



Reflect and discuss

# Is marijuana bad for your brain?



## Activity steps

1. Ask participants what they know about cannabis (aka marijuana) and some of the risks involved in using it.
2. Watch the **Is marijuana bad for your brain? video**.
3. Walk through the **Is marijuana bad for your brain? handout**.
4. In pairs, small groups or as a larger group, reflect on the questions below.

## Reflect and discuss

According to the video, youth under 25 are at higher risk for cannabis-related problems. This is because they have more cannabinoid receptors in their white matter, the part of the brain responsible for communication, learning, memory and emotions.

- To what degree are communication, learning, memory and emotions important in the daily life of a young person? Give examples.

The video says frequent cannabis use (e.g., daily or almost daily) can damage long-term learning ability and problem-solving.

- What are some common problems that young people face and must address?
- What happens when a person is unable to solve or manage their problems? Give examples.

Cannabis use can cause hallucinations or paranoid delusions (cannabis-induced psychosis). It can also unmask a persistent psychotic disorder in youth with a family history of schizophrenia or related disorders.

- How much do you know about your family's physical and mental health history?
- What could you do to learn more?

Tolerance develops with repeated use of cannabis or other drugs, meaning more and more is needed to feel its effects.

- What are some of the risks of increasing the amount of cannabis used?
- What are some strategies for preventing tolerance?



Reflect and discuss

# Is marijuana bad for your brain?



Cannabis use carries no risk of overdose or life-threatening withdrawal, even after long-term use.

- On a scale of 1-10, how important is overdose risk to young people? What makes you think that?
- On a scale of 1-10, how much do youth consider withdrawal when using substances? What makes you say that?

Cannabis withdrawal may include sleep disturbances, irritability and depressed mood for a couple of weeks

- How does cannabis withdrawal compare to other substances?
- Have you ever quit something (e.g., caffeine, social media) and then experienced withdrawal? If so, what was it like? How did you manage your symptoms?
- How could you help someone experiencing withdrawal symptoms?

## Take it a step further!

Create a pamphlet or other harm reduction resource based on what you learned in the activity.