

WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT YOUR TEEN IS USING DRUGS

* **Look closely and smell deeply:** When your teen comes home from an evening with friends, get close enough to take a deep breath: if you smell pot, alcohol, strong cologne, perfume, or mints, he/she is probably using. *Don't fall for the "everyone else was using, not me—that's why I smell."* *If they are hanging with kids who are using, that in itself is dangerous and you need to adjust where your child is allowed to hang out without supervision. A very good place to "sniff" is the car after the kids have been out.*

* **Think about changes:** Physical, mood, attitude about school, missing medication, appetite, use of money, grades, friendships: If you can't account for these changes through other adolescent reasons, suspect drug use.

* **Ask to see his/her My Space or Face Book Page:** If your teen refuses, there are probably high-risk activities shown or talked about on it.

* **Do you know where your teen is?** Never be afraid to call to check up on where your child says he/she is. Just knowing you will check is a strong deterrent.

* **Thoroughly talk over a course of action with both parents and any step parents before going forward.** Everyone should be on the same page so that there are no surprises, and the child can't play one parent against another.

* **Directly let child know what you are observing.** Ask for an explanation. Take the information in calmly, and tell the child that you are asking because you care about safety. If you can't stay calm, get help from someone who can keep you calm.

* **Consider a drug test:** If you have serious suspicions, take your child to a professional for a drug test. Contact your doctor or hospital to arrange this. **Home tests are not reliable and not recommended.** Prior to doing this, get advice from your physician or a therapist trained in drug intervention.

IF you know for sure your child is misusing alcohol or other drugs, check out www.drugfree.org/Parent/WhatToDo Your school Student Services Department is also an excellent resource for ideas and referrals.