



The Dangerous Truth About Today's Marijuana:
Johnny Stack's Life and Death Story

By Laura Stack, Founder & CEO

JOHNNY'S
AMBASSADORS



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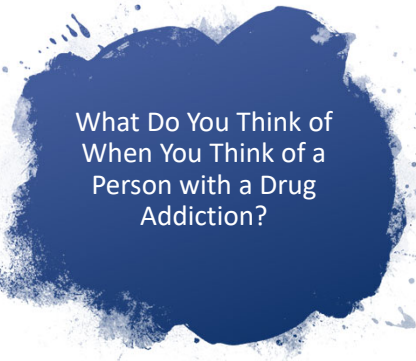
Suicide is an emotional topic. Discussing suicide and loss can bring up unexpected emotions or feelings.

Feel free to disconnect at any time.

The National Suicide Hotline is 800-273-TALK.

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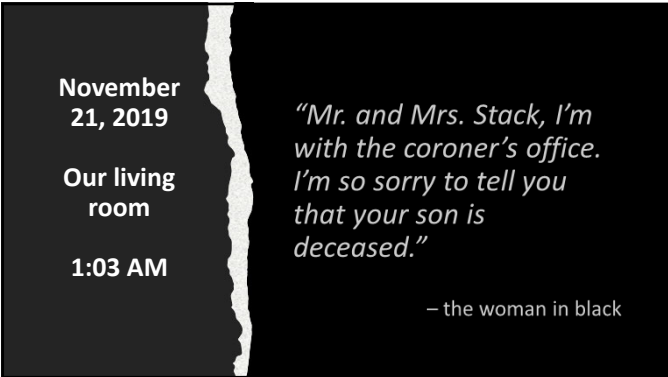
What Do You Think of When You Think of a Person with a Drug Addiction?

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The Timeline

- 2012: Colorado became the 1st state to legalize recreational marijuana.
- 2014: 9th grade. According to Johnny, pot was “everywhere,” and easy to get at high school parties. His friend had an 18-year-old brother with a med card.
- 2014: Concentrates more common on the market and “dabbing” became popular.


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NO, Not THIS Kind of Dabbing!

If you said to yourself, “What does she mean by ‘dabbing’?” you are not alone.



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How are Dabs Made?

- Dabs are marijuana extracts.
- Chemists run a solvent such as butane, ethanol, or propane through the cannabis plant.
- The THC leaves the plant material and dissolves into the solvent.
- The concentrated THC solution is filtered to remove (most of) the solvent and dried in a tray.
- The result is a sticky, bronze-colored oily substance that looks like beeswax or earwax.
- These can be additionally processed into distillates.
- Dabs are a chemical, not a plant, and they are highly potent, containing up to 99% THC.
- Dabs are typically heated on a hot surface, and the vapors are inhaled through a dab rig or pen.

