



BACK TO SCHOOL



While exciting, the start of a new school year can also be challenging with new teachers, friends, and expectations. Identify ways to support the children and teens in your life: check-in daily, share a meal together, and start conversations. Parents and caregivers: remember, you are role models for your kids and the other young people you care about.

HOW CAN YOU HELP KEEP KIDS SAFE?



- Have conversations about staying safe: wear a seat belt, use a helmet, don't drive or walk distracted (e.g., with a cell phone), be careful on social media, and limit screen time.

- Monitor and lock up substances in your home including any alcohol, THC/cannabis, Rx drugs, and over-the-counter medications.
- Make a plan together so your child knows how to get out of a risky situation (don't get in a car with an impaired driver, don't walk alone at night, practice refusal skills to steer clear of substances).



ARE YOU READY TO SUPPORT THE MENTAL HEALTH OF YOUTH IN YOUR LIFE?



- Practice self-care and healthy coping strategies and model them for the kids in your life.
- Some people use substances to change how they feel, but substance use often makes mental health challenges worse.



- Many people struggle from time to time. It's ok to not be ok, but it's important to get help!



**BACK TO SCHOOL
ARE YOU READY?**



**One
Choice**



PREVENT YOUTH
SUBSTANCE USE



Put me on
your fridge!

ARE YOU READY TO SET GOALS AND ESTABLISH EXPECTATIONS FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR?

- Balance looks different for every child and every family. Help your child find balance with homework, social activities, work, extracurriculars, family time, etc.
- Review and set family expectations for staying healthy: screen time, sleep, nutrition, activities, etc.

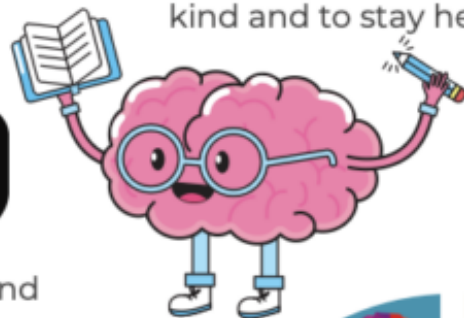


- Reflect on the past school year: *What went well? What would you do differently?*

HOW CAN YOU ENCOURAGE THE YOUTH IN YOUR LIFE TO BUILD HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS?



- Get to know the people in your kids' lives. Who are they spending time with?
- Start a conversation about what makes a good friend. How can your child be that friend to others?
- Remind young people that friends help one another to be kind and to stay healthy and safe.



ARE YOU READY TO PREVENT YOUTH SUBSTANCE USE?

- While it may not always feel like it, parents and caregivers have a powerful influence on teen behavior: what you say and do matters.
- Substance use is unhealthy for the developing brain. Make clear your expectation of NO youth use of alcohol, nicotine, marijuana, or other drugs.
- Talk about substance use as a health priority. Not using before age 21 is the health standard for youth.
- Prevention isn't a single conversation: talk early and talk often.



**BACK TO SCHOOL
ARE YOU READY?**

**One
Choice**

PREVENT YOUTH
SUBSTANCE USE

Put me on
your fridge!

**We have resources
that can help.**



**YOUTH & FAMILY
SERVICES**
OF HADDAM-KILLINGWORTH INC.
Strong families equal strong communities

