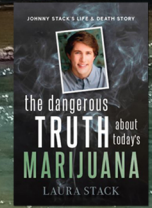


# The Dangerous Truth About Today's Marijuana: Johnny Stack's Life and Death Story

## DISCUSSION GUIDE



### Welcome to the Club!

Whether you're completing this Discussion Guide individually or with a club, welcome! We are so grateful to count you as one of Johnny's Ambassadors, who are working hard to educate parents and teens around the world about the dangers of today's high-THC marijuana on adolescent brain development, mental illness, and suicide.

Through Johnny's tragic story, which is ultimately a message of hope, you'll gain the knowledge you need to share his message and warning. It isn't an easy journey, and you may be ridiculed by people who want society to believe today's marijuana is harmless. We will not be silent and are determined to share the truth! This book, *The Dangerous Truth About Today's Marijuana: Johnny Stack's Life and Death Story*, will arm you with the research you need to counter those claims. Please join us in our mission to save our youth from the harms of marijuana!

If you have your own book club, thank you for selecting *The Dangerous Truth About Today's Marijuana: Johnny Stack's Life and Death Story* to read and study. We encourage all participants to:

1. Read a little every day. It's potentially difficult to absorb two chapters in one day, so plan on finishing the assignment a couple days before the next book club meeting. This will give you time to review and prepare for each session.
2. Answer the discussion guide questions as you complete each chapter, while the content is still fresh in your mind. Questions may cover your personal observations, interpretation, possible applications, or the implications for your life or family.
3. Write down important page numbers that made an impact on you or gave you an "ah-ha!" moment. Highlight and use sticky notes liberally.
4. For each chapter, write your reflections and an additional discussion question for that group related to your personal observations or situation. *(Please share your bonus questions with me, so I can add them to this document.)*
5. Come to each book club meeting fully prepared—don't try to "wing it." Scheduling conflicts will arise, and sessions can be recorded, but do your best to be consistent in attending for the benefit of your fellow group members. You'll find that careful preparation will greatly enrich your learning and time spent in group discussion.
6. Participate! Facilitators will not be lecturing; rather, they will encourage you to discuss what you learned and how to apply it.
7. Stick to the topic being discussed, listen attentively, and engage all participants.

Thank you very much for your participation and for honoring my son's life and legacy with your time.

Laura Stack

Founder & CEO, Johnny's Ambassadors

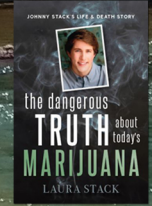
Author, *The Dangerous Truth About Today's Marijuana: Johnny Stack's Life and Death Story*

Email [Laura@JohnnysAmbassadors.org](mailto:Laura@JohnnysAmbassadors.org) or call 303-471-7401.

Upcoming scheduled Johnny's Ambassadors Book Clubs: <https://JohnnysAmbassadors.org/bookclub>

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

## DISCUSSION GUIDE



### Facilitator Notes

Here are some answers to frequently asked questions that might be helpful as you run or form your club.

1. **FREQUENCY.** What's the best way to cover the content? While your format, meeting times, and length may vary, we suggest the following six-week schedule:

Week 1: Introduction

Week 2: Chapters 1 & 2

Week 3: Chapters 3 & 4

Week 4: Chapters 5 & 6

Week 5: Chapters 7 & 8

Week 6: Chapters 9 & 10 and conclusion

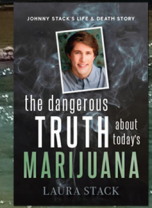
If a weekly meeting seems to be too much, you could meet every other week, which would result in a three-month program. Or, if you have seasoned readers, you can condense the program into three or six weeks (group by Intro/Chapters 1-2, Chapters 3-6, Chapters 7-10).

Feel free to adjust the timing to the needs of your groups, holidays, other initiatives, etc.

