



Beyond the Referral:
Engaging Pregnant and Parenting Families with Compassion
Lessons from the TIES Program Handout

A Stigma-Free Referral Conversation: A Quick Guide

5 Things to Say

- "Would it be okay if I shared a resource?"
- "What support would be most helpful right now?"
- "Many families find this helpful."
- "You can decide whether it's a good fit."
- "What questions do you have?"

5 Things to Avoid

- "You need..."
- "People like you..."
- "Because of your history..."
- "If you really cared..."
- "You have to..."

What the Provider Said	What the Provider Meant	What the Family Hears	Why this Doesn't Work	Alternative Language
"You need this program."	I think this could be helpful to you.	- You don't think I can handle this on my own - You think I'm failing as a parent - Something must be wrong with me - You've decided what I need without asking me - I don't have a choice	The concern is not the referral itself. The concern is that the statement removes autonomy and positions the professional as the decision-maker.	"There is a program that many families find helpful. Would you like to hear about it?"
"Because of your history..."	I'm making this recommendation based on your circumstances and risk factors.	- You're being judged for your past - People see me as my addiction, not as a person - Nothing I've done since then matters - You don't trust me - You'll never let me move beyond what happened	Many parents in recovery have worked incredibly hard to redefine themselves. Leading with "history" can unintentionally reinforce stigma and shame.	"Based on what you've shared about your goals, I'd like to tell you about a resource that might be useful." "Many parents navigating recovery find additional support helpful during pregnancy and early parenting."
"If you don't participate..."	I'm worried you may miss out on support that could benefit your family.	- This is mandatory - I'm being threatened - There will be consequences if I say no - This could affect my custody of my child - You are trying to pressure me	Many families affected by substance use have experienced systems where they felt coerced, monitored, or punished. Even well-intentioned warnings can trigger fear and distrust.	"Participation is your choice. My role is to make sure you have information about available supports." "Would you like to talk through what the program offers so you can decide whether it's a good fit?"

A Framework for Referral Conversations

A simple, respectful approach to connecting families with the right supports.



Your role is to listen, offer options, and support their choice.
You are not here to fix. You are here to connect.

Inclusive Language Guide

(adapted from First Call resource found at www.firstcallkc.org/language-guide/)

ABUSER (Stigma Alert)

A person who exhibits impaired control over engaging in substance use (or other reward-seeking behavior, such as gambling) despite suffering severe harms caused by such activity. In experimental research, the word “abuser” was found to increase stigma, which can affect quality of care and act as a barrier to treatment-seeking in individuals suffering from addiction. Instead, many have recommended the use of terms that reflect a disorder (e.g., “substance use disorder”) and the use of “person first” language. Consequently, instead of describing someone as a “drug abuser,” it may be less stigmatizing and more medically accurate to describe them as **“a person with, or suffering from, addiction or substance use disorder.”**

ADDICT (Stigma Alert)

A person who exhibits impaired control over engaging in substance use (or other reward-seeking behavior, such as gambling) despite suffering severe harms caused by such activity. While this language is commonly used, in order to help decrease stigma associated with these conditions, it has been recommended to use “person first” language; instead of describing someone as an “addict,” describe them as **“a person with, or suffering from, addiction or substance use disorder.”**

ADDICTION

An appropriate term to use when speaking to the general public. This allows you to use the language of the people in order to gain a better understanding.

AL-ANON

A mutual-help organization or peer support group for people who have been affected by a loved one's alcohol use disorder. Groups are based on the 12-step principles of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), and have attendees share stories and build supportive networks to help one another cope with the difficulties of having a loved one experience an alcohol use disorder. The focus is placed more on changing oneself and one's patterns of interacting with the addicted loved one, rather than on trying to change the alcohol-addicted person's behavior directly.

ALCOHOLIC (Stigma Alert)

A person who exhibits impaired control over engaging in alcohol use despite suffering severe harms caused by such activity. While this language is commonly used, in order to help decrease stigma associated with these conditions, it has been recommended to use "person first" language; instead of describing someone as an "addict," **describe them as "a person with, or suffering from, addiction or substance use disorder."**

BINGE DRINKING

Excessive alcohol consumption within a short time period. According to NIAAA, binge drinking is any alcohol consumption that results in a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) level of 0.08 or higher (usually achieved after 4 drinks for women and 5 drinks for men within a 2-hour period). According to SAMHSA, binge drinking is 4 or more alcoholic drinks for women and 5 or more alcoholic drinks for men within a short amount of time.

BIPOC (stigma alert)

One of the big problems with this term is that people have started using "BIPOC" when they are only talking about Black communities. If you're talking about Black folx, use the term Black. The term "Black and Brown" is great for referring to many communities; however, when referring to non-White people as a whole, Native American and Asian Americans are excluded. It

is best to use the most specific language possible when talking about race. For the Kansas City region, we commonly use **“Black and African American communities”** and **“communities best served in Spanish.”**

CLEAN (stigma alert)

A reference to a state of a person being abstinent from drugs of misuse. It may also be used in describing urine test results that are not positive for substance use. The term has been viewed as potentially stigmatizing because of its pejorative connotation, with the opposite being “dirty.” Instead, many in the field advocate for use of proper medical terminology such as describing someone as an individual in remission or recovery and describing urine toxicology test results as either negative or positive.

CONVICT/FELON (stigma alert)

Instead use **“Person releasing from jail or prison”**

DETOX

Short for “detoxification,” it is the medical process focused on treating the physical effects of withdrawal from substance use and comfortably achieving metabolic stabilization; a prelude to longer-term treatment and recovery.

