

Glossary of Preferred Language

For Pregnant and Parenting People Living with the Disease of Addiction and Their Providers

- ✓ "I am a pregnant parent living with the disease of addiction."
- ✓ "I have a substance use disorder."
- ✓ "I tested positive for [substance name]."
- ✓ "I am in recovery."
- ✓ "I may return to use because addiction is a chronic medical condition."
- ✓ "Ask me what happened to me."
- ✓ "I can be a good parent and still need help in recovery."
- ✓ "My newborn may need care for withdrawal symptoms after being exposed to substances during pregnancy."
- ✓ "Asking for help is a way I care for myself and my child."
- ✓ "My child and I have rights. Explain reporting requirements to me."
- ✓ "I can do this. I can get better."
- ✓ "See me. Hear me. Get to know me. Make me feel welcomed, valued, and worthy of care."

- ✗ I am not an addict, junkie, user, or drug abuser.
- ✗ I don't have a habit nor a substance *abuse* disorder.
- ✗ I am not dirty and I did not fail a drug test.
- ✗ I am not a reformed addict. Don't call me clean. I was never dirty.
- ✗ I didn't fail or give up.
- ✗ Don't ask me what's wrong with me.
- ✗ I am not a bad or unfit mother.
- ✗ My newborn is not an addicted baby, drug baby, or a baby born addicted.
- ✗ I am not trying to be difficult, manipulative, nor noncompliant.
- ✗ Don't threaten me with DHS involvement or assume my baby will be taken because of prenatal substance use or one positive test result.
- ✗ Don't tell me: "You did this to yourself. This is your last chance. Nobody believes you. You'll never change."
- ✗ Don't look down on me. Don't dismiss me as a liar, a drug seeker, or anything less than.



Improving care for and by pregnant and parenting people living with the disease of addiction



Department of
Public Health
DIVISION OF REPRODUCTIVE,
ADOLESCENT, AND CHILD HEALTH

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New resources
for providers
and parents:

