

Cannabis Facts Teacher Guide

Cannabis Facts

The effects

- Some people may feel relaxed and happy, get the giggles and may become talkative.
- Some will have one puff and feel sick.
- Being hungry is common, and is known as 'getting the munchies'.
- Some people become more aware of their senses, or get a feeling of slowing of time, due to its hallucinogenic effects.
- Stronger cannabis may have more powerful effects.

The risks

- Cannabis smokers can become anxious, panicky, suspicious or paranoid. Regular use of cannabis can increase the risk of later developing mental health problems.
- Cannabis affects your coordination, which is one of the reasons why drug driving is just as illegal as drink driving.
- Some people think cannabis is harmless just because it's a plant – but it isn't harmless. Cannabis, like tobacco, has lots of chemical 'nasties', which can cause lung disease and possibly cancer with long-term or heavy use, especially as it is often mixed with tobacco and smoked without a filter. It can also make asthma worse, and cause wheezing in non-asthma sufferers.
- Regular, heavy use makes it difficult to learn and concentrate. Some people begin to feel tired all the time and can't seem to get motivated.

The law

- Cannabis is a Class B drug - illegal to have, give away or sell.
- Possession can get you up to five years in jail plus an unlimited fine. If you're under 18, you'll get a reprimand and your parent or guardian will also be contacted. The police are more likely to arrest you if: you are blatantly smoking in public and/or have been caught with cannabis before. If you're under 18, the second time you get caught you're likely to get a final warning and be referred to a Youth Offending Team. If you're caught with cannabis for a third time it's likely you will be arrested.
- Supplying someone else, including your friends, can get you fourteen years and an unlimited fine. Dealing is a very serious offence. In the eyes of the law, this includes giving drugs to friends. People who grow cannabis in their homes or carry large amounts on them also risk being charged with intent to supply.

Other facts

- If you get a criminal record it could affect your chances of getting a job. It could also affect whether you can go on holiday to some countries.
- Drug driving is as illegal as drink driving. You could go to prison, get a heavy fine or be disqualified.
- Allowing people to take cannabis in your house or any other premises is illegal. If the police catch someone smoking cannabis in a club they can prosecute the landlord, club owner or person holding the party.
- Using cannabis to relieve pain is also an offence. Possession is illegal whatever you're using it for.

Cannabis Facts Teacher Guide

Cannabis Facts Quiz Answers

		TRUE	FALSE
1	All cannabis smoked in cigarettes (joints) is the same strength		X
2	It is illegal to drive immediately after smoking cannabis	X	
3	Regular use of cannabis helps people to concentrate		X
4	If you are under 18 and caught with cannabis your parents will be informed	X	
5	It is illegal to grow cannabis at home	X	
6	Frequent cannabis use can affect men and women's ability to have children	X	
7	If you get a criminal record for drug use you will not be allowed to travel to some countries	X	
8	It is legal to possess cannabis if you don't use it		X
9	If the police catch someone smoking cannabis in a club they can prosecute the owner	X	
10	It is legal to use cannabis for a medical condition		X

Why Young People Don't Use Drugs

Young people identified the following reasons for choosing not to use drugs:

- Significant people in the young people's lives disapprove of drug use;
- Fear of legal consequences, which ranged from not wanting to break the law, to fear of the impact of a possible criminal record on their life aspirations;
- Incompatibility with achieving career aspirations, young people thought, for example, it could prevent them from obtaining qualifications or affect the physical fitness required for certain career paths;
- Being too busy – these young people made extensive use of their spare time to follow hobbies, do part time jobs and undertake voluntary work;
- Being a parent was not perceived to be compatible with using drugs. Those who were already parents did not have time to engage in drug use and did not want to place their child at risk. Others who wanted to become parents in the future wanted to stay healthy and be good role models for their children;
- Previous negative experience with cannabis had made some decide not to use again;
- Fear of damaging health now and in the future was noted as another reason not to use drugs;
- Fear of addiction was noted by some. While this tended to be associated with Class A drugs, it also seemed to discourage young people from experimenting with other drugs too;
- Not wishing to lose control of themselves and do something they would regret;
- Having alternative sources of getting the 'buzz' that users got from drugs – these included drinking alcohol and certain hobbies;
- Having alternative sources of support meant that young people did not need drugs as a way of coping with their problems. The sources of support included alcohol or tobacco, supportive relationships, and other sources of stress relief such as using a punch bag, going for a bike ride, or going to the beach or park to 'chill out'.

Young people usually cited several reasons for shaping their decision not to use drugs rather than a single one.

Cannabis Facts Teacher Guide

Resisting Peer Pressure

What is peer pressure?

- Pressure is the feeling that you are being pushed toward making a certain choice—good or bad.
- A peer is someone in your own age group.
- Peer pressure is the feeling that someone your own age is pushing you toward making a certain choice, good or bad

Your rights

If someone is pressuring you to do anything that's not right or good for you, you have the right to:

- Resist
- Say no
- Not to give a reason why
- Just walk away from a situation

Why do some people give into peer pressure?

- Afraid of being rejected by others
- Want to be liked and don't want to lose a friend
- Don't want to be made fun of
- Don't want to hurt someone's feelings
- Are not sure of what they really want
- Don't know how to get out of the situation

Strategies for resisting peer pressure

- 1. Stand up straight, make eye contact and say no**
Assert yourself with physical confidence by standing tall with feet slightly apart, head high, and look the person straight in the eye. Your posture when you speak is usually more important than the words you say.
- 2. Say no assertively – not aggressively**
Say no to the person using a friendly but firm and determined voice and then not give in. It is not your job to try changing the other person's mind, but to keep yourself out of trouble, and follow your beliefs. If you are too aggressive the peer may react aggressively too.
- 3. Say no, keep repeating this – do not wavier**
Sometimes it helps to repeat your decision several times like a broken record: "No, it's not right," "No, it's not right." It makes you sound assertive and helps you not back down from your stand.
- 4. Say how you feel**
Say how you are being made to feel in the situation. I feel uncomfortable, sad, worried, upset etc.
- 5. Give reasons why you don't want to do this**
Thinking about the possible consequences of the choice helps strengthen your convictions not to proceed with what you're asked to do. Give the person the reason for saying no: "It's illegal," "I'll be in trouble," or "I could get hurt."
- 6. Suggest something else to do**
Suggest to your peer that they do something else instead.
- 7. Say goodbye and leave**
Standing up to a friend isn't easy. You may face teasing, or rejection for your choice, but that's what courage is all about. Sometimes the best option is to walk away from the situation.