



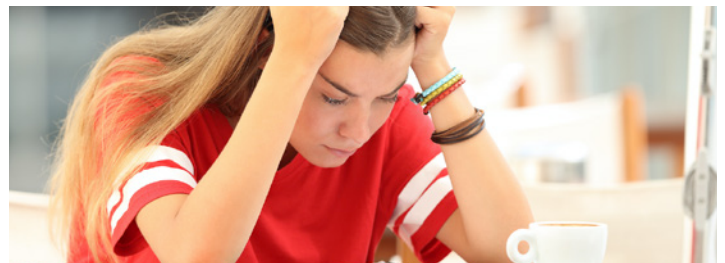
# CANNABIS AND TEEN MENTAL HEALTH

These days, teens are facing an unprecedented amount of stress and anxiety. As marijuana use has been growing in popularity following legalization, teens may see marijuana as a way to “self-medicate” and relieve some of their mounting pressure. Many don’t realize that cannabis use has been linked to a negative impact on teen mental health. In fact, those who use marijuana regularly are significantly more likely to develop long-lasting mental health disorders like anxiety and depression. Teens with a family history of mental illness are even more at risk.<sup>1,2</sup>

## Adolescent cannabis exposure and use are associated with:

- increased prevalence and worsening of psychotic, mood, and addictive disorders
- a likelihood of developing the following by young adulthood: psychotic symptoms, psychotic-like experiences, and full psychotic disorders

THC has been shown to affect the developing amygdala, the part of the brain responsible for emotional regulation, making anxiety and stress harder for teens to manage.



## Teens and Marijuana Use Disorder

Youth who begin using marijuana before age 18 are between four and seven times more likely to develop marijuana use disorder. **Symptoms include:**

- physical tolerance to the drug, which means one feels the need to consume a greater quantity or concentration to achieve the same high
- withdrawal symptoms that include problems with sleep, nausea, irritability and restlessness, headaches, and abdominal pain—symptoms can last 2-3 weeks
- problems with day-to-day functioning and responsibilities or giving up activities that were once enjoyed

## Sources

1. Moitra, E., Christopher, P. P., Anderson, B. J., & Stein, M. D. (2015). Coping-motivated marijuana use correlates with DSM-5 cannabis use disorder and psychological distress among emerging adults. *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors*, 29(3), 627-632. <https://doi.org/10.1037/adb0000083>
2. Solowij, N., Jones, K. A., Rozman, M. E., Davis, S. M., Ciarrochi, J., Heaven, P. C., Lubman, D. I., & Yüce, I. M. (2011). Verbal learning and memory in adolescent cannabis users, alcohol users and non-users. *Psychopharmacology (Berl)*, 216(1), 131-144. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00213-011-2203-x>