Conversation Starters about Family History

Prepare for the Conversation: What do you hope to gain?

ษา Preparatory Prompts:

What is my intention?
- What do I hope to gain?
- What does the ideal outcome of this conversation look like?

ญ Check In With Your Emotions:

Conversations about Family Health History can be emotionally charged. Take time to check your emotions before the conversation.
- What emotions come up when you think about having this discussion?
- What feelings come up with you think about the reasons you want to gather this information?
- What are some things you can do to use these emotions to positively impact & inspire this conversation?
- How can you get the support you need to manage these emotions?
Having the Conversation: What do you want to know?

Questions to ask your family:

- What kinds of disease diagnoses have our family members been diagnosed with in the past?
  - Who: Grandparents, aunts/uncles, cousins, parents, siblings, etc.)
  - Potential Diagnoses: Asthma, Cancer, Blood Pressure, Diabetes, High Cholesterol, Bleeding Disorders, Lung Disease, Stroke, Alzheimer's, Osteoporosis, Mental Health Disorders, etc.
- How old were they when they were diagnosed?
- How did they control these illness? What kinds of treatment were used? Was the treatment successful? Why/Why not?
- Where were our relatives from? (Country, Geographic Area, etc.)
- How did these relatives die? What was the reason for their death?
- Have any of your family members received genetic testing? If so, what were some of the results?

Having Difficult Conversations

Tips for the Family History Talk:

- Identify your intentions and goals.
- Choose the location and timing for this conversation.
- Use "I" statements instead of "you" statements to avoid blaming.
- Come from a place of learning & curiosity. Ask who, what, when & how questions.
- Seek common ground. What do you agree on? What ideas do you share?
- Take your time. Take a break. Do you need to gather all the details in one meeting? Maybe plan multiple meetings.