

Did You Know?

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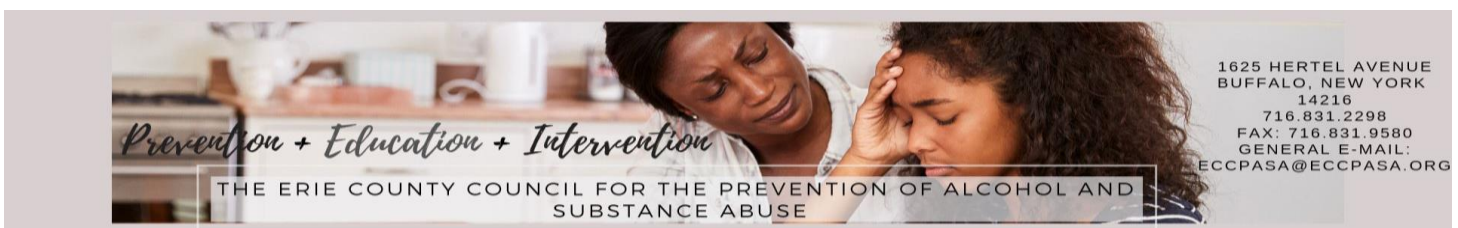
Making the Connection: Today's drug landscape is complicated to understand, especially with the myriad of circulated misinformation. This poses a specific threat to teens and young adults. The media and Big Marijuana have shifted conversation away from potential dangers surrounding marijuana legalization. As parents, it is imperative to be equipped with the facts while creating an open dialogue on the harmful effects of early marijuana use with teens and young adults.

What You Should Know:

- One Key difference between recreational marijuana and medical marijuana or cannabis is intent. There is a limited "high" attributed to the use of medical marijuana, as it has very controlled levels of THC (the psychoactive chemical found in marijuana) or in some forms contains none at all. Most medical properties attributed to medical cannabis are found in cannabidiol (CBD) and not THC.
- Medical marijuana isn't offered in smokable or edible forms. Those approved for medical marijuana can obtain it in capsules, concentrates for vaporization, patches, lozenges, oral sprays, and ointments.
- CBD and medical cannabis are not used as cures for illnesses, but to help aid in quality of life by reducing symptoms associated with pain, muscle swelling, epilepsy, nausea, and appetite control.
- Although laws differ from state to state, both recreational and medical marijuana are illegal substances in terms of the federal government. States with legalization in effect have age restrictions set for the protection of the public's health. However, something to consider is that alcohol and tobacco are legal substances, but demonstrate that legal isn't synonymous with safe.
- A common misperception argues that marijuana is a healthy substance because it is natural. Although marijuana does come from the cannabis plant, there are many health risks linked to its use. Tobacco, cocaine, and heroin are all naturally derived and have harmful side effects.
- Marijuana and brain development have a toxic relationship. Research shows that brain development doesn't finish until around age 25. Early use can be linked to far reaching health effects including memory loss, trouble with higher problem solving skills, and difficulty learning and processing information. 1 in 6 teens who try marijuana will become addicted.

What You Can Do:

- **Read the Signs:** Some signs and symptoms of use include social changes, declining performance in school and work, amotivational syndrome, health issues, dishonesty, and broken relationships. Overall you know your child best, so be aware of any present changes that could be linked to risky behavior.
- **Positive Approach:** Keep an open mind and eliminate judgement. Condemnation won't allow for your teen to be receptive to conversation. Try to put yourself in their shoes before starting a dialogue. Remember how tough life can seem as a teenager. Be sure to show empathy while eliciting trust.
- **Ask:** Try using open-ended questions that would evoke more than a simple "yes" or "no" response. Show that you really care and want to understand their point of view by asking follow up questions. Ask for permission when opening discussions with heavier subjects to create a safe space for conversation.



Prevention + Education + Intervention

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