



KnowTHC  
Keep Talking



September 24, 2024

Hi Kid Champion,

Cannabis use disorder (CUD) and mental health are very complex topics. Find below a sample of critical information that could spark an important conversation about the concerning effects of THC on the adolescent brain.

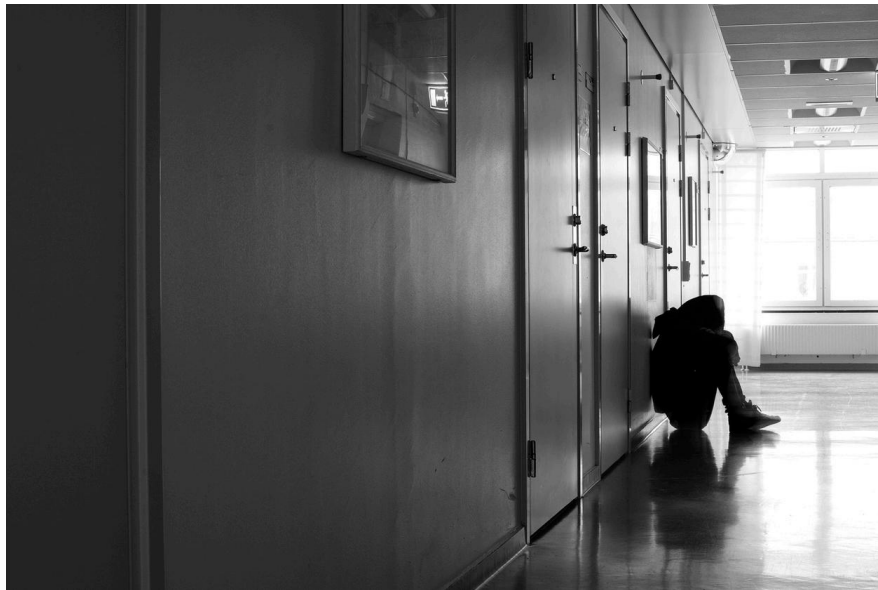
The relationship between a substance use disorder (SUD) and any mental illness is referred to as bidirectional, meaning one can contribute to or worsen the other. When both are present, they are known as co-occurring disorders and can result in greater impairment and an increased risk of negative outcomes.

## Did you know...

According to [SAMHSA's 2023 National Survey on Drug Use and Health](#), among those 12 and older who initiated marijuana use in the past year, **54.5% initiated use before age 21**. That means that of the 3.5 million people in 2023 who began using marijuana in the past year, more than half did so before age 21, equaling **1.9 million youth**.

Adolescents aged 12-17 with a past year major depressive episode (MDE) were **more likely than those without** a past year MDE to have used marijuana in the past year at 21.9% vs. 8.7% respectively.

856,000 adolescents aged 12-17 in 2023 have had a co-occurring major depressive episode **with a substance use disorder** in the past year.



According to the study 1.6 million (96.6%) of adolescents with a past year substance use disorder, who did not receive substance use treatment in the past year, **did not perceive a need** for treatment.

While not every parent may face these issues, it's important to remember that one problem can lead to another. Open conversations with our youth can help prevent the combined effects from worsening.

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## The Science...

**AGE:** Starting marijuana use during adolescence is strongly associated with future marijuana addiction. An [Australian](#) study found that initiation of cannabis use before 16 years of age increases the risk of developing CUD.

**FREQUENCY:** The [risk of progression](#) from cannabis use to CUD increases with the frequency of use.

**PSYCHOSIS:** According to a [public health statement](#) released by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, "Marijuana use by adolescents and young adults is strongly associated with developing psychotic symptoms in adulthood, such as hallucinations, paranoia, and delusional beliefs.

**SCHIZOPHRENIA:** A [Danish](#) study estimated that as many as 30% of cases of schizophrenia among men aged 21-30 might have been prevented by averting cannabis use disorder.

See our [2024 If You Care](#) document for more information and links.

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## To Protect Kids...

While recovery is vital, the best approach is to prevent dependence, sparing families the pain of addiction, recovery struggles, or potential loss of life.

Research shows anger or scare tactics don't work, but a calm discussion of facts may. Remember that you remain a strong influence on your teen. What you say matters but one conversation is not enough. Keep talking and listening whenever the opportunity arises and remember youth who know their parents think underage use is wrong are **72% LESS likely to use.** ([2017 HKCS](#)).

If you suspect that your youth is experiencing either a mental health concern or substance use disorder get help early. It's better to err on the side of caution to protect their futures.

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[Join One Chance to Grow Up](#) in protecting kids. With today's addiction and mental health crisis, it's crucial to raise awareness about the dangers of THC.

For updates on current THC products, visit [THCPhotos.org](#). Please share our [website](#) and follow us on [X](#), [Facebook](#), and [LinkedIn](#) for more information. Thank you for your care and support in better protecting our kids.

Please share this newsletter with your networks and ask that they sign up here.

Thank you for your commitment and support!  
The team at One Chance To Grow Up

## Donate



One Chance to Grow Up protects kids from THC through transparency, education, empowerment, and policy. We don't take sides on the politics of legalization for adults but instead serve as a reliable resource for parents, media, policymakers, and all those who care about kids.

Started by concerned parents and supported entirely by charitable contributions, One Chance is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit project of the Colorado Nonprofit Development Center.

**One Chance to Grow Up**

2590 Welton St. Ste 200  
P.O. Box 18770 | Denver, Colorado 80218  
[info@onechancetogrowup.org](mailto:info@onechancetogrowup.org)

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