

The
SOLUTION *source*
Thunder Bay Counselling Newsletter
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For You & Your Family

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CANNABIS

**KNOWN AS CANNABIS, WEED, POT, MARIJUANA, AND SO ON.
YOU KNOW ALL ITS NAMES, BUT DO YOU KNOW HOW IT CAN AFFECT YOU?**

The hush about hash is over and it is now important to learn about the benefits and potential problems of cannabis. Learn about how this new legalization can affect your life from home to work.

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Centre de counselling familial de Timmins Inc.
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CANNABIS BREAKDOWN

Cannabis is a plant that contains hundreds of chemical substances. Chemicals called cannabinoids have effects on the cells in the brain and body, changing the way they communicate. THC and CBD are some of the most researched cannabinoids.

THC:

- What makes you “high”
- Can be therapeutic
- Can have harmful effects

The strength of cannabis is determined by its level of THC and is shown as a percentage (%). The higher the percentage the more harmful its effects can be.

CBD:

- Does not produce a high
- Has been found to lower the effects of THC
- Can be therapeutic

Cannabis with lower than 0.03% of THC is considered hemp. This product can have beneficial therapeutic effects without the physical effects of THC.

The effects of cannabis use can be both positive or negative and last both short and long term.

SHORT TERM:

- Euphoria, relaxation
- Heightened senses
- Confusion, anxiety
- Fatigue
- Impaired memory, concentration and reaction time

LONG TERM:

- Shortened memory
- Lower concentration ability
- Slower ability to think/make decision
- Women with children can affect their child's development if using during pregnancy or breast feeding.

Use of cannabis can additionally increase the risk of mental health issues including depression, anxiety disorders, psychosis, and schizophrenia. These risks are especially high for young users, frequent users, or users who have a personal/family history. ■

Information from Health Canada - “Health effects of cannabis”, Health Canada - “Cannabis and its components”



FACTS FOR ONTARIO



Publicly you can only carry 30 grams at one time.



Recreational cannabis can only be legally purchased from the Ontario Cannabis Store.



It is illegal to drive impaired, this includes cannabis.



When travelling within Canada you must adhere to the laws in that province or territory



It is illegal to bring cannabis across the Canadian border, both leaving the country and returning. This includes if it is to/from an area where cannabis is legal.

Information from Health Canada - "Cannabis and the border", Government of Ontario - Cannabis Legalization Section 3

CANNABIS AND THE WORKPLACE

Recreational cannabis has no place in the workplace.



Using recreational cannabis in the workplace is illegal. Intoxication can last hours after consumption, so it is important not to use before working as well. Employees who are unable or unfit to work can be a hazard to their entire workplace. Not only do employees have a responsibility to ensure they are sober at work but also have a duty to report any hazards to their supervisor or employer under the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

Employers have the right to set policies for non-medical use cannabis. This includes prohibiting use during working hours and coming to work intoxicated. Employers also have the duty to accommodate employees who use medical cannabis as they would for any other employee who been prescribed medication. Employers are still required to address all workplace hazards under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. ■

Information from Government of Ontario - Cannabis Legalization Section 7



YOUTH USE

The younger someone begins to use cannabis, the higher the risk of negative effects including mental health issues, dependency problems, and physical health problems, especially if consumed through smoking. According to a 2017 publication by the Canadian Pediatric Society, Canadian youth are ranked first for cannabis use among 43 countries. Although the legal age to purchase cannabis in Ontario is 19, there are still many teens under this age who are using.

“I definitely see it as the main substance,” said Lauren Burrell a Youth Outreach and Addiction counsellor from Thunder Bay Counselling in an interview with the Solution Source. Youth who use under the age of 16 have an even higher risk of negative effects. Adolescents have a higher risk as their brains and bodies are still developing. With the new legalization on all minds, now is a good time for guardians to talk to youth about drugs, suggests Burrell.

“There seems to be this general normalization. [Teens] don’t see it as a serious drug that they are using or a harmful drug. There is a lack of understanding and education.”

Curiosity about cannabis in youth is important to be met with education to ensure they have the knowledge to make positive choices about using, adds Burrell.

“Those that use it almost daily are often using to cope with depression symptoms, anxiety symptoms, and to help regulate their emotions. I also see them using it a lot for sleep. Mostly self-medicating.”

If parents or guardians are concerned that their teen has a dependency, having a conversation is the best way to help, said Burrell ■

HAVE THE CONVERSATION

Having open conversations about drugs can help teens feel comfortable to ask questions or continue the conversation in the future. “Talking to your kids about drugs and alcohol is not a one-time event,” says Drug Free Kids Canada. For more information on how to talk to your teens about drugs or what to do if you suspect they are using visit:

www.drugfreekidscanada.org ■

ADDICTION

Like with alcohol, not all who use cannabis become addicted. There are causes behind addictive behavior. Issues such as abuse, neglect, loss, pain, depression and any other difficult life situations are commonly tied to substance use. If you want to make a change in your use, reach out to a loved one for support and to community support services. You are not alone. ■

**Helping people
is what we're all about.**

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