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**SOCIAL MEDIA:**
How to set boundaries.

**TALK TO YOUR TEEN ABOUT MARIJUANA:**
Learn the latest trends and early warning signs.

**5 TIPS TO HELP YOUR TEEN OVERCOME BULLYING:**
MARIJUANA

“HE JUST SMOKES A LITTLE POT...IT’S NOT A BIG DEAL.” ACTUALLY, IT’S A VERY BIG DEAL.

The struggle to keep our children away from marijuana keeps getting more difficult. Marijuana use is now legal in several states, with more sure to follow, and the media acts as if everyone is getting high. Don’t give in to the lies that it’s just “a little pot” and “they’re not really doing it all the time.” Get serious about marijuana, and if you suspect or catch your teen getting high, do something about it now.

SYNTHETIC MARIJUANA (SPICE, K2, BLISS, BLACK MAMBA, GENIE, SKUNK, MOON ROCKS, ETC.)

Commonly known as Spice, it consists of plant material laced with synthetic cannabinoids (technically classified as poisons) that have been dissolved in solvents such as acetone or formaldehyde.

Marketed as “100% organic herbs” or “herbal incense,” suggesting they are safe, even though “Not for Human Consumption” is stamped on the packaging to bypass FDA rules. This has made it more accessible than marijuana, because it can be purchased with no age restrictions and it is easily available online.

TIPS AND ADVICE TO CONSIDER

• Your teen is less likely to use pot if you talk at an early age about the risks of drug abuse and talk about it often. Teens cite their parents as one of the largest influences in their decision not to use drugs.
• If you suspect your teen is using marijuana or synthetic marijuana, use a drug testing kit. Be aware that traditional marijuana drug tests will not detect synthetic marijuana use, and you must use a test designed specifically for synthetic marijuana. Both types of drug tests are available at www.operationparent.org. See page 22 for details.

WARNING SIGNS OF A PROBLEM

• Your teen can have red and/or blood shot eyes, loss of coordination, act giddy, tired, paranoid or filled with anxiety and/or have the “munchies” and be hungry for any food they can get their hands on.
• With regular use of marijuana, your teen may start having problems with school work, declining grades, truancy issues, bad moods, and may quit their extracurricular activities and other hobbies.
• Smell their clothes and search for drug paraphernalia. These items may be hidden in their rooms, between mattresses, in fake shaving cream or other cans, in jackets, backpacks or vehicles. Look for things like pipes, rolling papers, clips that smell like marijuana, baggies with residue, burn stains, scales, incense, and plant magazines.

To find a drug rehab center near you:
www.drugrehab.org (make sure they treat adolescents, not just adults) www.hazelden.org

TRENDS

• Today’s pot is not the pot of the 60s or 70s. In the 70s, it contained 4% THC, and today it’s over 18%, making it much more dangerous.
• 46% of teens have tried marijuana before they graduate high school.
• 1 in 9 12th graders used synthetic marijuana in the past year.
• Reaction time for motor skills, such as driving, is reduced by 41% after smoking 1 joint, and is reduced by 63% after 2 joints.
• Vapers and e-cigarettes have made using marijuana easier to conceal. Teens can get a stronger high without the incriminating smoke or smell, and from a device that most teachers and parents can’t differentiate from an e-cigarette.
• Synthetic marijuana use is on the rise. Since traditional marijuana drug tests will not detect synthetic marijuana use, teens seek out synthetic marijuana as an easier to conceal alternative.

MISCONCEPTIONS

• My teen will be 18 soon and off on their own anyway. Peer pressure is difficult to handle at any age. For teens this can be a dangerous situation which you and your teen will be held liable for. Your teen can be tried as an adult if the situation is severe enough.
• Teens will drink anyway, I might as well provide the alcohol. Not all teens drink. And again, if you offer alcohol to your teen or their friends, you are endorsing the consumption of alcohol by minors, which is illegal.
• If I provide alcohol at a supervised party, the teens will be safe. If you take their keys and make sure they stay safe in my home. If you provide alcohol to minors, you are breaking the law. They cannot supervise everyone.
• We’re only going out of town for one night. An overnight supervision is almost a guarantee the party will be at your house.

MISCONCEPTIONS

• Marijuana does not lead to other drug use. Long-term studies show that very few young people use other illegal drugs without first trying marijuana.
• People can still function on marijuana. Marijuana negatively affects memory, judgment and perception.
• Marijuana is not addictive. Long-term marijuana use can lead to physical addiction. Teens using marijuana frequently suffer withdrawal symptoms.
• Effects of marijuana are minimal. It can permanently lower a person’s IQ up to 8 points.

TRENDS

• More and more parents are allowing unsupervised parties because they want to be their teen’s friend. Teens have friends. They need you as a parent.
• Many parents who claim to “supervise” a party are actually drinking with the teens or using alcohol.
• Unsupervised parties often get out of control because invited guests start calling “outsiders” to show up unexpectedly bringing more people, beer, drugs, etc.

MISSCONCEPTIONS

• My teen will be 18 soon and off on their own anyway. Peer pressure is difficult to handle at any age. For teens this can be a dangerous situation which you and your teen will be held liable for. Your teen can be tried as an adult if the situation is severe enough.
• Teens will drink anyway, I might as well provide the alcohol. Not all teens drink. And again, if you offer alcohol to your teen or their friends, you are endorsing the consumption of alcohol by minors, which is illegal.
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IT’S A BAD IDEA TO LEAVE OLDER SIBLINGS “IN CHARGE.”

You don’t neglect your role as a parent at home, so why neglect it the minute you drop your teen off? If you are unsure if a party is supervised or not, find out more about the parents hosting the party before you let your teen go. If you know the party is unsupervised, stand your ground and tell your teen no. As parents, we must guide our children away from dangers and temptations that they are not ready to handle. You could save them from a host of troubles.

TIPS AND ADVICE TO CONSIDER

If illegal substances are used, or even found on your premises, you may be arrested. If there is unreasonable noise or disorderly conduct on your property, you may be charged with being a Criminal Nuisance. (Regardless of your presence there!) Any assault, damage to property, larceny or committing those in your home to drive under the influence may subject you to charges. In short, you are responsible for your teen and others on your property. The only way to ensure your teen and their friends are safe is to fully supervise them at all times.

To avoid unsupervised parties or last minute venue changes, invoke a “24-hour notice” rule requiring your teen to make the request to attend one day in advance. This allows you to make contact with hosting parents and confirm details, eliminating last minute requests.

Call the parents of any home in which a party is to be held. Get their assurance that no alcohol will be dispensed. Go to the front door and meet the adults in charge of the party. If it ends up that the parents are not home, leave and take your teen with you.

If you have reason to believe a party is being planned that may involve alcohol being served to minors, place an anonymous call to your local police department and they will handle it from there.

If you feel uncomfortable about anything, do not let other parents or your children pressure you into a decision you may regret.

Disagreements between parents and teens are normal. Don’t let the guilt of “ruining your teen’s life” force you to give in. Stay firm. Trust your intuition.

www.marijuana-info.org www.teendrugabuse.us (Search “marijuana”)