

A photograph of three women walking on a city street. The woman on the left is wearing sunglasses and a dark jacket. The woman in the middle is wearing a light-colored jacket and a scarf. The woman on the right is wearing a dark hat and a dark jacket. They are walking past a building and a parked car. The image has a warm, yellowish tint.

---

# Tips for Talking with a Loved One About Their 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**—their behavior won't change right away.