

Talk it Out:  
Effects of Weed on  
Your Body and Brain

TEACHER'S GUIDE



## Table of Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Why Students Should View This Program ..... | 3  |
| Program Summary .....                       | 4  |
| Guidelines for Group Discussion .....       | 5  |
| Preview and Discussion Questions .....      | 6  |
| Activities and Handouts .....               | 7  |
| Suggested Resources .....                   | 13 |
| Related Materials .....                     | 14 |

## **Why Young Learners Should View this Program?**

Marijuana is the most used illegal, recreational drug used. Marijuana use has been proven to change the chemistry in a person's brain and is extremely harmful to a teen's developing brain.

Marijuana is a drug that is illegal for recreational use in most places. It has been legalized for medical purposes. This has caused confusion among many people as to the legality and safety of marijuana. Many people believe that legal means safe, but that is far from the truth.

Let's Talk About Marijuana presents the serious dangers of smoking pot to teenagers before they become subjected to peer pressure and the temptation to smoke their first joint. By providing a realistic view of marijuana and how it can damage their brains and bodies is important toward helping them avoid this harmful drug.

### **Learning Objectives:**

After viewing this program, students will:

- understand that marijuana changes the way the brain functions
- learn the immediate effects of marijuana on the body systems
- understand marijuana has negative effects on attention, memory and learning
- learn that marijuana is a drug that can be prescribed for medical purposes
- recognize that marijuana is an illegal, recreational drug in most states

## **Program Summary**

Using vintage footage, the program opens with a discussion of how peoples' attitudes about marijuana have changed dramatically over the years, but the one thing is certain; marijuana changes the way the brain functions.

Students will learn how the THC in marijuana enters the lungs, is absorbed into the bloodstream, and enters the brain almost immediately. Viewers will come to understand the immediate effects of marijuana use on various body systems. The program discusses the effects of marijuana on attention, memory and learning, and sites the evidence from scientific studies on the long-term, harmful changes in the brain.

In addition, the program explores the use of medical marijuana and its legalization as a recreational drug in different states.

## **Guidelines for Group Discussion**

Group discussion is an invaluable way to explore ideas and issues, foster creativity, and build communication and social skills in students. The following guidelines can help you maintain a “discussion-friendly” classroom:

- **Create a climate of openness and acceptance.** Encourage students to show respect for the opinions of others and model this behavior yourself.
- **Establish ground rules.** Students can participate in formulating the rules for discussion. Rules will vary, but should include some of these general principles: -No putdowns, ridicule or sarcasm. -Everyone may speak without interruption.- Everyone has the right to pass.
- **Guard against inappropriate self-disclosure.** An intense discussion may lead students to reveal inappropriate information about themselves or others. Sensitivity and vigilance can help you head off such revelations.
- **Probe behind the neat and tidy answers.** Children are good at telling adults what they think adults want to hear. To find out what students really think, it is often helpful to prolong discussion time and encourage greater depth. Offer a “What if...?”; bring out issues such as fairness, justice, intent or lack of it, and so on. Children have a remarkable capacity to discern complexities and subtleties, and their discussion can be very rich.

## Preview Questions

What do you know about marijuana? Do you think it's an addictive substance?

What do you know about the illegal and legal uses of marijuana?

Why do you think people begin to use marijuana? Why do they continue to use the drug?

## Discussion Questions

- What would be the key factors in deciding whether or not you would experiment with marijuana?
- What are the immediate effects of marijuana on your brain and nervous system?
- What do you think are the worst long term effects of marijuana?
- How does addiction to marijuana impact a person's social and financial life? How does it affect motivation?
- What are the physical and psychological signs of marijuana addiction?

## **Classroom Activity**

Distribute Handout #1 to the class before showing the program. Tally their answers below. After viewing the program, distribute another copy of Handout #1 and have the students fill in their answers again. Tally the responses. Compare the answers to see how the

## Handout #1

Read each statement below and decide if you agree or disagree.

Circle your answer in the left hand column. After viewing the program, read the statements again and circle your answers in the right hand column. Did your answer change? Talk about it.

| <b>Before Viewing</b> |   | <b>After Viewing</b> |
|-----------------------|---|----------------------|
| Agree    Disagree     | Marijuana is an addictive drug.   | Agree    Disagree    |
| Agree    Disagree     | Marijuana is a safe alternative to drinking alcohol.                                    | Agree    Disagree    |
| Agree    Disagree     | Marijuana smoke contains toxic gases and particles that damage the lungs.               | Agree    Disagree    |
| Agree    Disagree     | The effects of marijuana use are different for everyone.                                | Agree    Disagree    |
| Agree    Disagree     | Marijuana changes the way your brain functions.   | Agree    Disagree    |
| Agree    Disagree     | A person who smokes marijuana daily may be functioning at a reduced intellectual level. | Agree    Disagree    |

## **Handout #2**

### **What Do You Think?**

What do you think are some characteristics of people who use marijuana?  
What are some characteristics of people who cope with their problems in other ways? Give examples to support your ideas.



