

Alternatives to suspension for marijuana use: Assessing student and staff data

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Alternative to Suspension

- Tobacco and marijuana policy infractions alone account for 23% of the suspensions and expulsions for students in the region
- Schools' ability to provide in-house alternatives to suspension for tobacco and drug related issues was lost as a bi-product of the funding cuts
- An in-school, online intervention tool would help to alleviate the long-term impacts of suspension and expulsion first and foremost by keeping the student on campus for their discipline (vs. "school to prison pipeline")

Purpose of Pilot Study

- Determine the feasibility and initial efficacy of an internet-based marijuana program for high school students who would normally be suspended for first-time marijuana policy infractions
 - Alternative to out-of-school suspension, or to reduce number of out-of-school suspension days



Methods

- Work within districts' policies and procedures for suspension in the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 academic years
 - Based on a needs assessment across WA
- Reduced suspension days 50% if participated in program
- 4 school districts agreed to participate
 - 2 urban
 - 5 high schools
 - 2 rural
 - 3 high schools

Methods

- Marijuana 101 (3rd Millennium Classrooms)
<https://web.3rdmilclassrooms.com/courses/college/marijuana-101>
 - 4-hour online intervention course used for on-campus suspension for student marijuana violations; self-administered
 - Evidence-based intervention supported by research conducted on college students
 - This will be the first to test the feasibility and effectiveness of the program with high school students



COURSES + STRENGTHS + CONTACT +

SIGN UP FOR A COURSE

LOGIN



4-hour, online course for on-campus marijuana violations

We wrote that section

First developed in 2004 at the request of a major university, **Marijuana 101** is consistently updated with the latest and strongest research available. Six lessons cover a variety of key issues such as marijuana dependence, marijuana's effects, mental health issues, synthetic marijuana, local laws and legalization issues, and legal penalties associated with use.

Tailored to the individual, students receive a confidential personalized-feedback report that summarizes use and negative consequences, compares individual use with social norms, challenges personal expectations, and provides a range of strategies to quit.

Available in high school and workplace specific versions (see below).

REVIEW NOW

High School Workplace

Marijuana 101 HS

Marijuana 101 HS is an online intervention course for high school students who received a marijuana violation or a referral from a teacher or coach. Designed to educate students on the harmful effects of marijuana use for people their age, it can be offered as a standalone intervention or be combined with 4 Extended

Is Marijuana Addictive?



Is marijuana addictive?

Addiction means that people have a hard time controlling or stopping drug use, despite negative effects. Addiction can also lead to unpleasant withdrawal symptoms if people stop.

It is possible for regular users of marijuana to become addicted to it?

Approximately 15% of people entering drug abuse treatment say that marijuana is their primary drug of abuse.

Among people who have used marijuana in the last year, about 17% meet criteria for drug abuse or dependence.



In comparison, **57%** of people who have used heroin in the past year meet criteria for abuse or dependence, and 26% of people who have used cocaine in the past year meet criteria for abuse and dependence.

Marijuana addiction is less common than addiction to other drugs.

However, marijuana seems to be somewhat more addictive than alcohol. About **12%** of people who have consumed alcohol in the past year meet criteria for abuse or dependence.



If people use **greater amounts**, or start using at **younger ages** (in their teens), addiction is more likely.

For instance, one study of twins found that if one twin used marijuana before age 17, he or she was more likely to use and have problems with other drugs later on, compared to the twin that did not use marijuana before age 17.

Marijuana withdrawal is similar to nicotine withdrawal. Regular users who quit often report irritability, sleeping difficulties, and depression for a few days or weeks.

Experiences

Within the last **30 days**, how many times did you do the following?
Click "I did not experience this" if you have not experienced any of these.



Rode in an automobile when the driver was under the influence of marijuana and/or alcohol.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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I did not experience this

eCHECKUP TO GO Results

Potential Risks



Driving Under the Influence

You reported that:

- You drove **14 days in the past month** within 5 hours of using marijuana. It is likely that you were driving while intoxicated.
- In the past month, **you rode 15 days** with a driver who used marijuana in the 5 hours prior to driving. It is likely that your driver was driving while intoxicated.



