



## **Concerned About Someone's Drinking?**

Heavy drinking can have a huge impact upon relationships. Those affected often feel powerless to bring about any change, which can lead to frustration and resentment.

This fact sheet makes suggestions about what can be done to help those affected.

### **1) Take care of yourself**

- Worrying continually, and trying to stop someone else drinking, can leave you drained of energy, depressed and feeling helpless. In both your interests, and those of everyone around you, it is important that you take care of yourself.
- Find ways to deal with the stress and anxiety; eg. take time for yourself out of the situation.
- Make a list of the ways in which the drinking is affecting you.
- Try to find an activity or interest which is only for you and gives you the space to be yourself.
- Discuss with other members of the family what you are trying to do.

### **2) Find time to talk**

- Talk to the person who is drinking. Find a time when they're sober and when you're both reasonably calm.
- Tell them about the problems that their drinking causes.
- Listen to them. Find out how they feel about their drinking and whether they recognise that their drinking is causing problems.
- Help them to see the effects of their drinking, which might encourage them to change their behaviour.
- Avoid arguing – it will make it more difficult for them to talk openly about things in the future.

### **3) Develop strategies**

- Remember you are only responsible for your own behaviour, so it is important not to accept blame for someone else's drinking.
- Make it clear what behaviour you won't accept.
- Don't hide the effects of the drinking from the drinker or other people.
- Be clear what action you'll take if it continues to happen. Don't make idle threats.
- Be consistent. Don't keep changing your mind about what you're saying, or say one thing then do another.

### **4) Get support and help for yourself**

- Help the person who is drinking to be realistic. Don't encourage them to make promises they can't keep.
- Don't make it easy for them to drink (eg. always agreeing to go to the pub with them).
- Get support from someone you trust, which might include family members, GP, trusted friends or professional help – contact an alcohol agency such as SIFA.
- If there is a threat of violence, make sure you know who to contact and where to go. You do not have to tolerate violence or abuse.