2. **LENGTH.** How long should the meetings run? We schedule 90 minutes per session, to make sure we have enough time if discussions run long. You can also try one hour and adjust as necessary.
3. **GROUP SIZE.** How many people should be in our book club? We suggest limiting each book club to 25 participants maximum, and even that is quite large. A group of 7-10 is best for maximum conversation and ability for each person to contribute.
4. **LOCATION.** Where should I hold the book club meetings?
  - If you have a physical book club, you can hold them in someone's home, a local coffee shop, or at the library.
  - If your club members are geographically disbursed, you can hold meetings via phone, FaceTime, GoToMeeting.com, Zoom, or another virtual platform.
5. **IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.** Before the first meeting:
  - Decide how often your book club will meet (how much material you'll cover in each session).
  - Decide how long each session will be.
  - Query your group to discover any major scheduling conflicts.
  - Schedule the book club meeting dates by sending out a meeting invitation to each person. Make sure to include the login link for virtual meetings.
  - Distribute this Discussion Guide to each participant.
  - Send the [link to purchase the book](#) and make sure each person has a copy.
  - Send out a reminder before each book club meeting to read the chapters assigned that week and complete the Discussion Questions.

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

## **DISCUSSION GUIDE**



### **FACILITATION POINTERS**

Here are some reminders on the role of a facilitator:

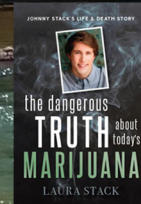
1. Read the assigned chapters from the book and answer the discussion questions yourself, well in advance. This tip may seem obvious, but it's one of the most important.
2. Welcome participants and make any opening comments.
3. Guide the group through each chapter and its discussion questions.
4. Read each question and let others answer first. Rotate who answers first, so everyone has a chance to participate and express opinions and insights.
5. You are still a participant, so participate actively in the discussion.
6. Don't try to be a teacher.
7. Move the conversation along efficiently.
8. Rein in tangents. Going off topic a little is fine but recognize group members have all read the book and expect to talk about it, not just one person's story.
9. "Go with the flow," in any order that makes sense for your group. (If someone gives an answer to question 3 that connects well with question 6, don't feel obligated to answer questions 4 and 5 in order before moving to 6).
10. Occasionally direct questions toward quiet people, but don't put them on the spot.
11. Remind participants to stick to the topic being discussed, listen attentively, and engage all members equally.
12. If you run out of questions, ask each participant to share the Bonus Discussion Question they wrote for each chapter.

### **Write Your Own Ideas and Goals for the Group**



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

## **DISCUSSION GUIDE**



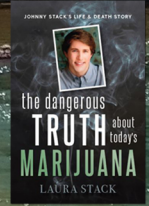
### **Before You Begin: Pre-Read Assessment**

Prior to the start of your book club, test your knowledge by answering the following questions:

1. What is dabbing?
2. Define a cannabinoid.
3. What is the difference between THC and CBD?
4. How does marijuana make a user “high”?
5. What is the difference between cannabis and marijuana and hemp?
6. What is the Endocannabinoid System (ECS)?
7. What’s the difference between flower and concentrate?
8. What does potency mean?
9. How many different ways can a user consume marijuana (what products)?
10. How has marijuana changed since “Woodstock days” in the 70s, 80s, and 90s?

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

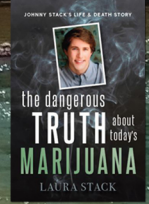
## **DISCUSSION GUIDE**



11. At what age does the brain's frontal lobe, responsible for risk vs. reward decision making, fully develop?
12. How does marijuana affect the development of the human brain?
13. Do you know the significance of 420 Day and 710 Day?
14. What age should you begin educating your child about drugs?
15. What are three (of the 12 mentioned) ways marijuana harms adolescents?
16. Name five potential negative health implications if your child uses marijuana.
17. At what age can a teen obtain a medical marijuana card in Colorado?
18. Is parental approval required to obtain a medical marijuana card if the child is under 21?
19. What is the #1 cause of death for youths aged 10-19 in Colorado?
20. Research shows that use of marijuana with a THC content over 10% increases the risk of suicide by what percentage and a psychotic disorder by what percentage?
21. What two documents should parents have in place before their child leaves for college, so they can have greater control over their child's medical decisions?

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

## **DISCUSSION GUIDE**



### **Week 1: Introduction**

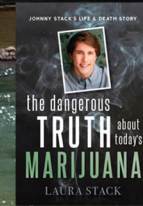
This week, book club participants will get to know each other and the facilitator.

