



**PURSUE
YOUR PASSION**

VIS TA PASSION

TEACHER'S GUIDE

OBJECTIVE

The goal of this presentation is to provide teachers of students in grades 7-11 with resources to help them understand the risks of cannabis use on their mental health, while also encouraging them to pursue activities that can help them feel their best. The first part of the experience educates participants about the effects of cannabis on their brain and mental health, while the second part provides youth with alternative activities that produce similar chemical reactions in the brain but in a healthier way.

By encouraging participation in engaging experiences that tap into physical activity, music, and art, the session aims to spark a passion for an activity that is more beneficial to their overall health. This document aims to provide you with tips and tools to host your own Pursue Your Passion session, and increase awareness of the health risks associated with cannabis use, particularly to mental health.



ENGAGING YOUTH

By working through the various steps, you can build your own Pursue Your Passion session to deliver fact-based information, lead thought-provoking activities, and inspire youth to pursue a passion, without the use of cannabis.

There are many reasons youth decide to use cannabis: to relax, to relieve stress and anxiety, to have fun, to experiment, to fit in with friends, or just to try something new. Some youth might see cannabis as a natural plant and think it's safe.

There are ways to engage with teens that promote open and positive communication:

- > Active listening (ask open-ended questions, be positive, encourage discussion)
- > Get in the right frame of mind (put yourself in their shoes)
- > Respond clearly to their questions and comments
- > Be clear about your intent and let them know that you hear them
- > Be calm, relaxed and offer empathy and compassion

To learn about more strategies for talking with youth about cannabis, see [Talking with teenagers about drugs](#) and [Talking with your kids about cannabis](#).

PLANNING A PURSUE YOUR PASSION SESSION

Breakdown of Pursue Your Passion Session

Estimated Duration: 30-45 minutes (mins)

| | |
|--|---------|
| Introduction | 5 mins |
| Learn the facts on cannabis and the brain | 7 mins |
| Engage in activities you're passionate about | 2 mins |
| Conclusion and questions | 10 mins |

There are a few things to consider...

- > **Location:** try finding a place where you can spread out and move around such as a gym or recreational area. If you're learning from home, encourage the youth to find an area in their home where they can move around.
- > **Time:** your session will take approximately 30 to 45 minutes.

- > **Resources available:** get creative with the resources you have such as sporting equipment, art supplies.
- > **Technical requirements:** you will need a screen with projector, large monitor or tablets with internet access for students to see the presentation internet access for the 360o Brain application and for the creative activities listed. Since some students may want to do a "creative" activity, you will also need some tablets with internet access to complete the activity.

360° BRAIN EDUCATION TOOL

The compounds in cannabis affect the same systems in the brain involved in brain development. Through the Pursue Your Passion experience, participants learn the facts on how cannabis affects each area of the brain, and what could potentially happen long term.

With this free [web application](#), participants will be able to access different parts of the brain and learn about what they do and the impact cannabis use can have on each one. It is important to stress that **frequent cannabis use can have a significant impact on adolescent brains**, as the brain is still developing up to the age of 25. Youth are especially vulnerable to the effects of cannabis on brain development and function.

We encourage educators to familiarize themselves with the platform before your session. In the session, educators will focus on the areas of the brain that affect our thinking,

planning and decision-making. During the session educators will cover the four sections in “Thinking & Planning.”

