

What to Tell Children about Cannabis/Marijuana

a consolidation of facts from Alex Berenson's book, *Tell Your Children: The Truth about Marijuana, Mental Illness, and Violence*,
Published January 2019. Compiled by Dr. Kathryn E. Patten, Ph. D. Neuroscience and Neuropsychology of Emotion

- Consuming marijuana (MJ) with THC causes a relaxed haze, but for teens whose brains are still developing, it has more serious effects
- THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) affects brain regions for motivation, emotion and memory formation and seriously affects learning
- Cannabis disinhibits users and increases violent behaviour in teens
- THC concentrations in street MJ have risen: from 2% in 1969 to 25% in 2017
- Consuming cannabis before the brain is mature, at 24 years old, can cause permanent brain damage because the brain is still forming and has not completed developing
- Cannabis consumption by teens can cause depression, suicidal feelings, decreases in IQ, memory loss, and even psychosis
- The more you consume, the more likely you are to experience psychosis
- The younger the consumption begins, the more likely and more severe the psychosis
- The germination for psychosis is from 6-8 years from use onset
- Scientific studies reveal that students who use MJ regularly are 3 times as likely to be violent than non-users
- Smoking MJ only 10 times raises the risk of developing psychosis 2.3 times that of non-smokers
- The areas of the brain that have the most receptors for THC are the amygdalae (evokes many body/brain functions) and the hippocampus (responsible for creating and storing memory)
- The US and Canada have the highest cannabis usage rates in the world
- Unlike normal psychoses, MJ caused psychoses do not respond to anti-psychotic drug treatment
- Use of MJ before age 17 years: 4 times as likely to develop addiction to opiate drugs
- 2017 National Academy of Medicine: Cannabis use in teens is highly associated with a) neurotoxicity and b) precipitated psychotic disorders, such as schizophrenia and bi-polar disorder, later in life