DIRTY (stigma alert)

A reference to a urine test that is positive for substance use. A person still using substances. This term is viewed as stigmatizing because of its pejorative connotation. Instead, it is recommended to use proper medical terminology such as an individual **having positive test results or currently to exhibit symptoms of substance use disorder.**

DOPE SICK (stigma alert)

A slang term used to reference withdrawal symptoms from opioids, such as heroin. It is preferable to use more accurate terminology such as **suffering from withdrawal**.

DRUG ABUSE (stigma alert)

A term sometimes used to describe an array of problems resulting from intensive use of psychoactive substances. It has also been used as a diagnostic label. According to the fourth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV), “substance abuse” is defined as a maladaptive pattern of substance use leading to clinically significant impairment.

DRUG OFFENDER (stigma alert)

Instead use **“Person arrested for drug violation”**.

EARLY RECOVERY

The first year of remission from a substance use disorder.

HOMELESS (stigma alert)

Instead use **“Unhoused” or “unsheltered”**.

LATINO/A

There is a wealth of research about Latino/a people not liking the term “Latinx”. We avoid using the term Hispanic; this word generally refers to anyone who is from or has ancestry in a Spanish-speaking country, including Spain, whereas Latino/a refers to anyone with Latin American heritage. In Kansas City, one of the greatest barriers Latino/a people face is language. **Best to use the term “communities best served in Spanish” whenever relevant.**

LGBTQIA+

While the word “queer” is being used more frequently in recent years, in lieu of LGBTQ, we never use it professional communications. Older LGBTQ folx and people who aren’t part of the LGBTQ community will be thrown off. Use “LGBTQIA+”.

LONG TERM RECOVERY

5 years of continued remission; the point at which the risk of meeting criteria for a substance use disorder in the following year is no greater than that of the general population.

MODERATE DRINKING

According to HHS, moderate drinking is per day no more than 1 alcoholic drink for women and no more than 2 alcoholic drinks for men.

NALOXONE

An opioid reversal medication, that works by blocking opioid receptors in the brain, thereby blocking the effects of opioid agonists (e.g., heroin, morphine). Brand name: Narcan.

OVERDOSE PREVENTION

Policies, programs and practices that aim to reduce the harms associated with the use of alcohol or other drugs. The defining features include a focus on the prevention of harm, rather than on the prevention of substance use itself, with attention and focus on the individual's active substance use (e.g., a clean needle exchange program can reduce rates of transmission of hepatitis C, HIV, or other infectious disease for individuals suffering from heroin use disorder).

PEOPLE/FAMILIES LIVING ON LOW INCOMES

This captures the idea that these are people who have limited financial resources, regardless of where they land on scale created by the federal government or where they live. Avoid using 'poverty' unless you are referencing the Federal Poverty Level. **"Historically underserved communities"** is also appropriate when discussing several demographic groups at once.

PERSON-FIRST LANGUAGE

A linguistic prescription structuring sentences to name the person first and the condition or disease from which they suffer, second. Instead of describing someone as an "addict", for instance, to describe them as a person with, or suffering from, addiction or a substance use disorder. Person-first language articulates that the disease is a secondary attribute and not the primary characteristic of the individual's identity.

RELAPSE/SLIP (stigma alert)

Relapse often indicates a recurrence of substance use. More technically, it would indicate the recurrence and reinstatement of a substance use disorder and would require an individual to be in remission prior to the occurrence of a relapse. The highest risk for recurrence of substance use disorder symptoms occurs during the first 90 days following the initial intervention. The

risk for recurrence of symptoms decreases after 90 days. This indicates that individuals attempting to recover from substance use disorder need the most intensive support during this first 3-month period, as individuals are experiencing substantial physiological, psychological, and social changes during this early recovery phase. There is typically a greater sensitivity to stress and lowered sensitivity to reward that makes continued recovery challenging. This term has a stigma alert, as it can imply a moral failing for some people. Instead it may be preferable to use morally neutral terms such as **“resumed,” or experienced a “recurrence” of symptoms.**

RELAPSE PREVENTION (RP)

Relapse Prevention is a skills-based, cognitive-behavioral treatment approach that requires patients and their clinicians to identify situations that place the person at greater risk for relapse – both internal experiences (e.g., positive thoughts related to substance use or negative thoughts related to sobriety that arise without effort, called “automatic thoughts”) and external cues (e.g., exposure to people that the person associates with prior substance use).

SUBSTANCE ABUSE (stigma alert)

A term sometimes used to describe an array of problems resulting from intensive use of psychoactive substances. It has also been used as a diagnostic label. According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV), “substance abuse” is defined as a maladaptive pattern of substance use leading to clinically significant impairment.

SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER

The clinical term describing a syndrome consisting of a coherent set of signs and symptoms that cause significant distress and or impairment during the same 12-month period.



TIES Program

Team for Infants Exposed to Substance use

The TIES Program is completely free and voluntary.

About:

The TIES Program is a home visiting program for moms and birthing people affected by substance use. It supports the entire family for a child's first 2 years of life.

Perks include:

Diaper support, Women's Group, Literacy Corner, transportation, crisis counseling, goal planning and parent coaching.

Eligibility requirements:

- Participants must be 18+ years old.
- Participants must either be pregnant or have a baby under 6 months old.
- Must want support for substance use recovery.
- Baby must be in participant's custody or custody of a relative during enrollment.
- Lives in one of the following zip codes:

Missouri

64050	64106	64114	64128
64052	64108	64120	64129
64053	64109	64123	64130
64055	64110	64124	64131
64101	64111	64125	64132
64102	64112	64126	64133
64105	64113	64127	

Kansas

66101	66111
66102	66112
66103	66113
66104	66115 or
66105	anywhere in
66106	Wyandotte
66109	County



Contact information:

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Scan the QR code
to self-refer:

