



When you're concerned about a friend, knowing what to say and how to say it can be overwhelming. These conversations can be difficult, but it's important to get someone help early instead of waiting for the problem to go away on its own.

Conversation Goals

- 1 Ensure the person is physically and mentally safe.
- 2 Show the person you care about them.
- 3 Strengthen the relationship you have with them.

Roadblocks

- Fear of losing them as a friend
- Not knowing how to have tough conversations
- Questioning whether you should get involved
- Being concerned that you'll say the wrong thing

What are Tough Topics?

Substance use, destructive relationships, self-harm, skipping school, eating disorders, and anything that could harm their or someone else's health and safety.

Have a P.L.A.N.

Plan what to say

Decide when and where you will talk, use "I" statements, and stick to the formula.

Listen

Give full attention and eye contact, and summarize what they say.

Assertive

Avoid being passive or aggressive and be clear about your concerns.

Never play counselor

Know your limits and ask for help when needed.

Know the Formula

Care: Remind them that you care.

"I care about our friendship, and I need to talk to you about something I'm concerned about."

What: Describe what your concerns are.

"Several things have happened lately (1-2 examples)."

How: Explain how these concerns impact your friendship.

"These things I'm concerned about have affected our friendship."

Need: Tell them your needs and ask that they seek help or talk to a trusted adult.

"I think you should talk to a trusted adult about these concerns and I will even go with you."

Ask for help. Trusted adults like counselors, parents or caregivers, coaches, neighbors and mentors are great resources for everyone involved.

Remember – Someone may not be ready to talk, and that's ok. Continue to offer support, and remind them that you're there for them if and when they do want to talk.