

An Open Letter to Parents

Depression. Suicidal Thoughts. Schizophrenia.

If you have outdated perceptions about marijuana, you might be putting your teen at risk. New research is giving us better insight into the serious consequences of teen marijuana use, especially how it impacts mental health.

Did you know that young people who use marijuana weekly have double the risk of depression later in life?¹ And that teens aged 12 to 17 who smoke marijuana weekly are three times more likely than non-users to have suicidal thoughts?²

And if that's not bad enough, marijuana use in some teens has been linked to increased risk for schizophrenia in later years.³



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Today's teens are smoking a more potent drug⁴ and starting use at increasingly younger ages during crucial brain development years.⁵

Still think marijuana's no big deal? Remember, you are the most important influence in your teen's life when it comes to drugs,⁶ so tell your teen the facts about marijuana. Teens who learn about the risks from their parents are less likely to smoke marijuana or use other drugs than teens who don't.

Let your teens know you don't want them using marijuana. Their mental health may depend on it.

Signed,

- American Psychiatric Association
- American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
- American Society of Addiction Medicine
- Asian Community Mental Health Services
- Association for Medical Education and Research in Substance Abuse
- Institute for Behavior and Health, Inc.
- National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association
- National Association of Addiction Treatment Providers
- National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare
- National Latino Behavioral Health Association
- National Medical Association
- Office of National Drug Control Policy
- Partnership for a Drug-Free America

1 Patton, GC et al. Cannabis use and mental health in young people: cohort study. British Medical Journal, 325: 1195–1198, 2002. 2 Greenblatt, J. Adolescent self-reported behaviors and their association with marijuana use, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), 1998. 3 Arseneault, L et al. Cannabis use in adolescence and risk for adult psychosis: longitudinal prospective study. British Medical Journal, 325: 1212–1213, 2002; Veen, N et al. Cannabis use and age at onset of schizophrenia. The American Journal of Psychiatry, 161: 501–506, 2004. 4 Marijuana Potency Monitoring Project. Report No. 83, University of Mississippi, 2003. 5 SAMHSA. Trends in Initiation of Substance Use, 2003. 6 SAMHSA. Parental Disapproval of Youths' Substance Abuse, 2002.