

Preventing Youth Substance Use

What Adults Need to Know

1 **Know that Youth Substance Use is NOT Inevitable**

Most teens do NOT use alcohol, nicotine, marijuana, or other drugs.

2 **Be Brain Development Savvy**

The developing brain is uniquely vulnerable to substance use: 9 in 10 adults with a substance use disorder started drinking, smoking, or using other drugs before age 18.

3 **Be Substance Savvy**

For teens, all substance use is related: using any one substance dramatically increases the likelihood of using other substances

4 **Talk Early and Often**

Prevention is not a single conversation: look for teachable moments and communicate the clear expectation of no use as the health standard for youth

5 **Act Quickly if You Suspect Substance Use**

Substance use puts teens at risk for many negative outcomes; help them make healthy choices and get support when you need it

Substance Use Prevention is a Health Priority

The health standard of no substance use for teens is similar to other health standards like using seat belts, wearing bicycle helmets, exercising, getting enough sleep, and supporting mental health self-care



To learn more, visit
www.gatewayimpactcoalition.com