



## Realities of Drug Addiction

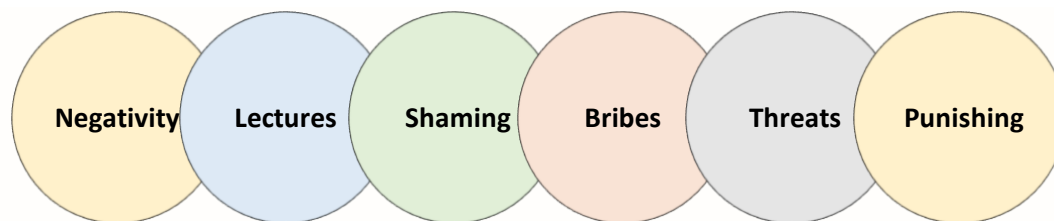
### How to Talk With the Person About Their Substance Use/Addiction

- ◆ It is not easy to talk to someone about their addiction, especially since this involves emotions for the person with addiction, family, and friends.
- ◆ It is important that the conversation comes from a place of empathy, compassion, and understanding.
- ◆ It is important to remember the person with addiction often feels ashamed, isolated, and has a low self-esteem.

### Communicating With A Person With Substance Use/Misuse/Addiction:

- ◆ **Do not delay the conversation:** Be aware of how you are communicating and of what you are saying. One on one communication is less threatening. You can start the conversation with something like "I've noticed that you haven't been yourself lately."
- ◆ **Environment:** The conversation should be in a private, relaxing place.
- ◆ **Listen:** Hear what the person is saying. Ask for clarification if needed.
- ◆ **Honesty:** Concerns should be presented calmly, sincerely, and respectfully.
- ◆ **Empathy:** Don't judge the person with addiction. They have already judged themselves. They feel ashamed, isolated, and are often withdrawn.
- ◆ **Non-Verbal Cues:** Be aware of non-verbal cues (i.e.: fidgeting, hands clenching, etc).
- ◆ **Information:** Research treatment options and share the information. Offer support. If they don't want to talk about treatment options, do not force it on them.

### What to Avoid During the Communication:



### What to Be Aware Of:

- ◆ Be prepared for the person to deny substance use/addiction. Dishonesty is often used to protect themselves from the stigma or consequences of substance use.
- ◆ The person with addiction can get angry, frustrated, agitated, or be very passive.
- ◆ Understand that one conversation will not solve the person's addiction.
- ◆ The person with addiction might say "yes" when they really want to say "no".

Many times family members believe they can get the person with addiction to stop their substance use. Unfortunately, the only person who can stop their substance use is the person with the addiction. They have to want recovery and work hard to reach that goal.



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