Concerned about a friend’s drinking? Want to help?
Trust your instincts.
If your friend’s drinking is bothering you, that’s reason enough to talk about it.

√ How to prepare.
• Learn more about drinking problems and resources. The more you know the clearer you’ll be able to be with your friend.
• Know what you like about your friend. Expressing what you know is special and unique about your friend will encourage them to open up and talk honestly with you.
• Know what you don’t like about your friend’s drinking. The more specific you can be about the negative consequences, the better your chances of reaching them. For example, “Last weekend you said you didn’t really feel like drinking and then you drank so much that you vomited.”

√ What you can do.
• You aren’t responsible for changing your friend’s behavior, but you are in a unique position to help – use natural problem-solving strategies.
• Talk about your concern
• Listen
• Give support
• Help find and share information and resources
• Stay in touch – check in – hang out together
• Let them know when you notice differences

√ What you can say.
• Choose to talk when you have plenty of time and neither of you has been drinking
• Be objective and as specific about concerns and examples as possible – avoid being vague
• Use “I” statements, not “you” statements
• Don’t preach, blame, judge or give advice
• Listen without interrupting
• Be flexible
• Don’t expect instant results

√ Take care of yourself.
• Know your limits
• Don’t lie or make excuses
• Have a support system yourself
• Re-evaluate – if you needs breaks, be honest with your friend

√ Tang Center Alcohol and Other Drug Resources
• Alcohol and other drug consultation, one-on-one counseling appointments, support groups and workshops. All services are confidential and non-judgmental; talk about your own use or that of a friend or family member. Call Social Services for a telephone consultation or an appointment - 510 642 6074.
• Online: UHS website has information, resources and services related to reducing alcohol-related negative consequences. www.uhs.berkeley.edu.