



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.

Take it a step further!

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

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?



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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?

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?