



# #9959 MARIJUANA EXPOSED

HUMAN RELATIONS MEDIA, 2000

Grade Level: 6-12

17 mins.

2 Instructional Graphics Enclosed

## DESCRIPTION

Personal experiences with marijuana support the information presented about this "safe, harmless" drug. Discusses its chemical makeup, the effects of THC (tetrahydrocannabinol), and the "I-don't-care" attitude that marijuana produces. Counselors, users, and former users share their experiences with this drug known also as weed, pot, and grass.

## ACADEMIC STANDARDS

### Subject Area: Health

- Standard: Understands aspects of substance use and abuse
  - ♦ Benchmark: Knows the short- and long-term consequences of the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs (e.g., physical consequences such as shortness of breath, cirrhosis, lung cancer, emphysema; psychological consequences such as low self-esteem, paranoia, depression, apathy; social consequences such as crime, domestic violence, loss of friends) (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 1-4 and 6.)
  - ♦ Benchmark: Knows influences that promote alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use (e.g., peer pressure, peer and adult modeling, advertising, overall availability, cost) (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 5.)
  - ♦ Benchmark: Knows ways to avoid, recognize, and respond to negative social influences and pressure to use alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs (e.g., refusal skills, self-control) (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 7.)

## INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

1. To identify the physical damage caused by marijuana.
2. To explain the impact of delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) on the user.
3. To explore the concept of marijuana dependency and psychological addiction.
4. To show how using marijuana can affect a person's well-being and destroy a person's ambitions and goals.
5. To illustrate why marijuana is called a "gateway drug."
6. To identify the ways in which marijuana causes problems with friends and family.
7. To discuss refusal skills.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Marijuana, or cannabis sativa, is the most widely used illegal drug in the United States. It is easily available across the country, in both urban and rural areas. For teens and even pre-teens, marijuana is the illegal drug of choice today. Although marijuana use among young people was down from 1970 to 1992, the trend reversed in 1993. Since then, this "natural" drug has steadily gained in popularity. According to the 1999 "Monitoring the Future" study, at least 17 percent of eighth graders have experimented with marijuana, and a startling 38 percent of high school seniors have tried pot at least once.

## VOCABULARY

- |                           |                    |                 |
|---------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1. addicted               | 7. cannabis sativa | 14. neurons     |
| 2. amotivational syndrome | 8. depression      | 15. pot         |
| 3. bloodshot              | 9. emphysema       | 16. serotonin   |
| 4. bronchitis             | 10. formaldehyde   | 17. side effect |
| 5. burnout                | 11. hemp           | 18. THC         |
| 6. cancer                 | 12. joint          | 19. tar         |
|                           | 13. marijuana      | 20. weed        |

## BEFORE SHOWING

1. Discuss drug use. List various drugs and their effects. Discuss the popularity of marijuana and how many people think it is safe. Discuss why people use marijuana.
2. Discuss what happens as a result of a "whatever" or "who cares" kind of attitude. Share personal examples of times you have had this attitude. How did it affect your life?

## DURING SHOWING

1. View the video more than once, with one showing uninterrupted.
2. Stop the video after the presentation of the question "Why take risks by smoking marijuana?" Discuss the question.

## AFTER SHOWING

### Discussion Items and Questions

1. Why do people think marijuana is safe and harmless?
2. What nicknames does marijuana have?
3. What plant is marijuana from? How is marijuana taken?
4. How many chemicals are in a marijuana joint? Which chemical is responsible for the "high" feeling?
5. Name the side effects of THC.
6. What determines how much THC is in a marijuana joint? What other things are sometimes added to the marijuana? Why?
7. How does today's marijuana compare to marijuana from the 1960s?
8. Explain how smoking marijuana is worse than smoking cigarettes.

9. What lung problems can smoking marijuana cause?
10. How does marijuana affect a person's short-term memory?
11. What does THC do in the brain? What can this cause over time?
12. Why do people smoke marijuana?
13. What are some of the general effects of marijuana?
14. Describe Chris's experience of getting arrested in New York City.
15. Why do many marijuana smokers develop a dependency on marijuana? How does marijuana's effect on the brain play into this psychological addiction?
16. Why do some marijuana users try other drugs?
17. What will you say if someone asks you to try marijuana?

