

## Tips for starting a conversation

If you are concerned about a loved one's use of alcohol or other drugs, and wish to raise these concerns with them, you can start a conversation with them.

- It's important to take your time and pick a moment when it is safe to do so, and when you and the young person will be in the best frame of mind to talk. Make sure that you do it in a private and relaxed atmosphere.
- Express your concern for that person and demonstrate genuine interest in how they're doing. Ask questions to find out more about what's going on. Make sure to do this in a non-judgmental manner and without accusing or jumping to conclusions. If they open up, let them talk.
- Query their use of substances and talk about their wellbeing. Ensure you express concern for them and demonstrate that you wish to support them through your actions, tone of voice and use of words.

### Some other tips for when you have this conversation are:

- If they want to continue using substances, discuss how they can do it safely.
- Don't give up on them if the first conversation doesn't go as planned.
- Let them know that you're there to support them and will be there for them if, and when, they want to engage with a specialist.



## Contact us

[anglicaresq.org.au/youth-in-charge](http://anglicaresq.org.au/youth-in-charge)

1300 114 397

[mhfw@anglicaresq.org.au](mailto:mhfw@anglicaresq.org.au)

### Do you need support?

Family Drug Support offers 24/7 support to families who have loved ones that are experiencing difficulties with drug and alcohol use.

Contact their support line: 1300 368 186.

Funded by Queensland Government  
Department of Health



Anglicare Southern Queensland acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands on which our services now stand. We pay our respect to Elders – past, present and emerging – and acknowledge the important role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in caring for their own communities.

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## Youth in Charge

Information for friends and family providing support

An Anglicare Southern Queensland  
Mental Health and Wellbeing program



## Drug and alcohol use in young people

It is not uncommon for young people to experiment with alcohol and other drugs. However, drug and alcohol use can become problematic as a result of a number of factors.

Young people view substance use as a solution rather than a problem, with many young people using alcohol and other drugs to cope with an undiagnosed mental health condition.\*

The number of young people using alcohol and other drugs at a high-risk level continues to increase. The 2019 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare survey found that:



**Smoked tobacco daily**



**Consumed five or more drinks in one sitting**



**Had used an illicit drug in the previous 12-month period**

**Services are available to those wanting support to stop, or reduce, their use of substances.**

## Signs that someone you know needs help

There are several signs to look out for that may indicate that someone you know could require help to manage their use of alcohol and other drugs. They may be struggling in different areas of their lives, and they may be showing changes in behaviour. You may perceive these behaviours to be unhelpful or even harmful to them.

Other signs to look out for include:

- Changes to their physical or mental health and relationships;
- Changes in their involvement at school, work or other usual activities;
- They appear to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol;
- They participate in high-risk behaviours;
- They appear to be withdrawn (especially if they used to be sociable);
- They appear to be unhappy with themselves or others;
- They're struggling to talk about their issues in a constructive way.

## What is Youth in Charge and who is it for?

Youth in Charge is a free, voluntary counselling program for young people who need support to manage moderate-to-severe substance use.

This program is designed specifically for young people aged 12 to 25 years old, who are:

- Concerned about their use of alcohol and/or other drugs;
- Would like support in understanding drug and alcohol issues;
- Would like to stop, or reduce their drug or alcohol intake.

## How the program is designed to help participants

Through the Youth in Charge program, we work with clients to help:

- cope with cravings, triggers and situations that lead to substance use;
- gain control of difficult thoughts, feelings and beliefs that trigger the want to use substances;
- take charge of stress, depression, anxiety and other symptoms that make it difficult to control the need for substances;
- manage a lapse and prevent relapse;
- reduce harm resulting from substance use;
- improve your relationships with family and friends;
- develop communication and assertiveness skills;
- create social and community support, and reduce isolation;
- find substance-free fun activities, opportunities to relax and creative things to do;
- improve your general health and wellbeing; and
- build on their strengths, abilities and confidence for the future.