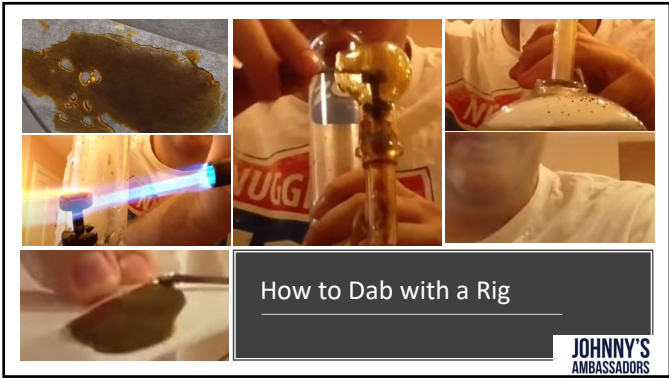
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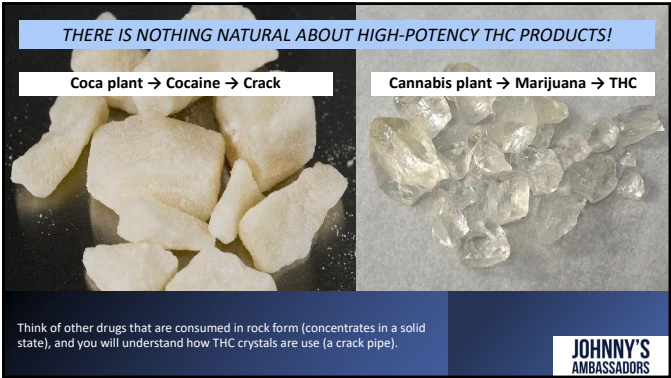
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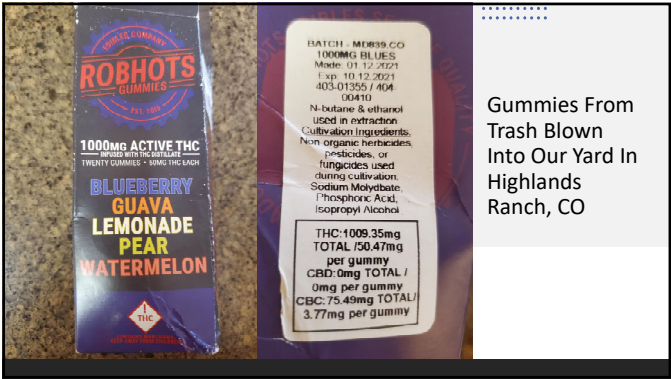
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Consumption Method	Potency	Total THC
Edible (one serving)	Varies	10 mg
Bowl (.25 g of flower) 60% loss to burning	18%	18 mg
Joint (.4 g of flower) requires more pot	18%	36 mg
Vape (1 g cart = 200 puffs)	80%	800 mg (4 mg per puff)
Dab (1 g of wax assume 8 "servings")	80%	800 mg (100 mg per serving)

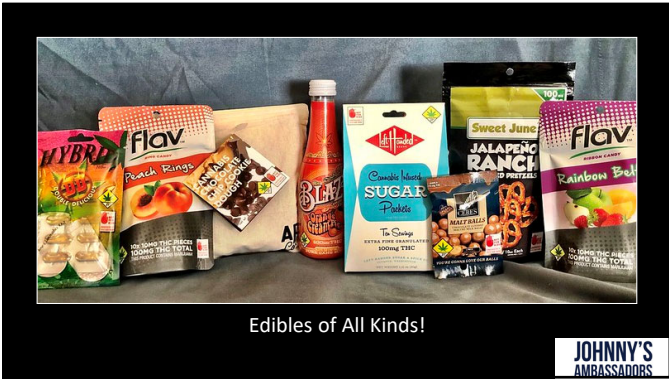
How Much THC
Is In Each
Method?

(Sample estimates
gathered from cannabis
websites, based on an
"average" size and
allowing for loss to
combustion.)

