TakeBack 420
Marijuana Prevention & Awareness Program for Adolescents
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Introduction

Teen drug use is largely on the decline, with one notable exception — marijuana. Nearly 23 percent of high school seniors reported using marijuana in the past month, based on the data from the National Institute on Drug Abuse and the National Institutes of Health, which collected responses as part of an annual survey of teen drug use known as Monitoring the Future (MTF). Marijuana use among adolescents is an important concern, and as legalization efforts increase across the nation, perceived risk of use steadily decreases. There is a need to provide clear and consistent information for adolescents, professionals and parents, and Caron is committed to being part of the solution. The 2016 Monitoring the Future Study (MTF) results indicates that marijuana remains the most widely used illicit drug in the study’s 42-year history. It is often perceived as a safe rite of passage despite social, legal and physical consequences.

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, 68.1% of adolescents do not view regular use of Marijuana as harmful, and one in 17 high school seniors smoke daily (MTF 2016). This is concerning when studies have indicated that when perceived risk goes down, actual use often goes up. In addition, although marijuana is illegal for recreational use in most states, its availability among teenagers remains high. Eighty-one percent of twelfth graders and 35% of eighth graders surveyed in the 2016 MTF study stated marijuana was very easy or fairly easy to obtain.

There are also common misperceptions that marijuana does not negatively affect the body despite research to the contrary. Marijuana has been shown to significantly impact brain structure. According to Kelly et. al. (2016) it was determined that daily use doubled the rate of onset of psychosis. Adolescents who smoke marijuana less than once a week, develop differences in the shape of brain structures responsible for learning, reward, fear, addiction, decision making, and emotional reactions (Idaho Office of Drug Policy 2015). Onset of use in adolescents could contribute to mental illness in adulthood such as schizophrenia, depression and anxiety.
HISTORY

April 20th has become a hallowed date in marijuana users’ calendar as they annually celebrate smoking weed. This day has become a part of a societal norm that many recognize, especially adolescents. The tradition dates to 1971 where a group of friends from San Raphael High School in Northern California would meet at 4:20, after school let out, and smoke. They were known as the Waldos due to their liking for meeting at a particular wall outside of their school. As word spread among friends, and more partook, they coined the term 420.

As its popularity grew, acquaintances of the Grateful Dead Band heard of the new term. Soon after, the famous band expedited the popularity through its fans by incorporating it into one of their songs. The term and day of celebration of marijuana grew widespread from there.

April 20th is now considered an unofficial holiday among marijuana users. Festivals and gatherings across the nation are held annually on this day to celebrate as some perceive, a harmless rite of passage. Today, the April 20th commemorative indulgence is an excuse for regular users and occasional enthusiasts alike to partake in getting high.

TakeBack 420

As April 20th, has become a highly-recognized occasion, it is time to reinvent the meaning of the date. TakeBack 420 is designed to promote awareness, empower youth and inform our communities about the harms of adolescent use. TakeBack 420 is a day to encourage prevention for those who have not used and help those who may have started already to reduce or stop their usage. Efforts to ensure accurate data and information is disseminated to parents and youth while assisting in educating our communities about the effects of marijuana use.
ACTIVITIES

The Smoke Screen

Utilizing school announcements, have 4 facts that can be read in twenty seconds. These facts should be tailored to your specific area and populations. These facts should encourage a lasting impression on the audience. It is important that we promote a conversation and help if needed so be sure to include a contact person should someone have a question.

Take the Pledge

Working with schools or youth organizations, create a banner that states a pledge against smoking on April 20th. The banner should be in a place where many can access it and there should be announcements about the banner and its meaning. Have students throughout the week leading up to April 20th sign it stating they pledge not to use marijuana. Make sure the banner has the name TakeBack 420 somewhere on it. Efforts to get students to sing the banner are often successful when having a group of students in lunch talk to students about the dangers of marijuana and have them sign the banner to pledge not to use.

Another alternative is to hand our pledge stickers to those within a school that pledge not to use marijuana on April 20th. Due to financial constraints as this program grows and develops stickers may not be available for everyone.

Parent blast

A fact sheet and information regarding marijuana use can be sent out to parents. This fact sheet will contain adolescent specific harms of use, information regarding the day April 20th and what parents can do to help prevent the child from using. It will also have a contact where they can reach out in case they are suspecting their child is using. See page 7 for the Fact Sheet.
What is TakeBack 420?

