Tips for Talking with a Loved One About Substance Use

- **Talk** with them in a quiet, private place when both of you are sober and calm.

- **Try to understand** the person’s own perception of their substance use. Ask if they believe their substance use is a problem.

- **Consider** the person’s readiness to talk about their substance use.

- **Do not force** the person to admit they have a problem.

- **Express** your point of view by using “I” statements, like “I have noticed...” or “I am concerned...”

- **Identify and discuss** their behavior rather than criticize their character.

- **Let the person know** that you are concerned and willing to help.

- **Listen** without judging the person as bad or immoral.

- **Do not label or accuse** the person of being an “addict.”

- **Treat the person with respect and dignity.**

- **Have realistic expectations for the person**—learning to manage a brain disease takes time.