

open for future conversations. In time, he or she may come to realize that what you said is true.

If your friend's problem continues, especially if it seems to be getting worse, you may want to be involved in an intervention. This should be done under the direction of a professional, experienced counselor and, if possible, with the participation of your friend's family members and other people important in his or her life. LCL can help facilitate an intervention or reach out to your friend.

It takes firmness and persistence to persuade someone to seek help for a problem with alcohol or other drugs. Those who seek help frequently do get better, but healing is a long-term process that requires support from others. Be available if your friend needs someone to talk to during that process. Whatever the outcome, take solace in knowing that you have done what you can to help your friend.

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF TOO

Keep these suggestions in mind as you interact with your friend:

- Never drink or use drugs as a way to stay close to your friend. It is not only dangerous for you, but you also are sending out the message that "some" alcohol or other drugs is OK. What your friend needs to work toward is abstinence.
- Do not cover up or make excuses for your friend's use of alcohol or other drugs. Don't loan your friend money or pay back his or her debts. At school do not cover up for missed deadlines, absences or tardiness.
- Do not ride with your friend if she or he has been drinking
- If your friend abuses your friendship, stand up for yourself and your feelings. Allowing your friend to take advantage of you will not solve his or her problem and will only end up hurting you.
- Do not blame yourself if your friend's alcohol or other drug problem stays the same or gets worse. Your friend may have progressed to a point where alcohol or other drug use is firmly ingrained in his or her life. It is not an easy problem to solve, and you are not the one who can solve it. In the end, this is your friend's problem to solve and only your friend can make the decision to seek help.

RESOURCES

IF YOU NEED IMMEDIATE COUNSELING: 24 hours a day Crisis Line: 612-379-6363 (say you were referred by Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers) During business hours, call Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers 651-646-5590

ALCOHOL ONLINE ASSESSMENTS: Online assessments are an objective, anonymous test that provide a baseline for determining the scope of alcohol or drug problems. These may be taken by your friend, or by you, with your friend in mind. <http://www.bhs.umn.edu/services/echug.htm> or <http://www.alcoholscreening.org/AS/index.aspx?CID=86>

LAWYERS CONCERNED FOR LAWYERS: Provides support, counseling, and mentors for law students www.mnlcl.org. Assessments are also available.

MN 12-STEP MEETINGS: Here is a site that lists many 12-step programs: <http://www.minnesotarecovery.info/OtherMN12StepGroups.htm>

LAW STUDENT RESOURCE WEB PAGE: <http://www2.mnbar.org/committees/lifelaw/LawStudents/index.htm>

ABA CO-LAP: Provides information on Lawyer Assistance Programs throughout the country and access to a listserve for law students in recovery <http://apps.americanbar.org/legalservices/colap/>

HOW CAN I HELP A LAW SCHOOL FRIEND WITH AN ALCOHOL OR OTHER DRUG PROBLEM



Do you know a law school friend who has a problem with alcohol or another drug? Abusing alcohol or other drugs can damage a person's health, destroy relationships with family and friends, and ruin careers. Maybe you're too embarrassed to bring it up, or maybe you feel you are interfering if you get involved. But you can make a positive difference in your friend's life by helping them confront their problem.

LAWYERS CONCERNED FOR LAWYERS (LCL)
Free confidential services available 24 hours a day
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2550 University Avenue West, Suite 313N
St. Paul, MN 55114
651-646-5590 or 1-866-525-6466
www.mnlcl.org • help@mnlcl.org

**This brochure focusses on chemical dependency and addiction. The symptoms may be very similar to other addictions and mental health problems. LCL can help, regardless of the problem.*

It won't be easy. Your friend will likely be angry or defensive. A common reaction is to deny that any problem exists. Even if your friend's home, school, or work life is suffering, he or she may refuse to seek help. You may be told that this is none of your business. Trying to help may strain your relationship.

So, why make the effort? Because you care and because your friend values what you say. Even if your friend has shrugged off advice from other people, your caring words will have an impact. At the very least, it will give your friend something to think about—especially if you provide some concrete suggestions for getting help with a problem he or she can't deal with alone. Here are some steps you can take to help your friend.

LEARN THE FACTS

Alcohol has become such an accepted part of our culture that many people forget it can be as harmful as any illegal drug if it is misused. The lives lost to drunken driving are the most obvious price society pays, but there are also many hidden costs. Crime, lost productivity and injuries, and health problems such as heart and liver disease are linked to alcohol abuse.

In the legal profession you and your friend are about to enter, alcohol abuse and addiction can harm clients and ruin careers. If your friend's chemical abuse or addiction has resulted in conduct or behavior that comes to the attention of bar admission authorities, and the abuse or addiction is not treated, your friend may not be able to be admitted to the bar. An applicant who does not provide full and complete information about his or her conduct or ability to practice law may also be denied admission or lose their license whenever this becomes known to bar admission authorities, even if the underlying issue has been fully addressed.

On the other hand, bar authorities in Minnesota look more favorably on applicants who get help to address an alcohol or other drug problem than those who do not.

Applicants who get help and address their chemical health problems effectively are generally admitted to the bar in Minnesota.

In addition, Minnesota's Rules of Professional Conduct make it clear that Minnesota's Lawyer Assistance Program, Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers (LCL) is exempt from having to report violations of the Rules of Professional Conduct.

Many people say they drink "just to be social," but drinking in any amount and in any form should be

off limits to those with an addiction. For those people, any drinking is dangerous. Alcohol also interacts adversely with many prescription and over-the-counter medications, so people taking medications should steer clear of alcohol.

