If your child has a friend with addiction issues, your child may also need some support. Suggest they attend the Milton Alateen support group at Milton BID Hospital.

Adapted from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration website.