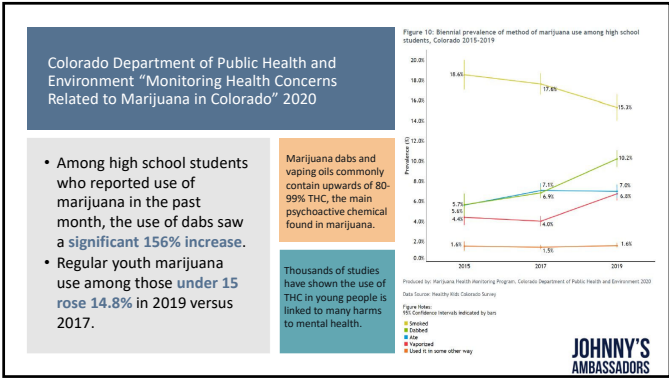
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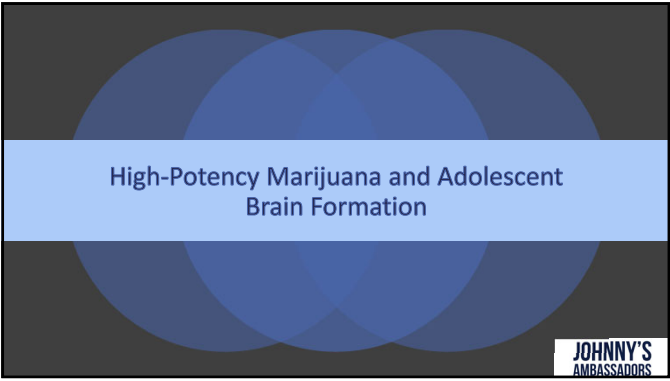
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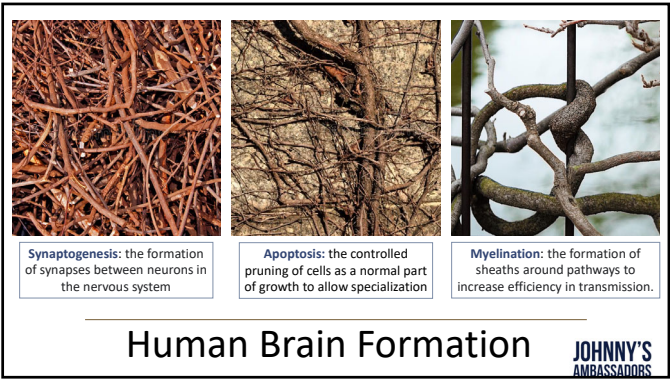
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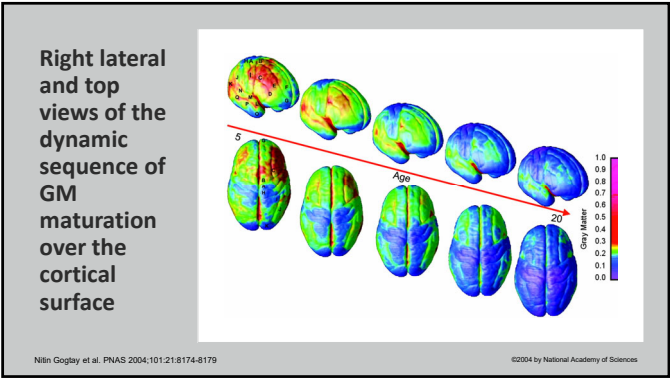
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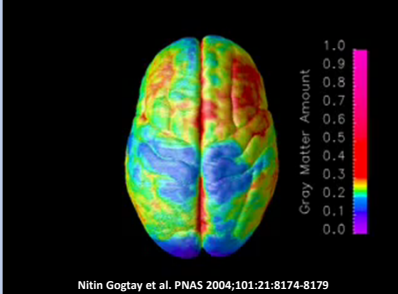


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Why is Marijuana So Much Worse for Adolescents? Their Brains Aren't Formed.



Nitin Gogtay et al. PNAS 2004;101:21:8174-8179

Video of Adolescent Brain Formation

Ages 5 to 20

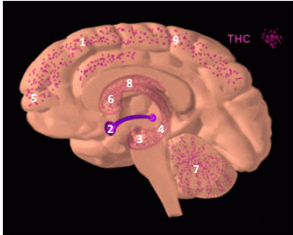
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Regions of the Brain Containing CB1 Receptors Impacted During Adolescent Brain Formation

Brain Part	Function	THC Impact
1. Prefrontal cortex	Executive function and higher reasoning	Increases impulsiveness and reduces judgment
2. Nucleus accumbens	The reward circuit	Increases euphoria; "hardwires" use
3. Amygdala	Emotions, fear, anxiety	Increases paranoia, panic
4. Hippocampus	Learning new information	Impairs memory
5. Orbitofrontal cortex	Motivation and drive	Decreases desire to do things
6. Basal ganglia	Planning and starting movement	Slows reaction time
7. Cerebellum	Motor skills, balance	Impairs coordination
8. Hypothalamus	Eating, sex drive	Increases appetite
9. Neocortex	Feeling and movement	Alters sensations