### **Applications and Activities**

1. Complete the worksheet "Marijuana: How Much Do You Know?" (See INSTRUCTIONAL GRAPHICS.) Correct the papers, and discuss the information.
2. Research one of the topics below, and write a brief paper on the findings.
  - a. Marijuana and the law. What are the laws regarding the sale and possession of marijuana? What is the punishment if you are caught? How long does it stay on your record?
  - b. The gateway connection. Is marijuana really a gateway drug that leads to other drug use? Develop an opinion and support it with researched facts.
  - c. THC and the brain. What is THC? How does THC work inside the brain? Can a marijuana smoker determine how much THC he or she is consuming?
  - d. Addiction. Is marijuana physically addictive? Psychologically addictive? Why are marijuana users often less motivated and less successful? Explain the addiction and emotional burnout.
  - e. A natural substance. Investigate if marijuana is a safe natural substance. Does it have carcinogens? What other substances are often added to marijuana?
  - f. Medicinal usage. Investigate the medical uses of marijuana. What is the latest news on legalizing marijuana for medical uses? How does the FDA evaluate a drug's safety?
3. Complete a "Peer Pressure Self-Assessment." Discuss the questions at the bottom when all are done. (See INSTRUCTIONAL GRAPHICS.)
4. Role-play scenarios about marijuana. Use these or develop your own.
  - a. You are in a local theater group. You admire the lead actor. Just before the show on opening night, you see him rolling a joint. He says it gets rid of stage fright and offers you some.
  - b. The season's biggest party is approaching. You and your closest friend are in charge. Your friend tells you that everyone is contributing \$15 each to buy some pot for the party. You don't think you need drugs to have fun.
  - c. Last week you and a friend smoked a marijuana joint for the first time. You didn't enjoy it. Now your friend wants you to smoke with her again. She's sure you will like it better this time. You don't want to try again.
5. Invent a new slang word for marijuana products. Consider making it clear with your word choice that marijuana is a cancer-causing poison.
6. Brainstorm a list of reasons why people decide to experiment with marijuana or other drugs.

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- a. Choose three reasons from the list.
- b. Write ways to react to each situation, or solve each problem without experimenting with drugs.
7. Write two goals you would like to achieve in the next year. Choose goals that could become reality.
  - a. For each goal, create a list of things to do to reach that goal.
  - b. When done, discuss how marijuana might affect your ability to fulfill each goal. Consider the specific impact that marijuana could have on your success.
  - c. The cost of the drug.
  - d. The psychological dependence.
  - e. The loss of ambition.
  - f. The risk of arrest.
8. Discuss and practice specific refusal skills.
9. Discuss positive role models. Answer the following questions:
  - a. Who do you consider a role model in your own life? How has she or he affected you?
  - b. What makes a person a good role model?
  - c. Do you think that anyone considers you to be a role model?
  - d. If someone looks up to you, what kind of behavior might he or she imitate? Give examples of your positive behaviors and also your negative behaviors.
  - e. Would you like to make any changes to become a better role model? What changes, and why?
10. Brainstorm a list of words that describe a "pothead." Evaluate the list. Put an "x" next to any characteristics you think are good ones to cultivate.
11. In small groups, work on media literacy issues.
  - a. Give examples of how movies, music groups, and popular media figures try to glorify marijuana so that it will be viewed by the public in a more acceptable light.
  - b. Create a media campaign (with posters, songs, video, etc.) which will help your peers, as well as younger students, learn to resist popular myths about marijuana.
12. Create a poster that shows the effects of marijuana on the mouth, throat, stomach, lungs, liver, heart, brain, and reproductive organs. Present the poster to a younger class.
13. Invent and write a story about someone who got in trouble because he or she was with a friend or "helped" a friend who was using drugs.

### SUMMARY

This program reveals to middle school students the unhealthy effects and very real dangers of marijuana use. Through plain-language narration by teen hosts and interviews with young people, marijuana is exposed as an illegal drug that damages the body as well as the mind with the powerful chemical THC. By investigating real-life accounts of the health, personal, legal, and family consequences caused by marijuana use, the video reinforces the message that marijuana use is detrimental to a young person's social growth and personal development as well as their

## C a p t i o n e d M e d i a P r o g r a m

general health. The program effectively dispels the myth prevalent among many young people that marijuana is not harmful because it is "organic" and "natural."

### CMP RELATED RESOURCES

- *Stand Up for Yourself: Peer Pressure and Drugs* #2231
- *The Teen Files Flipped: The Reality of Drug Use* #9924
- *THC* #8922
- *Think Twice: Marijuana & Cancer* #9963

### World Wide Web



The following Web sites complement the contents of this guide; they were selected by professionals who have experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students. Every effort was made to select accurate, educationally relevant, and "kid safe" sites. However, teachers should preview them before use. The U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Captioned Media Program do not endorse the sites and are not responsible for their content.

#### • PARENTS - THE ANTIDRUG

<http://www.theantidrug.com/marijuana/>

Marijuana puts kids at risk. It is the most widely used illicit drug among youth today and is more potent than ever. On the left-hand menu bar, choose from "Facts," "Kids & Marijuana," "The Discussion," "Quiz," "The Business of Marijuana," or "Marijuana Resource Page."



#### • MARIJUANA: FACTS FOR TEENS

<http://www.nida.nih.gov/MarijBroch/Marijteens.html>

What is marijuana? Are there different kinds? What happens if you smoke marijuana? These and many more questions are answered in language that is simple yet clear for the average middle school student. Version for parents and in Spanish to the right of the Web page.

