

MANITOBA ADDICTIONS AWARENESS

TOPIC:	Alcohol – Peer helping – Debating the Issues
AUDIENCE:	All ages
OUTCOME:	To raise alcohol awareness and debate the issues of peer helping

Alcohol Awareness Peer Helping Roles: Debating the Issues

Sometimes young people find themselves in situations where they are with friends who have consumed alcohol, become intoxicated, and things start to go wrong. Their friends may start to make risky decisions, may get in trouble, or pass out. Often, in situations like this, friends may feel that it is none of their business, they may feel too threatened themselves to act, or they may not know what they could do to help. They may wind up regretting that they were not able to help. While friends should not in any way assume responsibility for the behaviour or outcomes of others, there is room for their offering situational management knowledge and skills in order to prevent serious harm from occurring to others. This activity helps them explore that possibility.

Activity:

The questions posed for discussion in developing a collective position on peer helping are:

- Is there a role for friends helping friends in situations like this?
 - What roles could friends play to help their friends?
 - What might need to happen in order for the help to be offered/effective?
1. Have the group brainstorm 2 or 3 statements that they feel reflect common beliefs or attitudes about the importance or effectiveness of peer helping roles in alcohol safety...for example:
 - If you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem
 - I am not my brother's keeper...I am not responsible for their decisions
 - If you step into their problem, it will become your problem too
 - You can't help anybody who refuses to help themselves

Record them on a flipchart or whiteboard.

2. Create 3 locations across the floor of your room and identify these positions with poster cards as follows: AGREE, NEUTRAL, and DISAGREE. Provide chart paper and a marker for each location.

3. Have students go to the location which best reflects their opinion on the first statement.
4. Invite the students at each location to choose a recorder, discuss and quickly list points in support of their position. Have each group identify a spokesperson who will then share their arguments with the other groups. Allow each group a chance to present counter-arguments or revised positions.
5. Move through each statement in this fashion and then ask the students to draft a collective peer helping position on each of the discussion questions noted above.
6. Support and enrich this activity by having the groups develop “high risk” scenarios using the Basics Sheets on addiction topics. Have them apply/test and possibly revise their collective peer helping position.