"THC IS NEUROTOXIC" – Dr. Paula Riggs, Denver Health



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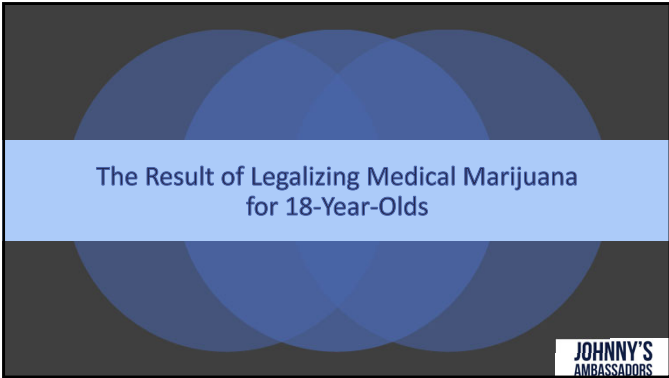
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The Impacts of Marijuana Use on Adolescents

Go to JohnnysAmbassadors.org/factorfiction for the game and the research

1. Marijuana dependence [\(a\)](#)
2. A decrease in IQ [\(b\)](#)
3. Increased risk of addiction with higher potency [\(c\)](#)
4. Increases the odds you'll use other drugs [\(d\)](#)
5. Can kill you from throwing up [\(e\)](#)
6. More likely to drop out of school [\(f\)](#)
7. Can result in psychosis and schizophrenia [\(g\)](#)
8. Decreases fertility rates [\(h\)](#)
9. Lowers motivation to do things [\(i\)](#)
10. Makes you paranoid and think others intend to harm you [\(j\)](#)
11. Damages your health [\(k\)](#)
12. Makes you a worse driver [\(l\)](#)

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The Timeline

- 2016: Johnny starts driving. Mood changes and anxiety begin.
- 2017: The fall of his senior year, the unraveling begins: defiance, running away, verbal abuse, marijuana vaping
- 2018: After his 18th birthday, Johnny leaves the home. Frequent, high-THC marijuana use, dealing, legal troubles, plummeting grades, and threats.

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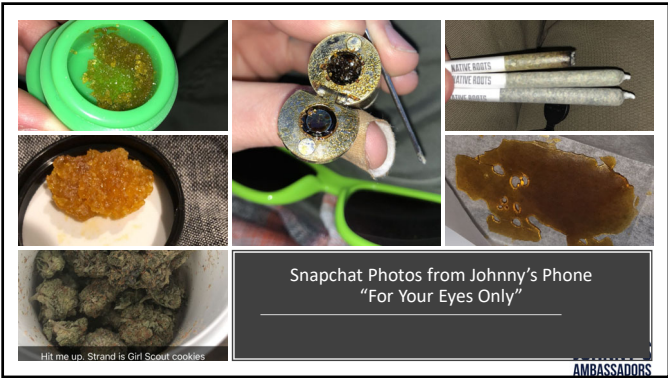
Johnny Came Full Circle.

He is Now the 18-Year-Old Marijuana Dealer with a Med Card.

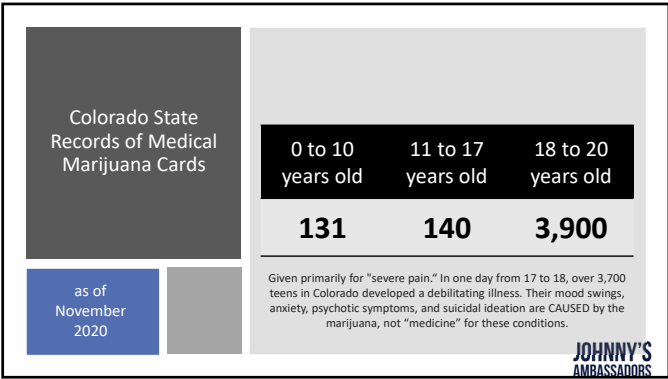
Johnny didn't have a single medical issue.