Reliable research examining the effects marijuana on driving skills suggests that you are significantly more likely to be in a car crash after using marijuana. This research also shows that it **can take as long as 10 hours** for THC blood levels to return to safe driving levels.

You also said you ingested marijuana edibles **4** times in the past month.



If you use **marijuana as an edible (i.e., eat/ingest it)**, it may take even longer for your THC blood levels to return to safe driving levels.

Methods

- Student data
 - Within-student change tested over time (pre-online education vs. post-online education vs. 2-week follow-up)
 - Descriptive statistics for student personal use
- Staff data
 - Interviews with school staff used to assess feasibility of the program
 - Qualitative descriptive methodology

Preliminary results

- Student data
 - Marijuana 101 = 41 students
 - 2 high schools from 1 district



Preliminary results

- Participants
 - 91% male
 - 17 years of age
 - 62% White, 17% Asian or Pacific Islander
- Average use
 - 2.1 hours/week
 - 2.4 weeks/month
- Money spent on marijuana in a typical week
 - \$0 (50% endorsed)

Preliminary results

- Student data
 - **Knowledge**
 - Pre-test = 48.2% correct
 - Post-test = 82.6% correct
 - **Satisfaction** (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree)
 - Easy to understand M=3.97
 - Interesting and helpful M=3.74
 - Help me to avoid future problems M=3.53
 - Recommend to a friend M=3.00

Preliminary results

- Student data
 - **Personal use**
 - Age of first use was between 13 years (27%) and 16 years (27%)
 - 62% did not drink alcohol when using marijuana
 - 68% did not use edibles in the past 30 days
 - **>50% went to class while under the influence**
 - **20% drove within 5 hours of use; 44% were driven by someone within 5 hours of driver's use**

Preliminary results

- Student data
 - **Personal use**
 - Downsides: Feeling tire, unmotivated, or run down, coughing/breathing problems, trouble with work (30-50% endorsement)
 - I used because: **safer than other drugs (74%)**, have a good time (57%), help me sleep (57%), relaxes me (48%)
 - “Good things”: **relax, reduce stress**, helps me sleep, have fun (70-90% endorsement)

Preliminary results

- Student data
 - **Personal use**
 - Wished they spend more time on: getting a good's night sleep (88%), being more productive (85%), going to the gym (88%)
 - **50% want to change their personal use**
 - Have a plan for saying no, just not buy it, put paraphernalia out of sight, spend more time at the gym (70-90% endorsed)
 - However, **18% had no to little confidence** that they could change their use



Preliminary results

- Staff (N=4; 2 schools): Common perspectives about the program
 - **The online modules are easy to use and convenient**
 - By both staff and students, no issues reported
 - The module can be started immediately following every suspension
 - The online option does not require additional resources (teacher or staff) to carry out intervention
 - **The online option is still a consequence**
 - This is a positive! Staff and parents still want some sort of consequence; not a "walk in the park" for the students, they can't skip pages, it requires them to think and takes time

Preliminary results

- Staff: Common perspectives about the online option:
 - **Students have "buy-in"**
 - Realistic content describing both the benefits and negative consequences of using cannabis
 - **It got the student back to school**
 - Cut out of schools suspension time in half
 - The module was completed at home by most but some completed it on school campuses where they had access to a computer

Why this matters: Implications for school policy

- We found that an online program addressing marijuana was viewed favorably by school staff, and was able to increase knowledge of marijuana consequences in students completing the program
- Preliminary support for an alternative to out-of-school suspension that fits within current school policy
- Interest in embedding this in the curriculum
 - Also include Nicotine 101 and Alcohol Wise
- Not yet used in our rural school districts

Moving Forward

- Concurrent research is being conducted in which the parents and students are surveyed to explore perceptions of the program
- Comparing these results to school-level data
 - # of marijuana-related suspensions
 - Change over time
- Alcohol Wise and Nicotine 101 data to be analyzed
- Possible roll-out across the state?
- **Menu of options** for schools based on needs and current resources (Marijuana Education Initiative)

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