

THC, Youth and Families

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Adolescents Seeking Treatment

- **Dual Diagnosis/Co-Occurring Disorders**
 - Marijuana - 93%
 - ADHD - 62%
 - Anxiety - 60%
 - Depression - 25%
- **What's the root of the problem? Substance use is a symptom.**



Marijuana

- **Myth: It's natural so it must be safe**
 - Just because something is natural does not mean it is safe
 - Cases of marijuana induced epilepsy
- **Myth: It's legal so it must be safe**
 - Legal distribution has increased access and each individual determines the dosage
 - Has hundreds of different chemicals, which are not predictable in their interactions with one another
- **Myth: I used to smoke it - it's not that big of a deal**
 - Potency has increased 500-1200% in the last 10-15 years
 - 50-70% more carcinogenic than tobacco smoke
 - Price has gone from \$20/oz on average to \$265/oz on average



- **Myth: No long term effects**
 - For someone smoking regularly, it can stay in the brain over 100 days
 - Scandinavian study re: motor accidents
 - IQ Drops
 - Longitudinal study in Australia
 - Emotional stagnation
 - Connectors in the brain become disconnected:
 - Enjoyment
 - Decision making/consequences
 - Emotional regulation
 - Memory

- **Myth: It helps with anxiety or ADHD**
 - Has proven to exacerbate anxiety and depression



- **Myth: It helps with other mental health disorders**
 - People with existing psychosis proven to have earlier relapse and more frequent hospital stays
 - Young people with mood disorders have proven to be more prone to self-harm
 - Results in higher death rate, including but not limited to suicide

- **Myth: It's not addictive or as bad as some other drugs**
 - 78% of the 2.4 million people who began using in the last year were adolescents (12-20)
 - Marijuana on the adolescent brain IS addictive
 - Growing number of cases of marijuana induced psychosis - this is irreversible! Mimics schizophrenia
 - If no other option - at least make the case for delayed use until brain is further developed

- **Myth: You can't overdose or withdraw**
 - No cases of people dying from the overdose but you CAN overdose. Increase among children
 - Cannabis Withdrawal Syndrome is real. Flu-like symptoms, nausea, agitation, anxiety, body aches



Vaping

- Myth: It's not as bad as cigarettes.
 - Yes, there's some water. But there is also *propylene glycol* (anti-freeze), lead and other chemical liquid carriers for the *nicotine* or *E-liquids*.
 - Diacetyl, the cause of popcorn lung, is found in many popular flavors of E-liquid. In fact, 75% of flavored E-cigarettes and their refill liquids were found to have diacetyl.
 - E-cigarette vapor can contain cancer-causing *formaldehyde* at levels up to **15 times higher** than regular cigarettes.
 - 70-90% of those who vape are “dual users” and the CDC reports that vaping **doubles the odds** that the user will advance to smoking traditional cigarettes.



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Delta-8

- Not approved by the FDA
- A THC product, NOT a CBD-only product
- Does not require a prescription and is sold in vape shops
- Psychoactive effects



Social Media



- Messages and videos disappear offering no “paper trail” of activities
- Check the stories of those who are your child’s friends
- “My Eyes Only” section

Instagram



- Privacy Settings
- Stories
- Secret Instagram Accounts
- Addiction to Likes
- Negative self-image by comparison of false reality

DIRECTORY OF EMOJIS





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Cocaine



Cough Syrup



Xanax



High Potency



Dealer Advertising



Technology





SIGNS OF STRUGGLING

- Be observant!
- If it walks like a duck, and quacks like a duck....





Quick to anger or be defensive

- Are you walking on eggshells?
- Do they respond with disproportionate emotion to a situation?



Lying

- White lies count!
- Where they've been
- Who they've been with
- What they've been doing
- Why they didn't make it to [fill in the blank]



Less interest in what they enjoyed

- Family time
- Sports
- Youth group
- Extracurriculars



Isolation

- Adolescents are by NATURE pack animals
- Whether they're introverted or extroverted, they want to fit in a group somewhere
- If he/she just wants to be alone, spend time in their bedrooms, play video games alone in their rooms, this is an indicator that they're acting outside of their normal developmental behavior



Highs and lows

- One day parents are convinced they need to get treatment for their child, THEN
- The next day the child comes in from a (dance), chats, acts "normal," seems more like themselves
- Keep in mind that if they are using, when they are on the drug, they may resume signs of calm, happiness, engagement, conversation, etc. and appear less edgy



Stealing

- It doesn't have to be grand larceny
- Could be small things
- Look at pill boxes and prescription containers
- They may not be taking the pills themselves but stealing them to sell to others so that they can purchase their own drug of choice



Aggression

- Punching walls
- Throwing things
- Defiance in arguments when this isn't their normal nature
- Verbally abusive



Pop Culture

- What types of movies do they really enjoy?
- “Hippie” music
- Hip Hop music
- Advocates for marijuana use/legalization



Other Signs

- Change in friend group
- Decline in grades
- Missing/skipping school
- Asking for money frequently, even in small amounts
- Changes in appetite
- Changes in sleep, more OR less
- Changes in personal upkeep



Bias to Action

- I'm worried about you and I care about you
- Tough love
- Free, confidential consultation
 - Individual therapy
 - Group therapy
 - Intensive Outpatient Program
 - Residential Treatment Center



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Q & A

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