1. Get to know your fellow book club members. Round Robin, introduce yourself to the other participants. Tell us a little bit about your background and why you joined this group. Do you have a loved one who has been personally impacted by marijuana use? Specifically, what is your interest in reading this book?
2. Watch the book trailer at <https://vimeo.com/542928657>.
3. Ask a volunteer to read the book Introduction on pages xix and xx.
4. Meet Johnny. You likely did not have a chance to meet Johnny personally. Let's learn a little bit about his life by watching his tribute video:  
<https://vimeo.com/productivitypro/johnnytribute>
5. Go through the answers to the assessment questions from the Before You Read section above. The answers are on the next page upside down.



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

## DISCUSSION GUIDE

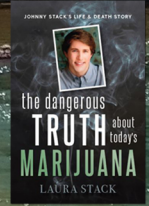


### Answers to the Pre-Read Assessment

1. Inhaling the vapors from a heated marijuana concentrate such as wax, shatter, or crystalline.
2. Cannabinoids are chemicals that occur in the cannabis plant. There are over 80 cannabinoids. Our bodies also produce natural cannabinoids called anandamide and 2-arachidonylglycerol (2-AG).
3. THC, or delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol, is the psychoactive cannabinoid in marijuana; CBD or cannabidiol is the 2nd most common cannabinoid in the cannabis plant, and it can't get you high and is possibly a protective factor to balance the THC.
4. The THC molecule is similar to the body's natural endocannabinoid (anandamide). THC enters the bloodstream and binds to CB1 (cannabinoid 1) and CB2 (cannabinoid 2) receptors throughout the brain and body and "tricks" the system into thinking it's the real thing, thereby blocking the real thing.
5. Cannabis is a genus of plant; marijuana is a species of cannabis that has greater than .03% THC; hemp is a species of cannabis that has less than .03% THC (delta 9). Delta 8, 9, and 10 can be derived from either marijuana or hemp.
6. The endocannabinoid system (ECS) is a complex cell-signaling system that plays a role in regulating a range of functions and processes, including sleep, mood, appetite, memory, reproduction, and fertility. The ECS exists and is active in your body even if you don't use cannabis, but it is negatively impacted when it interacts with THC.
7. Flower is the plant or herb part of the plant ("weed" or "grass"), while concentrates have all plant matter removed through solvents and laboratory processes, so that just the THC remains (the plant matter is discarded). Concentrates are chemicals, not plants, and there is nothing "natural" about them.
8. Potency refers to the percentage of THC present in the particular marijuana product (e.g., 28% in flower or 80% in dabs). The number of marijuana products available today is staggering! They include flower, concentrates, edibles such as candy and bakery goods, vape/oil, tinctures (flavoring people put on or in food), tampons, suppositories, inhalants, drinks, and more.
10. Until the 90s, marijuana averaged between 2-5% THC. Today, due to cultivation for higher and higher levels of THC and lower amounts of CBD, it's impossible to find marijuana flower in a dispensary lower than 10%, and many near 30% THC (a hard drug is anything over 10% THC). Concentrates weren't commercialized until after 2010 and range from 60% to 99% potency.
11. Most scientists believe the female brain finishes forming at 25, and the male brain can continue formation until 28 or 30.
12. The brain forms back to front and bottom to top. THC in the developing brain disrupts its normal development of synaptogenesis (formation of synapse between neurons in the nervous system); Apoptosis (the controlled pruning of cells as a normal part of growth to allow specialization); and Myelination (the formation of sheaths around pathways to increase efficiency of transmission). MRIs show the cortices of youth who use marijuana before this process is complete have more thinning, meaning parts were pruned they might have wanted to keep.
13. 420 Day is a holiday celebrating marijuana. Users smoke marijuana at 4:20 PM on April 20. 710 Day is a holiday celebrating concentrates (on a calculator, 710 spells "OIL" when held upside down). Users dab at 7:10 PM on July 10.
14. As early as possible, in an age-appropriate fashion, starting at 5 years old, adding more information at 10, 13, 16, 18, and always.
15. Marijuana dependence, decreased IQ, increased risk of addiction with higher potency, increased odds of using other drugs, death from throwing up, more likely to drop out of school, possible psychosis and schizophrenia, decreased fertility rate, lower motivation to do things, possible paranoid and thoughts that others intend to harm you, health damages, poor driving skills.
16. Addiction, brain health, increased heart rate, mental illness, poisoning (especially ingesting edibles), increased risk of stroke and heart disease, heavy cough, chemicals and tar that raise concerns about risk for cancer and lung disease, large airway inflammation, increased airway resistance, lung hyperinflation, chronic bronchitis, respiratory problems, reduction of respiratory system's immune response, leading to lung infections such as pneumonia, EVALI leading to death, to name some.
17. 18 years old (by making up a non-specific diagnosis such as migraines).
18. No! Anyone between 18-21 can legally buy shatter in CO from a medical marijuana dispensary with a "red" (medical) card.
19. Suicide. In 2018, over 36% of suicides in youth ages 15-19 had THC in their toxicology reports.
20. Using marijuana over 10% increases risk of suicide by 7-fold and risk of developing a psychotic disorder by 5-fold.
21. HIPPA and POA (Power of Attorney)

