

UNDERSTANDING MARIJUANA

WHAT'S THE HARM WITH USING MARIJUANA?

- There are both short and long-term effects of marijuana/cannabis use in youth.
 - **Short term:** distorted perceptions, memory impairment, difficulty with thinking and problem-solving, euphoria, anxiety, hallucinations, paranoia, delayed reaction time and coordination.
 - **Long term:** Impaired brain development (impacting attention, memory, multi-tasking, cognition, learning, and motivation), increased risk/prevalence of mental health disorders, increased presence of respiratory ailments, cardiac impairments.

WHAT ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH?

Many people use marijuana to cope with mental health or to escape problems, however, it can actually make mental health worse over time. Specifically in youth:

- Marijuana has been associated with anxiety, depression, and suicidality, and can make managing these conditions and feelings more difficult.
- Using marijuana during adolescence can increase the risk of developing cannabis use disorder and psychotic disorders like schizophrenia, especially for those who are already vulnerable.

WANT TO QUIT?

- Quitting use of marijuana can feel difficult, but it is **not** impossible.
- If you've been using marijuana regularly, you might feel some withdrawal symptoms when you stop, but those feelings usually don't last forever.
- Practice healthy coping skills and refusal skills.
- Engage in healthy activities that you enjoy.

RESOURCES

- **Massachusetts Substance Use Helpline:** 1-(800)-327-5050; www.helplinema.org
- **Boston Children's ASAP Program:** (617)-355-2727; ASAP@childrens.harvard.edu
- **SAMHSA's National Helpline:** 1-(800)-662-HELP (4357)
- **Walpole Prevention Coalition:** www.walpolepreventioncoalition.com

