

# LET'S TALK

OPENING A CONVERSATION & BRIEF INTERVENTION

FASD  
NATIONAL  
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## Social Workers Can Reduce the Negative Health Risks Associated with Alcohol Use

### Tips for Opening a Discussion About Alcohol with Clients

- Screen all adults to determine if clients are drinking at excessive levels.
- Be prepared with a validated screener and resources for further referral.
- Build rapport with the client with the goal to establish partnership and trust.
- Try starting with: “To provide the best quality care, I’d like to ask about issues that affect your health, like smoking, exercise, diet, and alcohol use. Would it be okay if we chat about these for a few minutes?”
- Establish interest and curiosity: “Tell me about a typical day in your life. Where does your current alcohol use fit in?”

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

CDC’s Planning and Implementing Screening and Brief Intervention for Risky Alcohol Use: A Step by Step Guide for Primary Care Practices



[bit.ly/45oTYiW](https://bit.ly/45oTYiW)

### Pros and Cons

- Elicit Pros: "Help me understand, through your eyes, the good things about using alcohol. What else?"
- Elicit Cons: "What may be some of the not-so-good things about using alcohol? What else?"
- Provide summary: "On the one hand (what's good about the behavior), and on the other hand (what's not so good about the behavior)."

### Readiness Ruler

- Support autonomy: "You have thought a lot about what is best for you and it is absolutely your choice what you decide."
- Ask "On a scale of 1 to 10, how ready are you right now to cut back below risky drinking limits?"
  - "Why did you choose that number?" or
  - "What would it take to help you to have a higher number?"
- Reflect change talk (speech that favors change) and support self-efficacy.

### Action Plan

- Summarize discussion:
  - "What are some steps/options that will work for you to stay healthy and safe?"
  - "What support do you have for making this change?"
  - "Is it ok for me to write down your plan, to keep with you?"

Summarize statements in favor of change, emphasize client strengths, and restate any agreement reached. Say, "I have some resources that may be helpful. Is it ok if I share them?" and thank the client for talking with you.