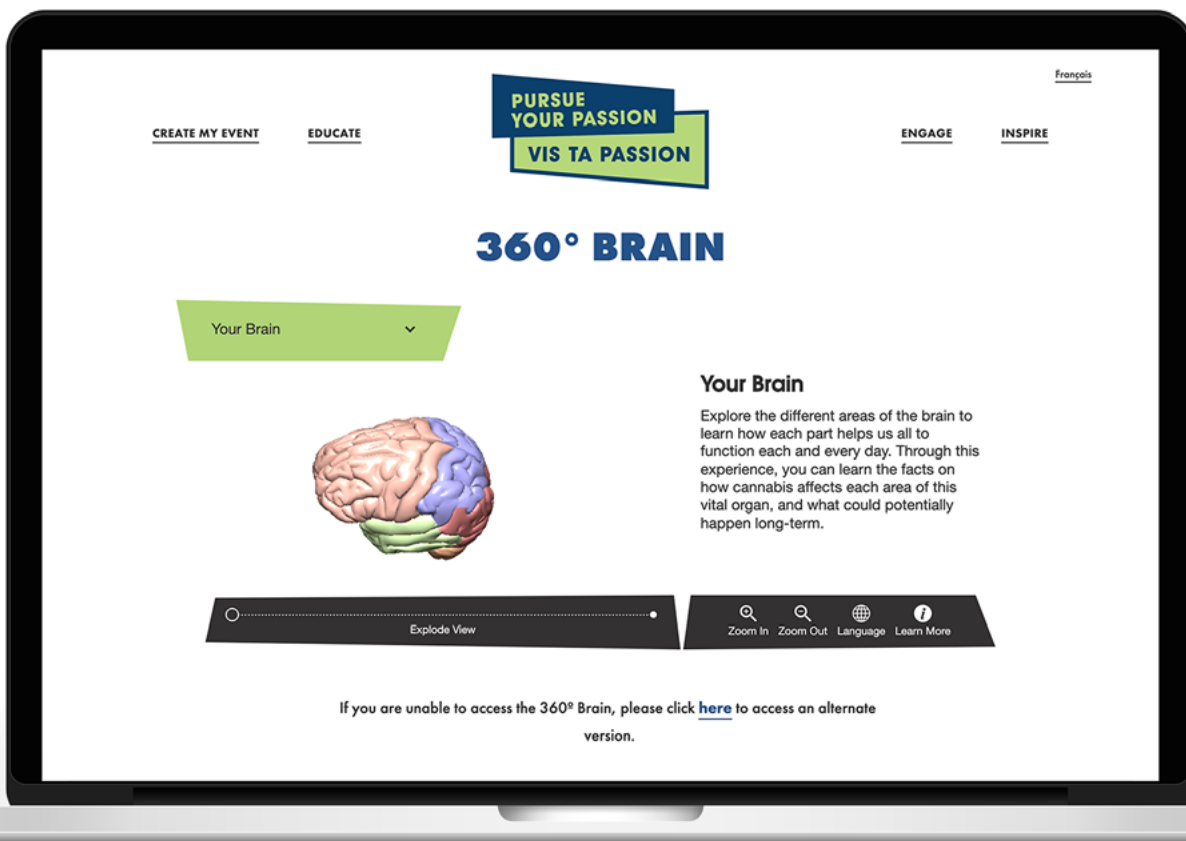
Tip for a better experience

Set up on a projector so multiple people can view the 360° Brain at one time.



Additional Resources

For a list of comprehensive cannabis resources, see [Talk about cannabis](#)





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SESSION GUIDE

Before getting started please ensure you have the following set up...

Legend

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Teacher's Speaking Points |  |
| Directions |  |

- The Pursue Your Passion slides are set up and visible to the students
- Students have access to a computer or tablet for creative activities (2 minute activity) and [360° Brain Education Tool](#)
- There is adequate space for students to perform physical activities (2 minute activity)
- You have access to a timer

SLIDE 1



Did you know that youth and young adults who consume cannabis, especially cannabis containing THC, are more likely to experience mental health problems?

This happens because cannabis can interfere with healthy brain development until your mid 20s.

Youth and young adults who use cannabis are more likely to experience long-term mental health problems including cannabis dependence or cannabis use disorder, anxiety, depression, and even schizophrenia in those who have a family history.



SLIDE 2



What is Pursue Your Passion? It's a campaign launched by Health Canada to educate you about risks of cannabis use on your mental health and brain function.

It's also about pursuing activities that can make you feel your best, without the potential health and safety risks of cannabis.



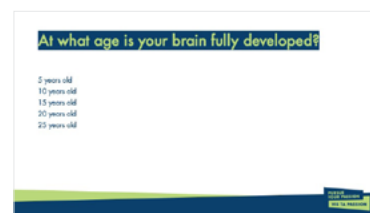
SLIDE 3



Let's start with a pop quiz:

At what age is your brain fully developed? 5 years old, 10 years old, 15 years old, 20 years old or 25 years old?

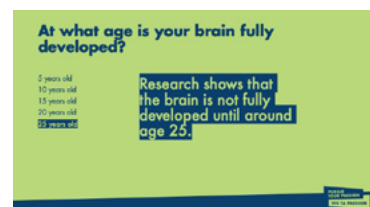
Ask students to shout out what they think the correct answer is. Submit the most popular answer on behalf of all the students.



SLIDE 4



The correct answer is 25 years old. Research shows that the brain is not fully developed until around age 25. Youth are especially vulnerable to the effects of cannabis on brain development and function. The earlier you start using cannabis, the more harm it can do to your health.

