

NEWS FLUSH

...in the know while you go



MELROSE
SUBSTANCE ABUSE
PREVENTION COALITION

MARIJUANA & THE BRAIN

What's the big deal?

The brain develops from back to front and from the bottom up. This means that the **frontal cortex** is the last to be complete (at around age 25). This section of the brain governs executive functions, such as the ability to plan, pay attention, follow instructions, and multi-task. It also helps to control impulses.

It is because of these changeable qualities of a still-developing teen that they are especially susceptible to the negative effects of substance abuse. This is especially true when it comes to marijuana. Statistical and scientific evidence also shows that early drug use could lower a person's IQ and damage other areas of a teen's well being.

The Dangers of Combining Alcohol and Marijuana

Because marijuana is an antiemetic (used to treat nausea and vomiting in medical situations), it may be easier to drink alcohol until dangerously high blood alcohol levels are reached, as the normal body defense of vomiting when drunk may be muted by the marijuana.

68% of Melrose High School students choose to protect their brains by not using marijuana! (YRBS 2013)

What will you choose?!

Questions? Email MelroseYAT@gmail.com
or call Lauren Dustin at 781-979-4128

What are the short term effects?

- Problems with memory and learning
- Distorted perceptions of sound, smell, touch, and time
- Hard time holding back or controlling emotions
- Loss of motor control
- Increased heart rate and anxiety
- Risky, impulsive behaviors, like experimenting with drugs and alcohol
- Drawn towards high-excitement, low-effort activities

Long term?

- Impairs the body's immune system
- Linked with depression
- When an adolescent uses marijuana to decrease stress, they are not learning healthy ways to cope with stress or other emotions; essentially, they can stunt their emotional growth.

Engaging in this kind of substance abuse can also lead to compromising and increasingly vulnerable situations such as drinking and driving, driving while high, or risky sexual activity while under the influence.

A Distorted Reality

Marijuana is a drug of perception, meaning that the user often perceives things to be very different than reality. Have you ever said to others, "I'm a more careful driver" or "I do better on tests" when high? Well **news flash**...it's just not true! Adolescents actually drive worse (slower than a safe speed, visual perception is impaired) and underperform on exams. Think again next time!