

PURSUE YOUR PASSION

VIS TA PASSION

Pursue Your Passion is a campaign launched by Health Canada to educate youth about cannabis use and its risks to their mental health and brain function. It's also about pursuing activities that can make them feel their best, without the potential health and safety risks of cannabis use.

Did you know that North American teenagers use cannabis more frequently than any other teenagers in the world? Although it may feel like cannabis can help with mental health immediately after use, using it often can make a person feel worse over time. Youth are especially vulnerable to the effects of cannabis, as their brain isn't fully developed until around the age of 25 years old.

WHAT IS CANNABIS

Cannabis (weed, pot) is a drug that is often used for its effects on the mind, but it can also be used for medical, social, or religious purposes. The two most common chemicals in cannabis are THC and CBD. THC is the one that makes someone feel high and can harm brain development if it's used daily or near daily. CBD doesn't make someone feel high but can still have effects on the brain.

MENTAL HEALTH AND BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

Talking to your student/child about both the short and long-term effects of cannabis use can help them make informed choices. Depending on the method of use, short-term effects can be noticeable seconds or minutes after smoking or vaping cannabis, or within a few hours of ingesting it. These effects can last for up to 12 hours. Long-term effects develop gradually, over time, especially with daily or near daily use that continues over months or years.

Short-term effects:

- Affects the way someone thinks and feels
- Makes it harder to learn and remember things
- Makes it dangerous to drive
- May impact performance in physical activities

Long-term effects: Though some people use cannabis when they feel stressed, anxious or depressed, research shows that using cannabis on a daily or near daily basis does not improve these symptoms over time and can instead worsen mental health issues.

The likelihood of experiencing mental health issues is greater in those who:

- Start using cannabis at an earlier age
- Use cannabis daily or near daily and over months or years
- Use cannabis products containing higher levels of THC
- Have a family history of mental health disorders

People under 25 are more likely to experience harm from cannabis use, especially daily or near daily use, because the brain continues to develop until around the age of 25.



PURSUE YOUR PASSION

VIS TA PASSION

WAYS OF USE

There are many ways to use cannabis, and each carries its own set of risks. The three most common methods of use are listed below.

Smoking: Smoking is the most common and the most harmful way to use cannabis, especially to the lungs.

Vaping: While all forms of cannabis can harm mental health, vaping cannabis extracts can be particularly harmful, since extracts have the highest levels of THC.

Eating and drinking: Also known as edible cannabis, comes in many forms such as drinks, and baked goods.

The effects from edible cannabis are delayed and can feel particularly strong. This is because THC is broken down in the liver first and made into a stronger form of THC before reaching the brain. It's important to know that it can take up to 4 hours to feel the full effects from eating and drinking cannabis.

ADDICTION AND STIGMA

Contrary to popular belief, people can become addicted to cannabis. Daily or near daily cannabis use can cause physical dependency and addiction. This can negatively impact mental health and other areas of life like school, and relationships. Addiction is not a choice, it's a treatable medical condition, and it is possible to get better. Stigma around addiction is harmful because it can make a person feel lonely and make it harder for them to get help. That's why it's important your student/child knows they should treat everyone nicely and with respect, no matter what their situation is.

PEER PRESSURE

Feeling pressured by friends to try cannabis is common. Talking to your student/child about peer pressure ahead of time can help them be ready to respond and do what's best for them.

ILLEGAL CANNABIS

Although cannabis is legal in Canada, not all cannabis is legal. This means there are still illegal products that some people may use. Legal cannabis products follow strict packaging regulations to protect youth. If cannabis packaging is multi-coloured or resembles a popular snack or food brand, it is illegal and may be harmful to consume.

DOES YOUR STUDENT/CHILD HAVE A PASSION?

Does your student/child have a Passion?

The effects of cannabis can have an impact on pursuing the activities your student or child may love to do. Having passions is important as it can help build identity, confidence, and purpose. It's important to keep an open dialogue with your student/child about cannabis use and how it can impact their lives and passions.



Viewing and making art can make people feel happy and decrease stress. This is because viewing and making art triggers the release of "feel-good" chemicals and decreases the stress-causing hormones in the brain.



Cannabis can affect thinking, concentration, mood, memory, and alertness, all of which can impact the ability to learn and perform music. Producing and listening to music triggers the release of "feel-good" chemicals and decreases the stress-causing hormones in the brain.



Physical activities require a diverse range of core functions such as coordination, reaction time and balance. Cannabis can affect these core functions, meaning it can also affect the ability to enjoy the activities you love. Exercise can help alleviate feelings of anxiety and depression, and even help prevent mental health disorders from ever developing.