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

## **DISCUSSION GUIDE**



### **Week Two: Chapters 1 & 2**

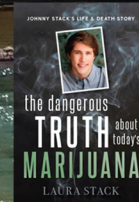
#### **Discussion Questions for Chapter 1: THE BELOVED SON**

1. This chapter unveiled beautiful reflections and traditions by Johnny's family in the form of the eulogies shared at his celebration of life service. What kind of traditions do you share with your family that you believe will bring fond memories to your loved ones at your memorial service? If you don't have family traditions, what kind of traditions would you like to establish in your family? What memories did the eulogies trigger for you about your own personal life experiences?
2. Share a memory from one of the eulogies delivered at Johnny's Celebration of Life Service that is a testament to his character.
3. What resonates with you the most about Johnny as a child? Does he remind you of your children in any way? How is he different?
4. On page 13, Laura stated, I used to think, "My kids would never be drug addicts because we raised them in the church, so they have a solid value system." What have you done to establish a solid value system in your child/children? Have you ever fallen prey to similar false thinking?
5. How do you think Johnny's intellect and falling GPA, overlaid by the psychosis, contributed to his suicidality?



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

## **DISCUSSION GUIDE**



### **My Reflections on Chapter 1**

### **Write Your Own Discussion Question**

#### **RELATED CHAPTER VIDEOS**

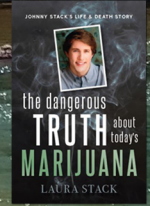
“Vision is Victory: Why Vision Builds Family Unity and Improves Adolescent Mental Health” with Carey Conley: <https://johnnysambassadors.org/ja200731>

“Parenting a Unicorn: How Your Children’s Temperament Could Drive Them Towards Risk” with Wendy Gossett: <https://johnnysambassadors.org/ja200814>

“Anti-Cannabis Parenting Tactics: Changes You Can Make to Lower Risk Behavior by Your Teen” with Bobby Smyth, Ph.D.: <https://johnnysambassadors.org/ja210212>

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

## **DISCUSSION GUIDE**



### **Discussion Questions for Chapter 2: THE TEENAGE YEARS**

1. After Johnny died, Laura researched the possibility that Johnny could have had a genetic predisposition to mental illness from his paternal grandfather, John Drew. Her conclusion was that his grandfather never showed signs of psychosis, and Johnny never showed signs of psychosis until after using marijuana; therefore, their conditions were unrelated. Are you aware of any genetic predispositions your child or loved one may have and what can you do to help prevent manifestations? Does addiction run in your family?
2. What are your thoughts about the Mom/Dad Agreement? Has your family used similar agreements? What parenting tools have you found to be most effective?
3. Johnny told his mom about his first use of marijuana. Unfortunately, telling Johnny about marijuana's negative impact on IQ did not change his involvement with this drug. Do you think if Johnny's parents had known about marijuana-induced psychosis, conveying that information would have made a difference?
4. On pages 43-45, Laura covered the ten most likely "tip-offs" that your teen may be using marijuana. Have you ever recognized any of the tip-offs in a loved one? If so, how did you handle it?
5. Laura discovered hidden pictures on Johnny's SnapChat app of him using and dealing marijuana. What do you know about the social media accounts your children use?