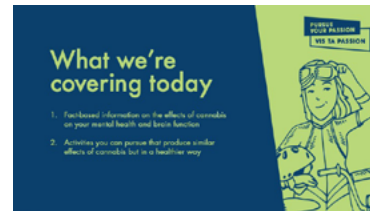


SLIDE 5



What we're covering today:

1. Fact-based information on the effects of cannabis to your mental health and brain function
2. How cannabis could make it harder for you to pursue the activities you love



SLIDE 6



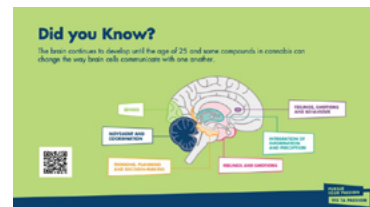
The brain continues to develop until the age of 25 and some compounds in cannabis can change the way brain cells communicate with one another.

Cannabis can impact different parts of the brain and can potentially impact the following long-term:

Your:

- > Senses;
- > Movement and coordination;
- > Thinking, planning and decision-making;
- > Feelings, emotion and behaviour;
- > Information and perception

Let's learn the facts on how cannabis affects each area of the brain, and what could potentially happen long term.



For more information visit:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-medication/cannabis/resources/cannabis-brain-know-facts.html>



SLIDE 7



Here we will explore the different areas of the brain to learn how each part helps us all to function each and every day.

In this exercise we will focus on the areas of the brain that affect our **thinking, planning and decision-making**.

You can also scan the QR to take a look at the brain yourself.



Click on the dropdown and take the students through the **Thinking & Planning** sections. Read the info for each of the four sections in **Thinking & Planning**



SLIDE 8

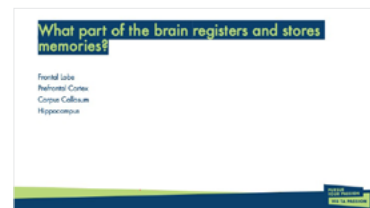


Pop quiz time...

What part of the brain registers and stores memories?

Frontal Lobe, Prefrontal Cortex, Corpus Callosum, or Hippocampus

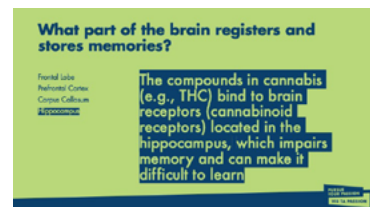
Ask students to shout out what they think the correct answer is. Submit the most popular answer on behalf of all the students.



SLIDE 9



The correct answer is Hippocampus. The compounds in cannabis (e.g., THC) bind to brain receptors (cannabinoid receptors) located in the hippocampus, which impairs memory and can make it difficult to learn.



SLIDE 10



It's important to remember that youth and young adults who consume cannabis, especially cannabis containing THC, are more likely to experience mental health problems. This happens because cannabis can interfere with healthy brain development until your mid 20s.



SLIDE 11



These are the short-term effects of using Cannabis

Affects mood and feelings – Cannabis use can cause feelings of euphoria and relaxation or anxiety and panic.

Makes it harder to learn and remember things – After using cannabis, you may have problems paying attention, remembering or learning things, and making decisions. Using cannabis can reduce your ability to perform well on the job or at school.

Impairs your ability to drive safely or operate equipment
– Driving is a complex task and requires the use of many areas of the brain. Cannabis can decrease your ability to react quickly, interferes with attention, and impairs coordination. If you know someone has consumed cannabis and intends to drive, do not get in a car with them.

Please consider a safer alternative to get yourself home.

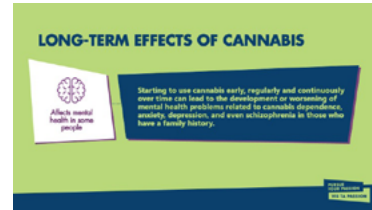
Call an Uber/ Lyft, taxi, or ask someone you trust to come and pick you up.



SLIDE 12



The long-term effects of using cannabis is that it affects mental health in some people. Starting to use cannabis early, and using it regularly and continuously over time makes you more likely to experience anxiety, depression, psychosis and schizophrenia.

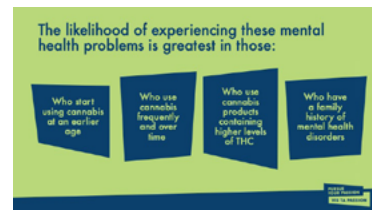


SLIDE 13



The likelihood of experiencing these mental health problems is greatest in those:

- > who starting using cannabis earlier in age
- > who use cannabis frequently and over time (i.e., daily or near daily)
- > who use cannabis products containing higher levels of THC (e.g., 30-90% THC often found in vape pens and other cannabis extract products for 'dabbing')
- > who have a family history of mental health disorders



SLIDE 14



There's evidence to suggest using cannabis can reduce the effect of medications that some may take for mental health problems (e.g., anxiety, depression) and can therefore limit your recovery potential. Evidence also shows that reducing or stopping cannabis use can help improve mental health.