### Handout #3

Read each statement below and decide if it is true or false.

- |      |       |  |
|------|-------|--|
| TRUE | FALSE | 1. Marijuana is a safe recreational drug.  |
| TRUE | FALSE | 2. Instead of the feeling of euphoria and relaxation, some users feel anxiety, fear and paranoia.  |
| TRUE | FALSE | 3. Frequent marijuana users feel no withdrawal symptoms when they stop using the drug.   |
| TRUE | FALSE | 4. In large doses marijuana can cause acute psychosis that is presented through hallucinations, delusions and loss of personal identity. |
| TRUE | FALSE | 5. Within minutes after of inhaling marijuana smoke, a person's heart rate will decrease by 10 to 20 beats per minute or more.           |
| TRUE | FALSE | 6. There are more than 400 chemicals in the average marijuana plant.   |
| TRUE | FALSE | 7. Marijuana is not an addictive drug.   |
| TRUE | FALSE | 8. The substance THC found in marijuana interferes with your body's normal functioning.  |
| TRUE | FALSE | 9. Marijuana has been shown to enhance a person's ability to learn and problem solve.  |
| TRUE | FALSE | 10. Unlike tobacco smoke, marijuana smoke does not negatively impact a person's overall health.  |

## **Handout # 4**

### **What Would You Do?**

Your best friend brings a joint to your house and asks you to go outside to smoke it, just to see what it's like. What would you do? What would you say? Explain your reasoning.

## Handout # 5

### Should Marijuana be a Medical Option?

There are proponents and opponents of medical marijuana. Research the arguments for both the pros and cons and list them below. Draw your own conclusion and write a short essay as to why you agree with either the pro or con side of the debate.

**PROS**

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**CONS**

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## **Suggested Resources**

Drug Facts

<https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/understanding-drug-abuse-addiction>

Addiction Education

<http://www.addictioneducationsociety.org/>

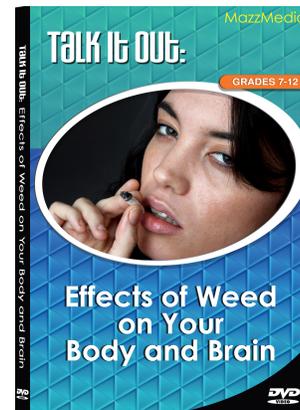
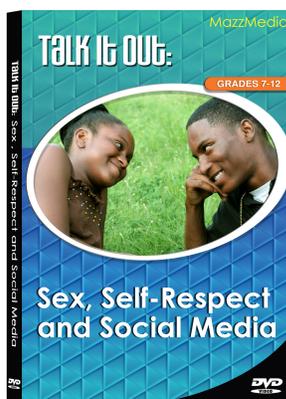
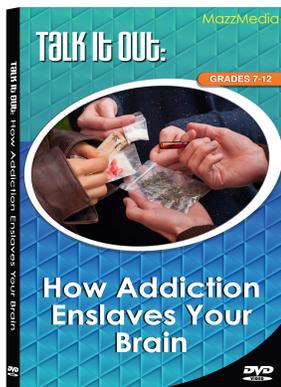
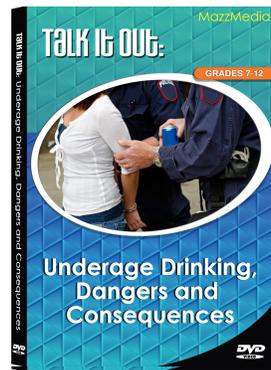
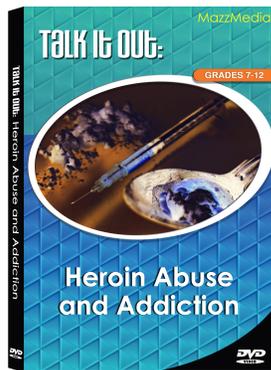
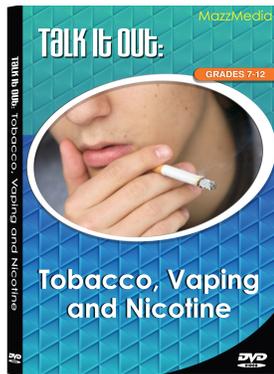
Dealing with Addiction

<http://kidshealth.org/en/teens/addictions.html?ref=search>

Related Materials from

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