



# 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!



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## 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?*

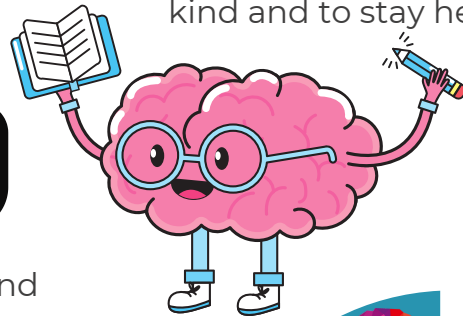
## HOW CAN YOU ENCOURAGE THE YOUTH IN YOUR LIFE TO BUILD HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS?



- 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.



We have resources that can help.



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