Cannabis smoke contains similar chemicals found in tobacco smoke. Hence, smoking cannabis frequently increases risk of long-term harms to your heart and lungs.



SLIDE 15



Name a short-term or long-term risk of using cannabis

Ask students to shout out their answers



SLIDE 16



With everything we just learned about the effects of cannabis, we now understand that it can have an impact on pursuing the activities we love to do



SLIDE 17



Read the callout on the screen and ask students to just shout out their answers



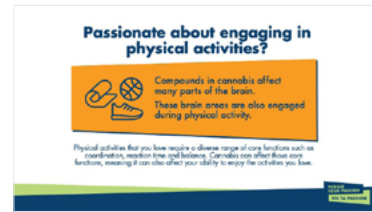
SLIDE 18



Compounds in cannabis affect many parts of the brain. These brain areas are also engaged during sports.

The brain stem controls breathing and heart rate, and the cerebellum, thalamus, basal ganglia and frontal lobe work together to control balance, coordination, movement, reaction time and decision-making.

Sports and activities you love require a diverse range of core functions such as coordination, reaction time and balance. Cannabis can affect those core functions, meaning your ability to enjoy the activities you love can be hampered. "



SLIDE 19



Read the callout on the screen and ask students to shout out their answers for each of the 6 options.



SLIDE 20



Some people turn to cannabis to relieve stress. Creating and listening to music can make you feel happy and decreases stress.



SLIDE 20 continued...



Producing and listening to music triggers the release of the “feel-good” chemical dopamine within the brain’s frontal-temporal lobes and decreases the stress-causing hormone, cortisol.

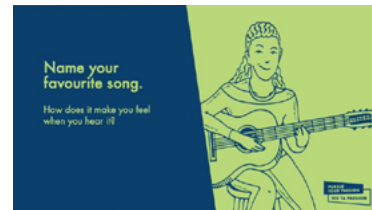
Cannabis can affect thinking and concentration (frontal lobe), mood (frontal lobe, amygdala), memory (hippocampus) and alertness (hypothalamus), which can all impact one’s ability to create (and be creative).



SLIDE 21



Read the callout on the screen and ask students to just shout out their answers



SLIDE 22



Some people turn to cannabis to relieve stress. Viewing and creating art can make you feel happy and decreases stress.

Similar to creating or listening to music...Viewing and creating art triggers the release of the “feel-good” chemical dopamine within the brain’s frontal-temporal lobes and decreases the stress causing hormone cortisol.

Cannabis can affect thinking and concentration (frontal lobe), mood (frontal lobe, amygdala), memory (hippocampus) and alertness (hypothalamus), which can all impact one’s ability to create (and be creative). “



SLIDE 23



Read the students the question and answers and have them shout out what they think the correct answer is. Then submit the most popular answer on behalf of all the students.



Engaging in a creative activity triggers the release of the "feel-good" chemical known as?

- Cortisol
- Organic
- Hypocampus
- Dopamine

SLIDE 24



(waiting on dopamine content from HC)

Engaging in a creative activity triggers the release of the "feel-good" chemical known as?

- Cortisol
- Dopamine**
- Hypocampus
- Neural lobe

Dopamine is an important brain chemical that results in feelings of happiness. It also plays a large part in how we learn, focus, and find things interesting.


SLIDE 25



Read the slide



So, let's Pursue Your Passion



PERSE
Pursue Your Passion
Live & Pursue

SLIDE 26



Choose either a physical activity or a creative activity. We will have a 2 minute challenge.

Read the instructions from the slide. Give the students about 1 minute to think about which activity they will participate in.



Set a two minute timer. When you are ready let the students know.



Ready, set, go!

Let the students know when there is one minute left...letting the physical activity participants know to move on to the next move.

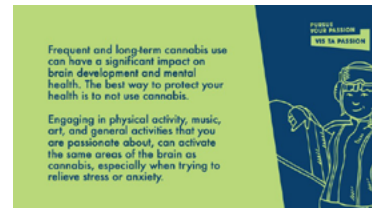


Allow the students to share how they feel.

SLIDE 27



Read the slide.



SLIDE 28



Read the slide. Link to FAQs and resources.