A collage of three photographs. The top photo shows a group of young people in a car. The bottom-left photo is a close-up of a person wearing large, round sunglasses. The bottom-right photo shows a person's face with a cigarette in their mouth. A text overlay at the bottom of the collage reads "Anyone wanna smoke me up before I my med card? 🤔".

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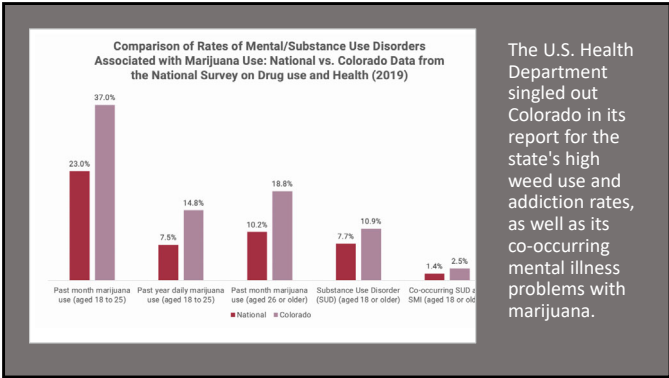


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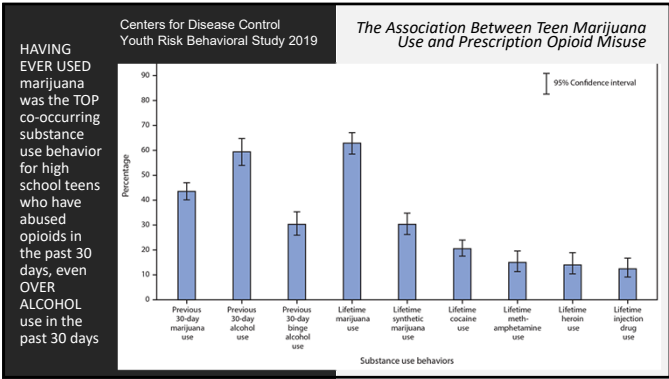
Does a Regulated Pot Industry Keep Marijuana Away from Our 18-Year-Old Kids?

- Can't get tobacco or alcohol legally but CAN obtain a medical marijuana card without parental knowledge or approval.
- Physician is not required to write a "prescription" with recommendations on the type of product, route of administration, amount used, frequency of use, and period of use.
- No requirement for follow-up appointments to determine whether the recommendation has been helpful or if there are side effects.
- Can take the card to the dispensary and get anything they want or is recommended by the person selling the products, "budtenders" who have no requirements for any medical training.
- Patients can purchase twice as much in the medical (2 ounces per day) versus recreational dispensary (1 ounce per day), and it is less expensive because of lower tax.
- No tracking to see if someone is going from dispensary to dispensary and purchasing more product, a process known as looping.
- The "doctor" is protected, so you can't find out who gave it to them. This is just like the "pill mills" in the opioid crisis – pay your \$500 and get your "prescription," which is only a recommendation to buy.

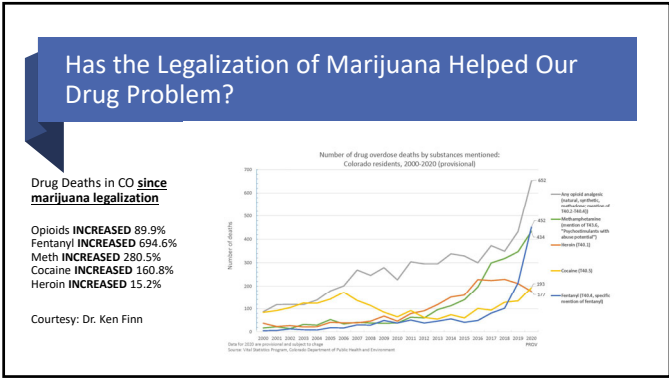
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Who Is To Blame for Johnny's Death?

Me? I didn't shove marijuana down his throat or push him off the building.

Johnny? He killed himself, but the marijuana made him psychotic. So, he wasn't in his right mind.

Marijuana? No, by itself, it's just a plant and not dangerous if you leave it alone.

