

# Words Matter:

## Reducing Stigmatizing Language when discussing addictions

### Person First language

### Stigmatizing Language

#### Say this...

- Person with a substance use disorder
- Person living in recovery
- Person living with an addiction
- Person arrested for a drug violation
- Chooses not to at this point
- Medication is a treatment tool
- Had a setback
- Maintained recovery
- Positive drug screen

#### ... Instead of this

- Addict, junkie, druggie
- Ex-addict
- Battling/suffering from an addiciton
- Drug offender
- Non-compliant/Bombed out
- Medication is a crutch
- Relapsed
- Stayed clean
- Dirty drug screen

### How to support someone in recovery from addiction

- **Don't judge:** Accept them for who they are and refrain from criticism and negativity.
- **Be patient:** Recovery can be a long complicated process, people often have setbacks. It is important that they know they are supported when things get tough.
- **Reinforce that recovery is possible:** Like other chronic diseases, people can manage addictions successfully.
- **Actively listen:** Take notice of your loved one's victories and struggles.
- **Encourage healthy habits:** Cooking, exercising and playing games are all positive, substance-free activities to engage in with someone in recovery.
- **Suggest a support group:** Support groups allow individuals to interact with and receive encouragement from others who struggle with addiction.
- **Continue to offer encouragement and support:** Emphasize that it takes a lot of courage to get help.
- **Take care of yourself:** Take time to participate in activities that you enjoy. Consider joining a support group for friends and families of people with addiction.