Legally prescribed drugs, such as benzodiazepines and amphetamines, can be addicting and harmful if taken in greater than prescribed doses. An overdose of barbiturates, especially in conjunction with alcohol, can lead to a coma or death.

Users of illicit drugs, such as heroin and cocaine, also subject themselves to health risks, including addiction and the possibility of death by overdose. Even marijuana, which many consider relatively harmless, can lead to short-term memory loss and impaired judgment. In all cases, possession of these illegal substances put the user in jeopardy of arrest and jail time, in addition to jeopardizing bar admission.

You can find more information about these and other drugs from LCL's website (www.mnlcl.org), other internet sources, libraries, bookstores, college or law school counseling centers, alcohol and other drug prevention agencies, and treatment centers. Several resources are listed in this brochure.

KNOW THE WARNING SIGNS

Does your friend:

- Drink or use drugs to the point of unconsciousness or a deep stupor?
- Routinely arrive late to class, leave class early or miss class altogether?
- Miss deadlines, classes, meetings or social obligations because of alcohol or other drug use?
- Have unexplained absences?
- Seem more interested in drinking or drugs than other activities?
- Overreact to criticism, shift blame to others, or seem aggressive, hostile, defensive, excitable, irritable or restless?
- Withdraw from fellow students?
- Have memory lapses or difficulty in concentrating?
- Have difficulty getting along with students, faculty or staff?
- Steal money or engage in other illegal activities to get alcohol or other drugs?
- Have regular hangovers, bloodshot eyes, dilated pupils or other physical indications of alcohol or other drug use?
- Have financial, family or legal problems stemming

from his or her alcohol or other drug use?

- Come to school or social functions while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs?
- Put him or herself or others at risk by drinking or taking other drugs before driving?
- Have alcohol or other drugs stashed in desk drawers, work or school lockers, their car or closets at home?

Although these behaviors may also be symptoms of another addiction or mental illness, if your friend shows signs of any of these symptoms, it is important that you get help for your friend.

FIND PEOPLE WHO CAN HELP

Remember that addiction to alcohol or other drugs is a disease. You cannot cure diabetes or cancer with a simple conversation, so do not expect to solve your friend's problem by just talking to him or her about it. Before you talk with your friend, or if you are not comfortable talking to your friend, find out about resources in your community that can provide help.

Talk to the director at LCL, Minnesota's free, confidential Lawyer Assistance Program. LCL's website has a brochure for law students in PDF format (www.mnlcl.org) that describes its services and additional information. You can also talk to your physician, your minister or a counselor at an alcohol or other drug treatment center. Look in the Yellow Pages of the phone book for agencies that deal with alcohol or other drug problems. Check on the Internet for treatment programs and other suggestions for helping a friend who has problems with alcohol or another drug. Check out some of the agencies mentioned in this brochure.

LCL and other professionals are experienced in helping people who have problems like your friend's, so they should be able to recommend a positive course of action. You do not even have to mention your friend's name.

Getting help for your friend can prevent the downward spiral in your friend's life: inability to be admitted to practice law, loss of license, job, and income, family turmoil, divorce or estrangement from a spouse or significant other, endangerment of children in your friend's care, violent or dangerous behavior, drunk-driving arrests and other legal problems, or automobile accidents resulting in injury or death. Left unchecked, your friend's problems can cause harm not only to himself or herself but also to others.

TALK TO YOUR FRIEND

Once you know something about alcohol and other drugs and the various treatment options, you can try to guide your friend to help. Prepare yourself for how difficult this may be. If possible, enlist the help of at least one other person who cares about your friend. If you have noticed how your friend's alcohol and other drug use is disrupting his or her life, chances are that others have too.

Try to be specific about how your friend's problem with alcohol or other drugs has directly affected your friendship. Rehearse what you want to say, then choose a specific time or place to talk that will be comfortable and free of distractions. Make sure your friend has not been drinking or using drugs and is able to absorb your message. Here is an example of what a friend might say:

"We've been friends ever since we started law school together two years ago. I've always been able to be honest with you, and that's why I want to talk to you today. It's been apparent for some time that you've developed a drinking problem. I first started noticing it when we'd get together at happy hours. You drank far more and far longer than anyone else. Then you started showing up late and hungover for class pretty regularly, expecting me to give you my notes and cover for you. Just last week, when you couldn't show up for class because you were too hung over, you asked me to write your initials on the attendance sheet. That sort of thing puts me in a bad position. I don't want to hurt you but I cannot lie or cheat for you, either. I can't continue to cover for you. It's not fair to either of us. I'm afraid you may not be able to graduate from law school, and if you do, you may not be able to get into the bar. Even worse is what you're doing to yourself physically. Now, I've looked into the resources for lawyers and law students we have here in Minnesota, and you know, they are really very good. There is a free, confidential service for lawyers and law students that can provide peer support or make referrals for evaluation and treatment, and it won't ruin your career. LCL is totally confidential. They don't report to the law schools, board of law examiners, or anyone else. I want you to check out LCL's website and look this information over and think seriously about getting help."

When you talk with your friend, use the words and style that are most comfortable for you. Say what you really feel. Try to be calm, unemotional and compassionate. Do not accuse or preach.

The next step depends upon your friend's reaction. If he or she is receptive to admitting a problem and getting help, share the information you collected and offer your support. But do not be surprised if your friend reacts in anger or denial. If that happens, give your friend time to absorb what you said. Leave the door