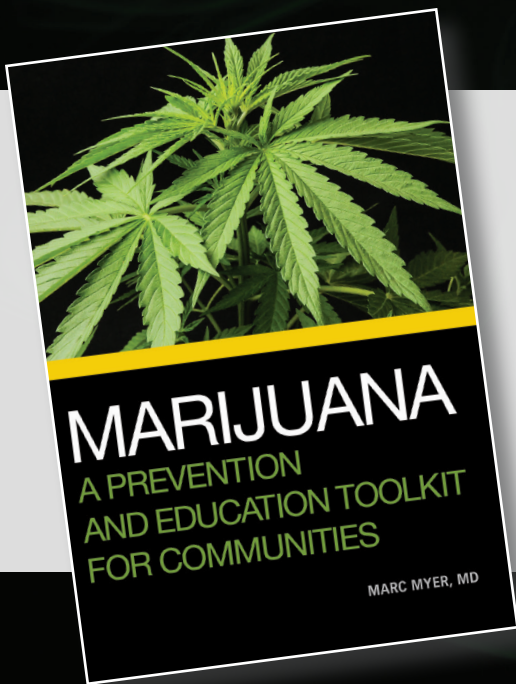


FREE
"SHARE THE TRUTH"
LESSON

Marijuana is addictive.



After alcohol, marijuana is the most prevalent mind-altering drug used in the United States. This comprehensive resource provides reproducible materials to create an effective, multidisciplinary plan for addressing marijuana misuse in your community.



HANDOUT 1

LESSON 1:

MARIJUANA: SHARE THE TRUTH

Marijuana (sometimes called pot, grass, reefer, weed, herb, ganja, Mary Jane, or MJ) is the leaves, stems, seeds, and flowers of the *Cannabis* plant, also called the hemp plant. It is usually smoked or eaten.

TRUE: Marijuana is used more than any other illegal drug in the United States. In 2013, there were 19.8 million current users—about 7.5 percent of people aged 12 and older—up from 14.5 million (5.8 percent) in 2007.¹

TRUE: Our bodies have a natural chemical that affects pleasure, memory, thinking, concentration, movement, coordination, appetite, pain, and our own awareness of time and our senses. Marijuana contains a similar chemical that is stronger than the one in our bodies, so it can affect our ability to function normally.

TRUE: Marijuana is much stronger today than it was in the past. This means it is more likely for people to have a bad reaction to the drug, especially people trying it for the first time.²

TRUE: The effects of marijuana can last for up to three hours. Some people feel relaxed, but others may feel high, find it hard to remember things, find it hard to focus, feel clumsy, feel hungry, feel their heart beat faster, feel lazy, feel withdrawn, have red eyes, and feel scared or nervous.

TRUE: If large amounts of marijuana are used, people may feel panic or become very mixed up in their thinking. Teens who use a lot can have permanent damage to their IQ. Marijuana smoke can cause lung problems, and in 2011, marijuana was involved in 455,668 emergency room visits.³

TRUE: Marijuana that you eat takes longer to affect your body and it is harder to know how much you eat when it is mixed in with food, meaning people can overdose—especially people trying it for the first time.

TRUE: About 17 percent, or one out of six teens who start using marijuana will become addicted. Addicted means they have a very hard time stopping their use of marijuana. Of those who use daily, 25 to 50 percent are addicted.⁴ When

HANDOUT 1: Marijuana: Share the Truth

they stop using marijuana, the withdrawal symptoms are unpleasant, but not life-threatening, and include a bad mood, trouble sleeping, feeling scared or nervous, and an urge to use marijuana again.

TRUE: Marijuana is not safe to use if you are driving. It affects concentration, alertness, judgment of distance, and reaction time. It is even more dangerous when combined with alcohol.

TRUE: Research shows that most high school students choose not to use marijuana, but more than 45 percent of teens will try it before they graduate. Marijuana use is associated with not doing well at school, and heavy teen use may result in the permanent loss of eight IQ points by mid-adulthood. For 60 to 70 percent of young people, marijuana is the reason they are in treatment.⁵

TRUE: Science has not proven that medical marijuana works. Not enough research has been done to prove that it can be helpful for medical purposes. It continues to be studied, but more proof is needed.

TRUE: In some states, it is now legal for adults to use marijuana, but it is still illegal for minors and it is still illegal according to federal law. Many legal drugs such as tobacco and alcohol are harmful, and marijuana is no different. Just because something is legal does not mean it is safe.

TRUE: Synthetic (or man-made) marijuana is not actually marijuana at all. Dried herbs and plants are sprayed with concentrated chemicals that come from marijuana, making synthetic marijuana much more powerful and dangerous. Because the plant materials in synthetic marijuana are always different, the effects may also be different every time, making it even more dangerous. Synthetic marijuana is illegal.

Endnotes

1. National Institute on Drug Abuse, “Drug Facts: Nationwide Trends,” revised June 2015, www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/nationwide-trends.

2. B. Briggs, “Colorado Marijuana Study Finds

3. Drug Enforcement Administration. “The Dangers and Consequences of Marijuana Abuse.” May, 2014, www.dea.gov/docs/dangers-consequences-marijuana-abuse.pdf.

4. National Institute on Drug Abuse, *Marijuana: Facts Parents*

HANDOUT 2

LESSON 1: SHARE THE TRUTH

None of the popular myths listed on this page are true. Use the facts on Handout 1 to right each of the wrongs listed below. List reasons why each of following statements are not true.

FALSE: Marijuana is not harmful.

TRUTH: _____

FALSE: Marijuana is not addictive.

TRUTH: _____

FALSE: Stopping marijuana use does not cause any withdrawal symptoms.

TRUTH: _____

FALSE: Because marijuana is legal in some states, it must be fairly safe.

TRUTH: _____

FALSE: Most high school students have tried marijuana.

TRUTH: _____

FALSE: Eating marijuana is safer than smoking it.

TRUTH: _____

FALSE: Synthetic marijuana is legal and safer than marijuana.

TRUTH: _____

FALSE: Science has proven medical marijuana to be effective.

TRUTH: _____