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*** pot doc who gave Johnny a med card



George Soros, billionaire investor



John Sperling, billionaire donor



Aaron Smith, CEO National Cannabis Industry Association



Hugh Hefner, first donor to NORML



Robert Corry, attorney, founding father of amendment 64



Ethan Nadelmann, founder of the Drug Policy Alliance



Peter Lewis, billionaire donor



Troy Dayton, Founder, Arcview



Rob Kampia, co-founder of Marijuana Policy Project

Who Is to Blame for Johnny's Death?

These carpetbaggers who helped make marijuana legal.

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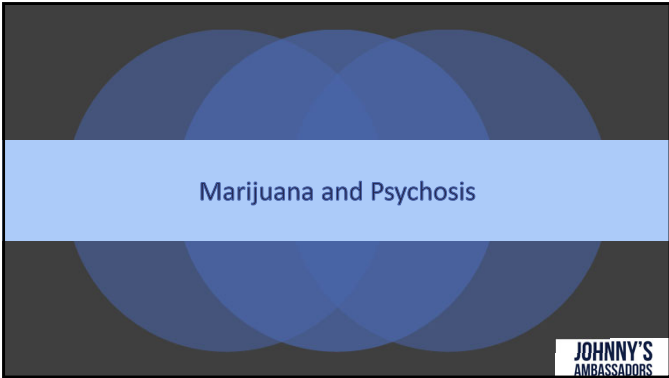
HEY KIDDOS, YOU WANT SOME CANDY? ..ER... I MEAN MARIJUANA?

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Addiction is an Adolescent-Onset Disease

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The Timeline

- 2018: May, Graduates high school with honors.
- 2018: August, Johnny attends university #1 on a scholarship. Dabs for two weeks and texts me he’s suicidal. 1st mental hospital stay, then 1st suicide attempt.
- 2018: Sept. to Dec, sober from MJ, recovers at home.
- 2019: January, Johnny attends university #2. First psychotic break and 2nd mental hospital stay.

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What Does Psychosis Look like?
Johnny’s Journals

A collage of handwritten journal entries. A diagonal white banner with the text "THC Abuse Severe" is overlaid across the center. The background text includes phrases like "January to May was just the...", "year had been leading up to...", "UNC, I frequented...", "seemingly a military...", "institution one...", "type of Federal...", "the United S...", "me knowing that I had to pretend to...", "the whole world knows about me...", and "made myself ignore and forget about it".

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How Do We
KNOW THC
Causes
Psychosis?

RESEARCH!

- MORRISON: THC administration in the clinic triggers psychosis in 40% of users with no family history of psychosis.
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3055738/pdf/npg2010222a.pdf>
- HINDLEY: A single THC administration induces significant psychotic, negative, total, and other psychiatric symptoms with large effect sizes in adults with no history of psychotic or other major psychiatric disorders.
[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366\(20\)30074-2/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366(20)30074-2/fulltext)
- D'SOUZA: The positive symptoms induced by D-9-THC included suspiciousness, paranoid and grandiose delusions, conceptual disorganization, and illusions. It also produced depersonalization, derealization, distorted sensory perceptions, altered body perception, feelings of unreality and extreme slowing of time. D-9-THC produced negative symptoms including blunted affect, reduced rapport, lack of spontaneity, psychomotor retardation, and emotional withdrawal. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/15173844/>

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Genetic vs Marijuana Onset Schizophrenia in an Email to Me by Dr. Robin Murray

You can have a heart attack because you have a heavy genetic loading, even if you exercise a lot.

You can develop schizophrenia because you have a heavy genetic loading, even if you never use marijuana.

Even if you have no genetic loading, you can have a heart attack because you never exercise and get fat.

Even if you have no genetic loading, you can develop schizophrenia because you use a lot of marijuana.

It's easiest to have a heart attack if you have genetic loading AND get very fat.

It's easiest to develop schizophrenia if you have genetic loading AND use marijuana.

