



Marijuana: The Great Un-Motivator

By

Randy Brazzel MA, LPC, LMFT

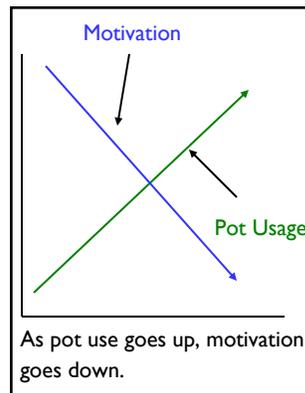
According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), marijuana is the Nation's most widely used illicit drug. Approximately 40% of Americans age 12 and older have tried marijuana at least once. A 2007 survey by the National Survey on Drug Use and Health revealed that 14.4 million Americans aged 12 or older used marijuana at least once in the month prior to being surveyed. About 6,000 people a day in 2007 used marijuana for the first time—2.1 million Americans. Of these, 62.2 percent were under age 18. Approximately 5.4% of 12th-Graders report using marijuana daily.

While some argue that marijuana ("pot") is a "natural" substance that is harmless, those of us in the recovery community frequently see a very different picture. Research has shown that marijuana use can 1) damage the lungs, 2) impair short term memory, 3) impair verbal skills and judgment, 4) distort perception, 5) weaken the immune system, and 6) possibly increase

the user's likelihood of developing cancer. Marijuana use has also been shown to be correlated with work accidents, injuries, and absenteeism. This is a primary reason that most employers now conduct drug screens as part of their hiring practices.

In addition, marijuana use can have a devastating effect on motivation. People that smoke pot often get "high" and talk about all of the things they want to do. In reality, however, they usually don't do anything, except go to the refrigerator and get something to eat. The more a person smokes pot, the greater their loss in interest in other activities. For example, teenagers that begin to use marijuana heavily tend to drop out of extra-curricular activities, such as sports. They also tend to drop all of their friends that don't get high. A typical day revolves around getting high, preparing for the next high, or talking about the last high. Grades tend to drop and the frequency and intensity of conflicts at home

tend to escalate. "I don't care" or "I just don't have any interest in it anymore" become frequent mantras of the heavy pot smoker. Even individuals that are high achievers or have enormous artistic talent experience this loss in motivation. They may still be achieving, but their achievements are below their potential. Pot is the Great Un-Motivator.



Understanding Depression

Depression is a debilitating disorder that can strike individuals at any age. People that experience depression often have difficulty functioning and tend to lose interest in participating in activities of daily living. They frequently feel helpless and worthless and may have thoughts of dying or suicide. They often feel so much fatigue

that just getting out of bed can be exhausting.

Depression is more than just having a "bad day" or "feeling the blues". As a result, a person who is depressed can't just "snap out of it" or "pull themselves up by their bootstraps." The struggle is real and consumes the mood, thoughts, and behaviors of the depressed individual. This

can lead to significant problems with relationships, work, school, or home.

Fortunately, treatment can help. Research shows that the combination of psychotherapy and medication can have a dramatic effect on depression. With help, individuals can overcome depression and begin to enjoy life again.

New Dimensions Can Help If You or Someone You Know Is:

- Depressed or Suicidal
- Stuck and having difficulty making changes
- Dealing with trauma
- Struggling with Panic Attacks
- Having difficulty working or going to school
- Struggling with addictions or substance abuse
- Cutting or doing other self-destructive behaviors
- Struggling with anger issues
- Struggling to get their medications stabilized

1-800-685-9796

www.nddtreatment.com

Symptoms of Depression

- Depressed mood
- Loss of interest in everything
- Insomnia
- Fatigue and agitation
- Low self-esteem
- Poor concentration
- Feelings of helplessness and worthlessness
- Irrational guilt
- Thoughts of dying
- Significant weight loss or gain

Clear Lake Location:

1345 Space Park Dr., Ste. C
Houston, TX 77058

The Woodlands Location:

25511 Budde Rd., Ste. 2401
The Woodlands, TX 77380

Katy Location:

607 Park Grove Dr., Ste. A
Katy, TX 77450

1-800-685-9796

www.nddtreatment.com

**Psychiatric and Substance
Abuse Treatment for
Adolescents and Adults**

**Warning Signs of Alcohol and Drug Use
in Kids**

1. Rapid and frequent mood changes.
2. Sudden drop in grades.
3. Recent change in friends followed by an overall change in attitude.
4. Increase in “keeping secrets”.
5. Red or glassy eyes (adolescents may keep a bottle of Visine available at all times).
6. Distorted time sense.
7. Depression.
8. Impairment in short-term memory.
9. Sleep disturbances.
10. Caring less.
11. “The Munchies” – Decrease in appetite but an increase in craving sweets.
12. Sick more often.
13. Increase in discipline problems both at home and at school.
14. Finding drugs or drug paraphernalia.

If you begin to notice these symptoms in your kids, don't just ignore it and “hope that they will grow out of it.” Drug abuse tends to be progressive and typically gets worse over time. There is frequently a direct relationship between a teenager's decreased interest in healthy activities and their increased usage of drugs. The more drugs they do the less they want to do anything else. When appropriate, seek out help for your kid and have him or her drug tested if needed. Early intervention can make a difference.

13 Steps to Becoming an Effective Parent

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nurture your children and let them know how much you care. Don't just assume they know you love them. Tell them with your words and actions. 2. Trust your instincts as a parent. If something doesn't seem right, investigate. 3. Teach your children the importance of values while they are young. Remember that kids don't only hear what you say they also watch what you do. 4. Do not rely on the police or the school to parent for you. No one loves your children like you do so be proactive with parenting. 5. Set clear, consistent, pre- | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> dictable rules for your children and then be willing to enforce them. This is the best way to prepare them to function effectively as adults. 6. Be in charge. Kids feel safest and function best when they know that there is an adult who will guide them through life. Too much freedom can lead kids to destructive behaviors. 7. Let your kids make their own mistakes and suffer the natural consequences that come from those mistakes. Kids will learn quickly if you let them. 8. Make sure that your home is a safe, secure, and positive environment. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Maintain your own supportive relationships. Your children should not be expected to meet your emotional needs. 10. Remember it is not your job to make your kids happy. It is their job. Your job is to help prepare them to effectively cope with life as an adult. Teach them the skills they need so they can deal with the many ups and downs of life. 11. Spend individual time with your kids and get interested in them and what they do. 12. Know who your kids' friends are and the activities they are involved in. Peer influence matters, so stay involved. |
|---|---|---|



Parenting is an awesome responsibility that doesn't come with a clear set of rules. However, if you use the 13 steps above and stay involved you can make a difference in your kids lives. Remember that your role as a parent is to provide your kids the foundation they need to build healthy productive lives. That foundation is strongest when built with love, direction, and respect.