If you or someone you know is struggling with marijuana use or experiencing mental health issues, it's essential to reach out for help.

Here are some resources:

1. Talk to a Trusted Adult: Share your concerns with a parent, teacher or school counselor who can provide support and guidance.

2. Seek Professional Help: Consider seeing a therapist, counselor, or mental health professional who specializes in adolescent substance misuse and mental health.

3. Find Support Groups: Connect with other teens who are facing similar challenges through support groups or online forums.

4. Educate Yourself: Learn more about the effects of marijuana on teen mental health and explore healthy coping strategies for managing stress, anxiety, and depression.

5. Stay Drug-Free: Make a commitment to prioritize your mental health and avoid using drugs like marijuana that can harm your well-being.

Everybody's doing it, right?

People might talk as if smoking pot is the cool thing to do, but it's really not. The truth is, not everybody's doing it. Most teens don't use marijuana, and neither should you. If someone offers you marijuana, here are some ideas to say no:

- "No way! I need to keep my concentration on the big game."
- "No thanks. I'm applying to colleges and need to stay straight."
- "Weed gives you the munchies and I don't want to gain weight."
- "No thanks. I heard using that stuff could lead to depression."

The Truth About Getting High

Think you know everything about marijuana misuse? Test yourself here.

1. Since marijuana comes from a plant, it can't be bad for you.
   o True o False
2. Research shows that marijuana cannot increase the risk for depression.
   o True o False
3. Those who use marijuana regularly often experience anxiety and panic attacks.
   o True o False
4. Marijuana is often called a "gateway drug."
   o True o False
5. Marijuana use can cause you to become tired, unmotivated, and paranoid.
   o True o False

Answers: 1.False 2.False 3.True 4.True 5.True

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MARIJUANA AND MENTAL HEALTH



No Laughing Matter

What is Marijuana?

Many Names, One Drug

You might call it dope, weed, pot, reefer, or Mary Jane – but no matter what it's called, marijuana is one of the most misused drugs in the world. Many marijuana users might not know how harmful it is to their health.

Marijuana comes from the hemp plant Cannabis Sativa, and it also contains hundreds of chemicals, including delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), which is the drug's main mind-altering ingredient. When people smoke marijuana, all they need are a few puffs of it to feel high.

Some users claim that marijuana is harmless because it comes from a plant and is therefore natural. But marijuana has a long list of negative side effects.

Marijuana is a depressant and a hallucinogen and can also make you paranoid – users often feel like people are "out to get them." Did you know that teens who smoke marijuana are more likely to try other drugs? That's why marijuana is known as a "gateway drug." People who smoke weed regularly build up a tolerance, so they're more likely to try something new to get high.





Mental Effects of Marijuana Use

The Short and Long-term Effects of Marijuana on Mental Health

Contrary to popular belief, marijuana can have negative effects on mental health, including:

1. Increased Risk of Depression: Research suggests that regular marijuana use during adolescence may increase the risk of developing depression later in life.

2. Anxiety and Panic Attacks: Especially in high doses or if they have underlying anxiety disorders.

3. Impaired Cognitive Function: Marijuana use can impair memory, attention, and decision making skills, making it harder to focus on school or at work.

4. Psychosis: In some cases, marijuana use, particularly high-potency strains, can trigger psychotic symptoms like delusions and paranoia, especially in those predisposed to mental illness.

5. Addiction: Users may develop dependence and addiction, leading to withdrawal symptoms when trying to quit, which may lead to depression.

Just the Stats!

Research shows a concerning link between marijuana use and mental health issues among teenagers. According to recent studies, adolescents who use marijuana regularly are more likely to experience depression, anxiety, and psychotic symptoms compared to non-users. In fact, teens who use marijuana daily are over three times more likely to develop a psychotic disorder such as schizophrenia. Additionally, studies indicate that marijuana use during adolescence can negatively impact brain development, increasing the risk of cognitive impairments and long-term mental health problems.

Mental Breakdown: *Emily's Story*



Emily was a high school junior who always felt a bit overwhelmed by the pressures of school and social life. She struggled with anxiety and found it hard to relax. One day, a friend offered her some marijuana, saying it would help her chill out and forget about her worries.

Emily knew that using marijuana wasn't legal for someone her age, but the promise of relief from her anxiety was too tempting to resist.

After trying it, Emily felt a sense of calm wash over her. For the first time in a long while, her worries seemed to melt away. She started using marijuana more frequently, using it as a crutch whenever she felt overwhelmed or stressed.

However, as time went on, Emily noticed that her mood was becoming more erratic. She would swing from feeling euphoric to sinking into deep bouts of hopelessness. Her grades started to slip, and she withdrew from her friends and family.

Emily's parents became concerned when they noticed the changes in her behavior, but Emily brushed them off, insisting that everything was fine. It wasn't until Emily had a breakdown at school one day that she finally realized the toll that marijuana was taking on her mental health. She spoke to a school counselor about her struggles, and together they worked to find healthier ways for Emily to cope with her anxiety.

Emily gradually reduced her marijuana use and focused on developing healthier coping mechanisms, until finally, she was able to quit using altogether, and she began to feel like herself again.