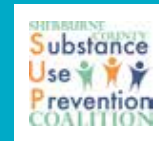


PREVENTING UNDERAGE MARIJUANA USE

Talking Points for Parents



TALK EARLY
TALK OFTEN

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

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% up to 90% THC. In contrast, leaf marijuana in the 1990's averaged 4% THC.

MARIJUANA IS LINKED TO SCHOOL FAILURE.

Marijuana has a negative effect on attention, concentration, learning, and memory. Regular use is linked to lower grades, increased absences, and a higher likelihood of dropping out of school.

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.

MANY YOUNG PEOPLE DO 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, Sherburne 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. Know the risks and teach your teens.

MOST TEENS ARE MAKING HEALTHY CHOICES.

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

YOUR CHILD MAY ASK IF YOU HAVE USED MARIJUANA BEFORE.

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.

YOU ARE ROLE MODELS FOR YOUR CHILDREN.

Be aware of how you use and talk about drugs in front of your kids. They learn by watching you.

YOU ARE THE MOST POWERFUL INFLUENCE IN YOUR CHILD'S LIFE.

Even when children reach their teen years, they still care about what parents say. If your teen knows you don't approve of drug use, they won't want to disappoint you. Talk early and often about the risks, set clear expectations and rules about drug use, and enforce reasonable consequences for breaking the rules. Visit the Sherburne County SUP website for additional resources to help start or continue conversations at www.sherburnesupcoalition.org.

YOU CAN TAKE ACTION IF YOU THINK YOUR TEEN IS USING MARIJUANA.

There are numerous resources, many right in your community, where you can take action if you think your teen is using marijuana. Consult your local school, healthcare facility, or community service organization. Access various community resources at www.stirmn.org/resources.

Scan for SUP Website



GET THE FACTS ABOUT MARIJUANA

Tips for Teens



1. Marijuana affects your brain. Your brain is still developing until your mid-to-late 20s and marijuana can interfere with this development. Using marijuana can affect your memory, learning, concentration, and attention.



2. Marijuana limits your performance. Marijuana affects timing, movement, and coordination, which can harm athletic performance and increase your risk of injuries.



3. Marijuana impairs driving. Driving while impaired by any substance, including marijuana, is dangerous and illegal. Marijuana negatively affects several skills required for safe driving, like reaction time, coordination, and concentration.

4. Marijuana affects your mental health. Regular marijuana use has been linked with depression, anxiety, and an increased risk of psychosis or schizophrenia.



5. Marijuana is addictive.

Because your brain is still growing, 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 amount of the main mind-altering chemical, THC, is considerably stronger than previous years, leading to higher rates of addiction and mental health concerns.

6. Life has many challenges.

Show others you're strong enough to face them without alcohol and other drugs. Learn how to cope in healthy ways at www.sherburnesupcoalition.org/studentresources.



7. Most teens are making healthy choices.

In a typical month, **most** students that attend a high school in Sherburne County **do not** use marijuana. When teens realize that not as many of their peers use as they thought, they are less likely to use.



8. Reach out for help.

No problem is too big or too small. There are numerous resources where you can get information and help. Talk with your school counselor, teacher, healthcare provider, or another trusted adult. Access a variety of community resources at www.stirmn.org/resources. Treatment can help you, a friend, or someone you love get back to the person you or they once were.