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Marijuana and Suicide

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The Timeline

2019:

- May: Recovers on antipsychotics. Gets a job and rents a room.
- July: Moves to our condo and gets a new job at Petsmart.
- August: Goes to university #3 and gets a new puppy.
- September: Re-unites with an old girlfriend who suffers from mental illness and dabs every day. Starts dabbing again and drops out of school.
- October: Girlfriend punches him in the face. Quits marijuana, nicotine, and his antipsychotic meds for five weeks.

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Johnny Made a
Valiant Attempt to
Be Sober

October 2019

Girlfriend and I broke up, long story, but she punched me in the face and I now have a restraining order against her. A lot of old friends have changed and extremely dislike me for shit I did in the past I can't change, but I'm focusing on becoming a

Better person right now. Keeping the right influences and connections in my life to become who I want to be. I've stopped smoking for almost two weeks now, and I want it to stay that way. My head is already much clearer and I'm genuinely more happier

Being who I am and not worrying about what other people think of me. I don't have anything to prove to people who's main personality trait is smoking a drug

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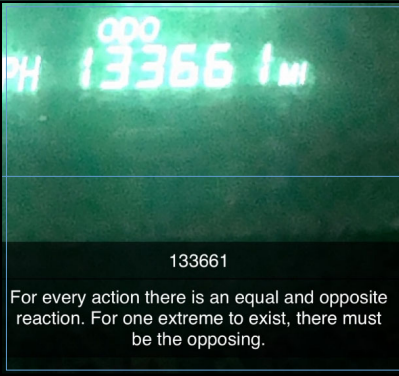
**Three Days Before
Johnny's Death**

Nov. 17, 2019

"I just want you to know that you were right all along. You told me marijuana would hurt my brain. It's ruined my mind and my life, and I'm sorry. I love you."

— Johnny Stack

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Johnny's
Suicide
Snapchat

133661

For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. For one extreme to exist, there must be the opposing.

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Marijuana
and Suicide

Research
Shows a
Connection

Two independent studies of adolescents who use marijuana have demonstrated a big elevation in suicide attempts:

1. The first study was a large longitudinal study of over 2000 adolescents conducted in Australia and New Zealand, which found that teens who are daily users of marijuana before age 17 had a seven-fold increase in suicide attempts compared to non-users.
[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366\(14\)70307-4/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366(14)70307-4/fulltext)
2. The second study was conducted with 700 teens and corrected for a prior history of depression or other mood disorders. In other words, they factored out kids who were already depressed when they started using marijuana. They found that marijuana use in those who weren't depressed before increased the risk of a suicide attempt 7.5-fold.
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4219077/pdf/wps0013-0322.pdf>

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Figure 3. Rate of Suicide Among Youth Ages 15-19 in Colorado (Deaths Per 100,000)



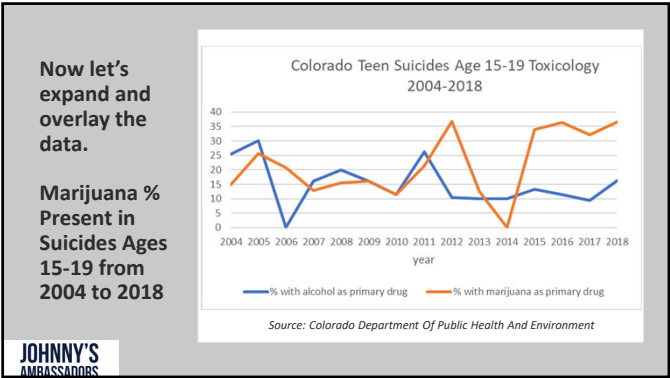
Year	Rate (Deaths Per 100,000)
2010	11.5
2011	12.5
2012	11.8
2013	13.8
2014	12.6
2015	20.4
2016	18.1
2017	20.5
2018	18.3
2019	21.0

Source: Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

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What happened in Colorado in 2014?
Coincidence?

