

# Cannabis Use and Psychosis: Practical Considerations

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# Overview

- Disclosures and who am I
- Why talk about it
- Harm reduction in general
- Approach to assessing marijuana use
- Harm reduction specific to marijuana use



# Financial Disclosures

- None





***D.A.R.E.***

**TO RESIST DRUGS  
AND VIOLENCE.**

**DRUG ABUSE RESISTANCE EDUCATION**

# Why Talk About It

- General prevalence
- Complicated issue:  
weed is not good or bad
- Engagement



# Possible Upsides



- Decreased risk of legal issues/arrests
- Increased willingness to disclose use
- Fewer interactions with drug dealers
- Increased transparency – what are people buying

# Definition



- Harm Reduction International:
  - Refers to policies, programs, and practices that aim primarily to reduce adverse health, social and economic consequences of the use of legal and illegal psychoactive drugs without necessarily reducing drug consumption. Harm Reduction benefits people who use drugs, their families and the community.

# Harm Reduction: Origin and Examples



- Initially used in the 1980's, alternative to abstinence only programs
- Most thought of in relation to IV drug use
- Concept easily applied to many behaviors beyond substance use

# Harm Reduction: Examples



## Drug Related

- Needle exchanges
- Substitution therapies
- Supervised injection facilities

## Others

- Beyond abstinence only sex education
- Helmets
- Seatbelts
- Sunscreen

# Harm Reduction: Principles

- Meet people where they are
- Risk is everywhere
- Praise the positive
- Typical approaches can have unintended negative consequences



**HARM REDUCTION  
VALUES LIFE, CHOICE,  
RESPECT AND COMAPSSION  
OVER JUDGMENT, STIGMA,  
DISCRIMINATION AND  
PUNISHMENT.**

# Developmental Context



- Experimentation and risk taking is the norm
- Rejection of authority
- Desire for autonomy

# Developmental Context



- Endorsed by High Times and Leafly!
- Important to consider primary versus secondary prevention
- Motivational interviewing is a developmentally appropriate tool

# Assessing Use



❑ Setting the frame

❑ Complicated issue

- Start with interests
- “Do you smoke much weed?”

❑ It’s not just a yes or no question

❑ Critical to understand what motivates use

# Useful Information



- Differences in smoking and eating
- Typical doses
- Differences in strains

# Smoking vs. Eating

## Inhaled

- Peak effects at 15-30 min
- Effects last up to 4 hours
- Bioavailability = 10-35%
- 2-3 mg produce effects

## PO ingestion

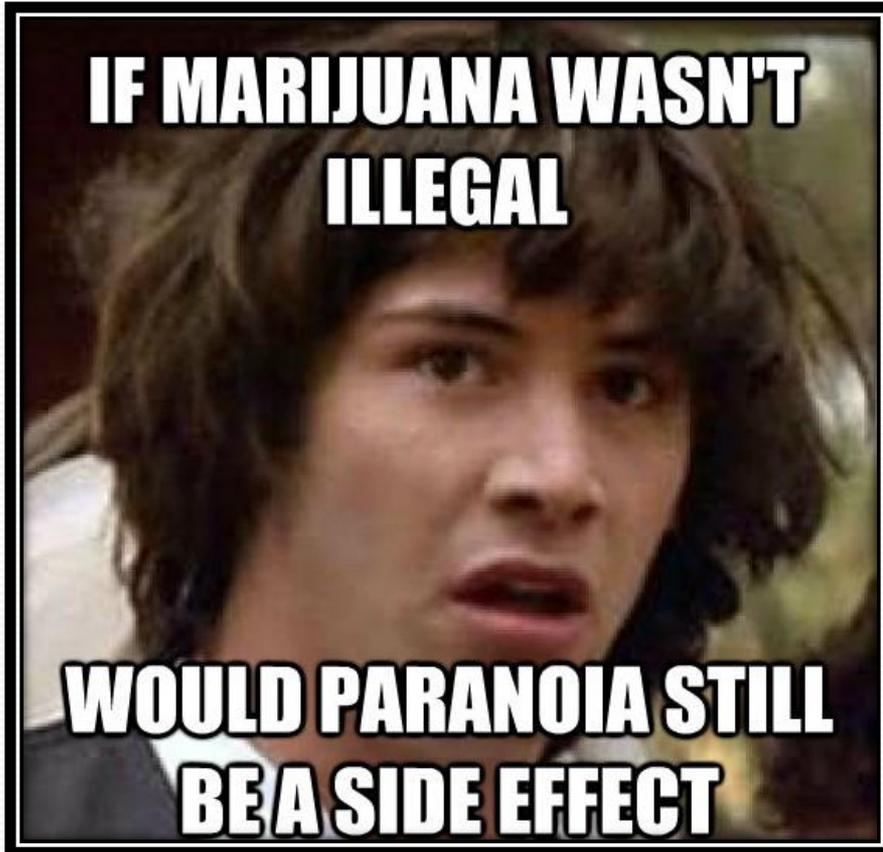
- Peak effects at 30 min to 3 hours
- Effects last for up to 12 hours
- Bioavailability = 5-20%
- 5-20 mg produce effects

# Indica (In-Da-Couch)

- Budtender would say:
  - Relaxation
  - Carefree
  - Sleepy
  - Calm
  - Mellow
  - Couch-lock
- Higher concentrations of CBD compared to Sativa



# Sativa



- Budtender would say:
  - Euphoria
  - Creativity
  - Alertness
  - Energy
  - Sociability
  - Cheerfulness
- Higher THC concentrations than Indica, lower CBD concentrations

# Harm Reduction Strategies



- Pace yourself; know yourself
- Chose strains with lower THC concentrations and/or balanced THC:CBD ratios
- Stick to the same dispensary, strains, and/or edibles
  - Don't eat the whole brownie!

# Possible Suggestions for Cutting Back

- Don't buy in bulk
- Plan ahead
- Monitor use
- Give people a heads up
- Take a pass when the joint comes to you or take smaller hits



# Thank You!

