

GET THE FACTS ABOUT MARIJUANA

Talking Points for Parents



Public Health
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Kanabec County Community Health



DID YOU KNOW? Talk to your kids about the facts.

Research has shown that although it may seem like kids aren't listening — they really are. Parents are role models for kids and their views on alcohol, tobacco, other drugs and mental health can strongly influence how they think about them. Make talking about drugs and mental health a part of your general health and safety conversations — starting as early as elementary age and continuing on from there.

MARIJUANA IS NOT A HARMLESS DRUG FOR TEENS

The teen brain is still developing until the mid-to-late 20s and marijuana can interfere with this development. The amount of the main mind-altering chemical, THC, is considerably stronger than previous years, as it's been modified to have increased effects. Products popular with teen users like oils (in vape carts) and edibles often contain an average of 50% to 90% THC. In contrast, leaf marijuana in the 1990's averaged 4% THC.

TEENS ARE AT HIGHER RISK FOR ADDICTION

Because the teen brain is still developing, early use of marijuana is more likely to lead to addiction, compared to those who wait until they are adults. Research shows that 1 in 6 individuals who start using marijuana in their teens will become addicted to the drug. In addition, the increasing strength of marijuana is leading to higher rates of addiction and mental health concerns.

YOUNG PEOPLE MAY NOT CONSIDER MARIJUANA USE A RISKY BEHAVIOR

The good news - when teens know how drugs can harm them, their use goes down. The bad news - fewer students see marijuana use as risky. According to the 2022 MN Student Survey, Kanabec County students believe that people are least likely to be at risk of harm using marijuana, compared to the use of alcohol, prescription drugs, cigarettes, and e-cigarettes. It is important to know the risks of use and teach your teens.

AVOID SCARE TACTICS

When discussing reasons to avoid marijuana with your teens, it's best to avoid using scare tactics. Many young people, especially teens, know friends or celebrities who use marijuana and seem successful, so it's crucial to stick to the facts.

YOUR TEEN MAY ASK IF YOU HAVE USED MARIJUANA

A brief, honest answer may help the child feel comfortable talking with you about drug use issues. Try to avoid giving your child more information than they asked for. Rather, a general discussion of drug use scenarios may be more helpful. If you have never used marijuana, share why it didn't interest you.

MOST TEENS ARE MAKING HEALTHY CHOICES

Most Kanabec County students do not use marijuana. However, there is a significant disconnect between this reality and the perceptions student have. Students report they believe that more of their peers use than what is actually reported. *This misconception can contribute to social pressures to use.*

For example, Teen: "Everyone my age drives a new car", Parent/Adult: "Is that really accurate?" In fact not "everyone" nor most teens drive a "new" car. This is the same type of perception that can lead to social pressures to use substances or partake in risky behavior.

RESOURCES



www.better2gether.me



Source: 2022 Minnesota Student Survey; Partnership to End Addiction; NIDA; SAMSHA.