



Transforming lives

Preventing Underage Marijuana Use Key Messages and Talking Points

Messages to Parents

- **It's not ok to share marijuana with children who are under the age of 21.** Just like alcohol, marijuana is illegal for anyone under the age of 21. Just like alcohol, it is illegal for adults to provide marijuana to anyone under the age of 21. Possessing more than 40 grams of marijuana, regardless of age, is also illegal.
- **Marijuana is linked to school failure.** Because the teen brain is still developing, marijuana has a negative effect on attention, motivation, memory and learning. Students who use marijuana tend to get lower grades and are more likely to drop out of school. (<http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/marijuana-facts-parents-need-to-know/want-to-know-more-some-faqs-about-marijuana>).
- **Teens are at higher risk for addiction.** During 2013, 72% of Washington youth (12-17) who entered publicly-funded addiction treatment listed marijuana as their primary drug (DSHS/BHSIA). The estimated public cost for their treatment was \$7.6 million. 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. One in four adults who started using an addictive substance before the age of 18 is now addicted (<http://www.casacolumbia.org/addiction-research/reports/adolescent-substance-use>).
- **Know the risks and teach your teens.** 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. One in five Washington 10th graders uses marijuana regularly, and only one in four sees little or no risk in doing this ([2012 Washington State Health Youth Survey-HYS](#)).
- **Most teens are making healthy choices.** Although teens think everyone is using marijuana, the fact is that most teen don't. About one in five 10th graders, and one in four 12th graders, uses marijuana regularly (HYS). When teens know that not using marijuana is the norm, they are more likely to "fit in" with the crowd by not using it.
- **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 rules against drug use, and enforce reasonable consequences for breaking the rules. Get tips for talking with your teens at www.StartTalkingNow.org.
- **Take action if you think your teen is using marijuana.** Talk to your school's counselor, or for free, confidential referrals to help in your area, call the [Washington Recovery Help Line](#) at 1-866-789-1511.

Messages to Teens

- **Marijuana – It’s Not So Natural.** Marijuana has more than 400 chemicals, including THC. The average potency of THC has increased dramatically since the 1980s. Spread the facts. Visit www.abovetheinfluence.com.
- **Marijuana – It’s Not Popular.** Four out of five Washington 10th graders do NOT use marijuana. Spread the facts. Visit www.abovetheinfluence.com.
- **Marijuana – It Impairs Driving.** Marijuana is the most common illegal drug involved in auto fatalities. Spread the facts. Visit www.abovetheinfluence.com.
- **Marijuana – It Limits Performance.** Marijuana impairs your memory, learning, coordination and reaction time. It can also increase your risk of injuries in activities and sports. Spread the facts. Visit www.abovetheinfluence.com.
- **Marijuana – It’s Addictive.** Because your brain is still growing, it may be hard to quit when you want to. For 72% of teens who enter treatment for addiction, marijuana is the reason. Spread the facts. Visit www.abovetheinfluence.com.
- **Life has many challenges** - show others you’re strong enough to face them. Live above the influence. Visit www.abovetheinfluence.com.
- **Stay original – be yourself.** Live above the influence. Visit www.abovetheinfluence.com.
- **Don’t Keep It In. Talk It Out.** No problem is too big or too small. Call 1.866.TeenLink or visit them at 866teenlink.