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

## **DISCUSSION GUIDE**



### **My Reflections on Chapter 2**

### **Write Your Own Discussion Question**

#### **RELATED CHAPTER VIDEOS**

“Listen So Your Teen Will Talk: Effective Parenting Tools & Strategies from “Motivational Interviewing” and “Natural Highs” with Avani Dilger: <https://johnnysambassadors.org/ja200925>

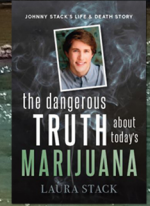
“A Parent’s Guide to HOW Marijuana and THC Concentrates are Produced” with James Henning: <https://johnnysambassadors.org/ja210319>

“Don’t Play Cat and Mouse with Teens and Cannabis” with Neil D. Brown, LCSW: <https://johnnysambassadors.org/ja210305>



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

## **DISCUSSION GUIDE**



### **Week 3 - Chapters 3 & 4**

#### **Discussion Questions for Chapter 3: THE DESCENT**

1. As circumstances continued to become more serious and dangerous, the Stack family set some clear boundaries for Johnny's behavior and their expectations. If you are comfortable sharing, have you ever had to set similar boundaries with a family member and was it effective?
2. Laura and John wrote a letter to Johnny stating guidelines for him should he choose to continue living in their home. Laura expressed regret for not following through with drug testing. Are you familiar with at-home drug tests? Do you think they are a good tactic to use with teens?
3. Laura seems to blame herself for some of the angry outbursts she directed at Johnny as his use suddenly became more worrisome. Is it always the case that parents should be calm, or are there occasions when anger is what is necessary to get the attention of the child?

#### **My Reflections on Chapter 3**

#### **Write Your Own Discussion Question**

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

## **DISCUSSION GUIDE**



### **RELATED CHAPTER VIDEOS**

“Marijuana and Teens: Brain Under Construction” with Matthew Quinn, MCP, LCPC, CADC:

<https://johnnysambassadors.org/ja210219>

“Medical Marijuana: Fact or Fiction” with Roneet Lev, MD, FACEP:

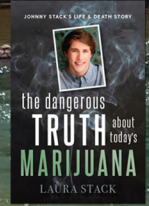
<https://johnnysambassadors.org/ja210716>

“Where Does Cannabis Go in The Body? The Adolescent Brain and The Effects Of THC” with Dr. Zerrin

Atakan: <https://johnnysambassadors.org/ja210430>

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

## **DISCUSSION GUIDE**



### **Discussion Questions for Chapter 4: THE BREAK**

1. In 2018, shortly after entering his first university, Johnny shared his first indication of suicide ideation with his mother, “Is it normal to think about killing myself every day?” Learning what we now know about how marijuana use can lead to suicidal ideation, attempts, or perhaps an eventual successful suicide completion, how should you respond if a loved one expresses having these type thoughts?
2. When Johnny turned 18 and revoked his consent for Laura to access his medical information, how do you suspect she felt? What do you think we should do as a society to get mental health treatment for adult children who won’t accept help but are suffering with substance use disorders?
3. During Johnny’s first suicide attempt, Laura and John were over an hour away. However, Laura was able to get the police to thwart Johnny’s attempt to leave his home by blocking him from driving away. What do you think may have happened if the police had not intervened that day?

### **My Reflections on Chapter 4**

### **Write Your Own Discussion Question**



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

## **DISCUSSION GUIDE**



### **RELATED CHAPTER VIDEOS**

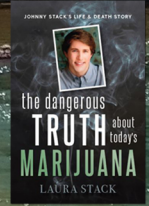
“21st Century Weed” with Ben Cort: <https://johnnysambassadors.org/ja201023/>

“How Do I Know? A Parent’s Guide to Detect Vaping, Alcohol, and Drug Abuse” with Detective Richard Wistocki: <https://johnnysambassadors.org/ja201226>

“E-cigs, Vaping & Marijuana: Emerging Drug Trends in Today’s Adolescents” with Aaron Weiner, Ph.D.: <https://johnnysambassadors.org/ja200904>

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

## **DISCUSSION GUIDE**



### **Week 4: Chapters 5 & 6**

#### **Discussion Questions for Chapter 5: THE PSYCHOSIS**

1. We read some vivid descriptions of some of Johnny's psychotic episodes. Before reading this book, were you familiar with psychotic behaviors? Have you ever had any of these experiences with a loved one or witnessed these behaviors?
2. Johnny said he had green poo inside his brain wreaking havoc. He said the FBI had bugged his phone. He leaned over the rail to scare his mom at the theater. What symptoms of psychosis did Johnny exhibit during this phase of his mental health crisis?
3. Laura shares a beautiful letter written by Jill Parry, whom Laura characterizes as an angel. Jill had a chance meeting with Johnny on the light rail when she had traveled to Denver with her husband on a business trip. She spent a good amount of time with him talking and having lunch. It appears as though this new encounter had a big impact on both Johnny and Jill. Can you remember a time you had a chance encounter like this that left an indelible impact on your life?