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To Summarize

1. Repeated cannabis use in teens interferes with the development of the prefrontal cortex, (the part of the brain directly behind the forehead), which affects executive functions. The PFC is particularly active in adolescence, as the brain prunes some synaptic connections and firms up those most useful.
2. There's no doubt marijuana impacts mental development in young people, which is also why it's illegal for recreational use until the age of 21. Even proponents of marijuana acknowledge this science.
3. The loophole for young people ages 18-to-20 to get "medical" cards makes it worse. They can't buy alcohol or cigarettes, but they can lie about having a migraine and legally buy shatter and sell it to other younger children (this creates the GRAY market).
4. Our youth are becoming psychotic and dying by suicide at alarming rates.

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What Should I Have Done?
What Can Parents Do?

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Parenting Recommendations

(Looking back – what I wish I would have done better doing)

- Start talking about marijuana (and alcohol and cigarette) use early!
- Discuss short-term and long-term risks of marijuana risks
- Set clear NO USE rules, including appropriate consequences for breaking these rules
- Keep lines of communication open
- Keep track of your children and their phones
- Pick up anywhere, anytime – no questions asked
- Monitor your own behavior
- Help your child plan for social pressure to use
- NEVER provide your child with marijuana, no matter the age
- Teach and practice refusal skills

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The 3-S Marijuana Refusal Method (or Any Drug)

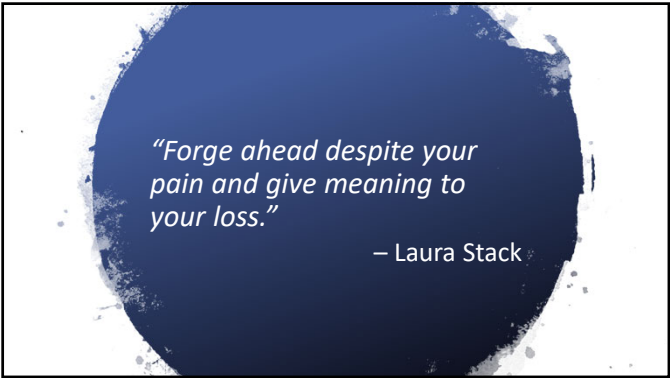
State Your Reasons	Suggest Something Else	Stick to Your Boundaries
<p>"My parents drug test me."</p> <p>"I don't want to mess up my brain."</p> <p>"I'm driving."</p>	<p>"Why don't we go..."</p> <p>"Let's do this instead..."</p> <p>"This would be more fun..."</p>	<p>"Seriously, I don't want it."</p> <p>"I don't want to disappoint my folks."</p> <p>"If you keep bugging me, I'm out of here."</p>

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The Death of a Son and Birth of a Mission

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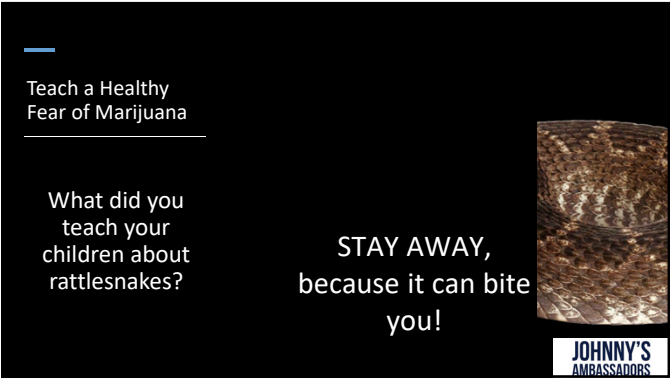
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We gratefully accept donations: johnnysambassadors.org/donate

Sign Up

Join our weekly newsletter: JohnnysAmbassadors.org/blog

Share

Join and share our Facebook posts:
facebook.com/groups/JohnnysAmbassadors

Show Up

Join us for the 2nd Annual #StopDabbing Walk on Sunday,
September 19, 2021: StopDabbingWalk.com

Speak Out

Get involved: JohnnysAmbassadors.org/join

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YOU KNOW WHAT
TO DO



Laura@JohnnysAmbassadors.org

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