

# How to Support a Student Struggling with Substance Use

## University of Iowa Collegiate Recovery Program

Written by UI CRP Coordinators Heidi Schmitt and Karen Grajczyk-Haddad

### Background

When a student is struggling with alcohol or drug concerns, signs and symptoms may be present in many areas of their lives such as relationships, academics or finances. These concerns will impact each student differently and it is important to know the warning signs as well as how you can offer support to the student.

#### Warning signs

- Personality changes
- Changes in sleep, eating habits or personal hygiene
- Sudden changes in academic performance
- Increased isolation from social supports
- Unexplained need for money
- Odors of alcohol or other strange odors on their breath or clothes

#### How to offer support

- Remember substance use disorders are chronic brain disorders
- Be aware of the stigma associated with substance use disorders
- Use empathy and openness
- Be flexible and keep reaching out
- Know there are supports on campus for students struggling with substance use concerns
- Know your resources (both on and off campus)

*There are many other warning signs, so it is important to be mindful and check in with a student if you notice any sudden changes or have concerns.*

### Resources

#### Campus Resources

- [University of Iowa Collegiate Recovery Program: UI-CRP@uiowa.edu](mailto:UI-CRP@uiowa.edu)
- [University Counseling Service: 319-335-7294](tel:319-335-7294)
- [Student Wellness: 319-335-8394](tel:319-335-8394)
- [Student Care & Assistance: 319-335-1162](tel:319-335-1162)

#### Off-Campus Resources

- [Community & Family Resources: 866-801-0085](tel:866-801-0085)
- [UIHC Addiction and Recovery Collaborative: 319-384-8765](tel:319-384-8765)
- [AA of Iowa City](#)
- [CommUnity Crisis Services and Food Bank](#)

*The UI CRP recognizes that recovery is a journey. We realize that there is a continuum for students identifying with an addiction, receiving treatment, being in recovery, and adjusting to sober life outside of a treatment program.*