

# SUBSTANCE USE

## Action Checklist

When drugs enter the system, the body sends out a surge of a chemical called dopamine. This “feel good” chemical tells the brain that whatever this sensation is is worth repeating, which leads to cravings. Addiction occurs when these cravings don’t stop, resulting in withdrawal, and use of these substances continues despite negative consequences. Open and honest communication between parents and children about substance use is key in fostering responsible decision-making and empowering our youth to resist societal pressures.

- Know warning signs and behaviors
- Know the risk factors
- Encourage compassionate and empathetic conversation
- Foster a comfortable environment for your child to feel safe talking to you
- Make sure the timing is right, and make it a priority
- Note what questions you are going to ask your child, to include your “pulse check” question
- Think through the objections your child may have and what positive responses you could offer
- Know what resources are available in your area in case they are needed