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- **HOWSTUFFWORKS 3HOW MARIJUANA WORKS2**

<http://www.howstuffworks.com/marijuana.htm>

Marijuana comes from the Cannabis sativa plant and is the most commonly used illicit drug in the United States. Read about how THC affects your body, the marijuana plant, potency, usage and much more information. All blue text is linked to other pages.



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- **MEDICAL MARIJUANA USE**

<http://www.edjohnston.com/edsci/prop215.htm>

Read an editorial comment about Proposition 215, the legal medical marijuana use law. Contrast this with the controversial use of marijuana by teens and adults illegally. Article written in 1999 when the medical marijuana law was first proposed in California.

## INSTRUCTIONAL GRAPHICS

- MARIJUANA: HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW?
- PEER PRESSURE SELF-ASSESSMENT



Name \_\_\_\_\_



## **Marijuana: How Much Do You Know?**

**Directions:** For each of the statements below, circle either “True” or “False.”

- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| 1. Marijuana is safe because it is natural.                | True/False |
| 2. You cannot overdose on marijuana.                       | True/False |
| 3. It only takes a little bit of marijuana to get high.    | True/False |
| 4. Marijuana enhances sensations.                          | True/False |
| 5. Marijuana changes your sense of time and space.         | True/False |
| 6. Marijuana is not addictive.                             | True/False |
| 7. Marijuana cigarettes are safer than tobacco cigarettes. | True/False |
| 8. Marijuana makes you more mature.                        | True/False |
| 9. Marijuana harms your reproductive system.               | True/False |

## Marijuana: How Much Do You Know?

### Answer Key

**1. Marijuana is safe because it is natural.**

**FALSE!** Since when are natural things safe? What about poison ivy and quicksand? If you think that marijuana is “all-natural,” think again! It has been carefully cultivated to be much more potent than it once was, and it may be cut with all kinds of harmful chemicals, including cocaine, PCP, or even embalming fluid.

**2. You cannot overdose on marijuana.**

**FALSE!** This is a dangerous misconception. In very large doses, marijuana can cause a person to fall into a coma. Also, taking marijuana with other drugs can be fatal.

**3. It only takes a little bit of marijuana to get high.**

**FALSE!** Many people report that they do not get high the first time they try marijuana. Once a person starts using marijuana regularly, he or she develops a tolerance to the drug—a need for more of the drug to achieve the same affect.

**4. Marijuana enhances sensations.**

**FALSE!** Studies prove that marijuana does not enhance sensations of touch, hearing, or sight.

**5. Marijuana changes your sense of time and space.**

**TRUE!** The distortion of reality can be so severe that the user can suffer a panic attack.

**6. Marijuana is not addictive.**

**FALSE!** Marijuana is very addictive psychologically. One-third of all marijuana users become daily users within three to five years. According to the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information, “Long-term users of cannabis may develop psychological dependence and require more of the drug to get the same effect. The drug can become the center of their lives.”

**7. Marijuana cigarettes are safer than tobacco cigarettes.**

**FALSE!** Marijuana contains more carcinogens (cancer-causing agents) than tobacco. One marijuana cigarette produces the same lung damage and cancer risk as five cigarettes and contains as much tar as 14 tobacco cigarettes. In addition, tobacco mixed with marijuana does more damage than either one alone.

**8. Marijuana makes you more mature.**

**FALSE!** Marijuana use has been clinically associated with failure to grow and mature both emotionally and physically. It can affect the brain’s ability to retain information.

**9. Marijuana harms your reproductive system.**

**TRUE!** It lowers the level of testosterone in males and interferes with a woman’s menstrual cycle. One study showed that regular marijuana use in males may cause irregular sperm cells.



## Peer Pressure Self-Assessment

**Directions:** Read the following questions, and answer them honestly. The purpose of this exercise is to give you a chance to think about how susceptible you are to peer pressure. There are no right or wrong answers. You will not have to share your answers with anyone.

### Have you ever . . .

### Yes / No

1. Bought certain clothes because your friends wore the same thing? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Joined a club or athletic team mainly because you wanted to hang out with your friends? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Stolen something because a friend dared you? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Joined in as your friends made fun of someone outside your group? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Stayed out past your curfew because you didn't want your friends to think you were a baby? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Started watching a specific television series because everyone at school was talking about the character? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Taken a sip (or puff, or snort) of something that could get you in trouble just because your friend offered it to you? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Ignored a family obligation because you promised your friends you'd hang out with them? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Pulled a prank or hurt someone's feelings in order to make your friends laugh? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Decided to do something unusual in the hope that you would impress your friends? \_\_\_\_\_

### How many times did you answer "yes"?

### TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

### Interpreting your score:

Reread the questions to which you answered "yes." What do they tell you about your decision? Do you let others influence what you want to do? Is it very important to you that your friends are impressed by you? What are your limits for what you will do to be accepted? Do you expect others to impress you? Have you set fair guidelines for what a friend is?