TakeBack 420 is a campaign designed to promote prevention and spread awareness of the potential negative health effects associated with marijuana use. Unfortunately, April 20th or 4/20, has become a day of celebration for marijuana users. TakeBack 420 is a charge towards transformation and engaging our community to empower youth to make healthy choices. It is an opportunity to share information about the impact marijuana use can have on their lives.

What is so Significant about 420?

April 20th has become a hallowed date for marijuana users to annually celebrate smoking marijuana. This designated day has become a part of a societal norm that many recognize, especially among our adolescent population. Currently, on April 20th the commemorative indulgence, is an excuse for regular users and occasional enthusiasts to partake in getting high.

Why is this Campaign Important?

With the issue of legalization of medicinal marijuana currently in the media, it is critical that our parents and adolescents are provided accurate, researched-based, and relevant information regarding the short and long-term effects of marijuana use. TakeBack 420 is an opportunity to stand up and advocate for the truth.

Facts about Marijuana Use:

- Smoking Marijuana results in approximately 5 times the carbon monoxide concentration, 3 times the tar, and the retention of one-third more tar in the respiratory tract than tobacco smoke.

- Marijuana is addictive. Contrary to many beliefs, repeated Marijuana use can lead to addiction—which means that people often cannot stop when they want to, even though it undermines many aspects of their lives.

- Compared with their nonsmoking peers, students who smoke Marijuana tend to get lower grades and are more likely to drop out of high school. Long-term Marijuana users report decreased overall life satisfaction, including diminished mental and physical health, memory and relationship problems, lower salaries, and less career success.

- Today, one in every 17 high school seniors is a daily or near-daily Marijuana user.

- 81% of 12th graders each year have said that they could get Marijuana fairly easily or very easily.

If you have concerns about a loved one, please call Caron Treatment Centers:

1-800-678-2332

Marijuana Facts

1. Regular use of marijuana has been linked to a loss of drive or motivation, and a loss of interest in previously enjoyable activities (SAMHSA, 2014).

2. Early and continued use of marijuana can affect memory, attention and ability to think clearly, making it difficult to concentrate, learn new things, and make sound decisions (Meier, 2012).

3. Research shows that marijuana can lower your IQ if you use it regularly in your teen years (Meier, 2012).

4. Marijuana use as a teen is linked to high-risk behaviors which can lead to unplanned pregnancy, car accidents or criminal behaviors (Bryan et al, 2012).

5. 17 percent of people who start using marijuana in their teens, or about 1 in 6, become addicted and cannot stop using even if they want to (Hall, 2009a; Hall, 2009b).

6. Withdrawal symptoms can make it hard for someone to quit using marijuana. Symptoms usually peak a few days after marijuana use has stopped. Symptoms can include: irritability, sleeping difficulties, anxiety and craving (NIDA, 2015).

7. Compared with teens who don't use, students who smoke marijuana tend to get lower grades and are 2 times more likely to drop out of high school (McCaffrey, 2010).


9. Some people experience an acute psychotic reaction (disturbed perceptions and thoughts, paranoia) or panic attacks while under the influence of marijuana (SAMHSA, 2014).

10. A drug conviction will affect students' ability to receive financial aid for college. If a conviction occurs while receiving federal financial aid, the student will become ineligible for aid and will be responsible for repaying funds given during that period (US Dept. of Education).

11. Marijuana affects timing, movement, and coordination, which can harm athletic performance (NIDA, 2015).

12. Someone who smokes marijuana regularly may have many of the same breathing and lung problems that tobacco smokers do, such as a daily cough and a greater risk of lung infections like pneumonia (NIDA, 2015).

13. If you were thinking everyone smokes marijuana, they don't. Statistics show that about 10%, or roughly 1 in 10 teens, report using marijuana in the past month. That means 90% of teens are NOT using (SAMHSA, 2014).

14. 17% (about 1 in 5) of car crash victims under the age of 18 tested positive for marijuana (Wilson, 2010).

15. Weekly use of marijuana DOUBLES a teen's risk of depression and anxiety (SAMHSA, 2014).

16. THC is rapidly absorbed by fatty tissues in various organs, including the brain. This fact is especially concerning when we consider the fact that the human brain can be up to 60% fat. It is the fattiest organ in the human body (Mehmedic, 2010).
REFERENCES


References Cont.