#### **My Reflections on Chapter 5**

#### **Write Your Own Discussion Question**

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

## **DISCUSSION GUIDE**



### **RELATED CHAPTER VIDEOS**

“Cannabis Use and Psychosis: The Chicken or the Egg” with Dr. Marta Di Forti:

<https://johnnysambassadors.org/ja210618>

“The Impact of Cannabis Use on the Frequency of Psychosis Across Countries and Time” with Dr. Robin Murray: <https://johnnysambassadors.org/ja210312>

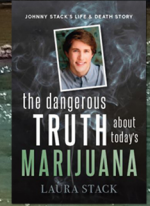
“THIS Is How Cannabis Can CAUSE Psychosis” with Erik Messamore, MD:

<https://johnnysambassadors.org/ja201009>



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

## **DISCUSSION GUIDE**



### **Discussion Questions for Chapter 6: THE RISE AND FALL**

1. In this chapter, we read many of Johnny's written essays and lists. What kind of insight do they give you into his personality and state of mind?
2. On pages 147-149, we read Johnny's gratitude journal and an essay. Have you ever kept a gratitude journal for an extended period of time? If so, what positive things came from that experience that you can share with others? What entries would you make in yours, today?
3. On page 153, we read Johnny's bucket list. What can you infer about his life goals and desires based on the things on his list? Does this appear to be the writing of a suicidal person?
4. When the new roommates in Denver offered Johnny weed, he was at his weakest point and could not refuse. What are the harsh realities he faces in this chapter? Why do you think he didn't say no?

### **My Reflections on Chapter 6**

### **Write Your Own Discussion Question**

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

## **DISCUSSION GUIDE**



### **RELATED CHAPTER VIDEOS**

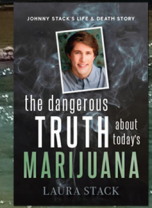
“What Parents Need to Know about Adolescent Marijuana Use in a Growing Legalized Environment” with Paula Riggs, MD: <https://johnnysambassadors.org/ja210402>

“What the Science Says About Cannabis and What It Means for Parents” with Jason R. Kilmer, Ph.D.: <https://johnnysambassadors.org/ja210326>

“The Neuroscience of High-Risk Behavior: Scientific Justification for Marijuana Use Prevention” by Crystal Collier, Ph.D., LPC-S: <https://johnnysambassadors.org/ja200918>

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

## **DISCUSSION GUIDE**



### **Week 5: Chapters 7 & 8**

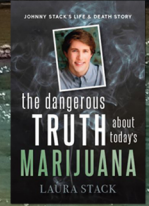
#### **Discussion Questions for Chapter 7: THE DEMISE**

1. In this chapter Johnny tells Laura, “Mom, I just want you to know you were right. You were right all along. You told me marijuana would hurt my brain. Marijuana has ruined my mind and my life. I’m sorry, and I love you.” How have these words inspired the author’s sharing of her son’s important message to the world?
2. Johnny thought the Trans Magnetic Stimulation was working, but he relapsed to marijuana use, then quit again. On the day he died, he went to his TMS session as scheduled and had the oil changed in his car. Were there any clues on November 20, 2019, that Johnny was going to follow through with the actions that lead to his death? Would his prior suicide attempt 14 months earlier be a warning?
3. Johnny’s family asked him numerous times to continue his antipsychotic medications to help control the delusional thoughts. Johnny refused and believed that he did not need the medication. They must have all felt so helpless. Have you ever had an experience with a loved one diagnosed with a mental disorder who didn’t want to follow proper treatment or take medications? If so, what strategies did you use that were successful? Unsuccessful?
4. It appears that Johnny wanted to recover from his dependency on marijuana. On November 2, 2019, only 18 days before his death, he created a to-do list, tv shows to watch, and books he wanted to read (pages 171-172). Is there anything on those lists that appears to be a red flag of suicidality? Share something that resonates with you on his list which you believe demonstrates his state of mind at the time.



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

## **DISCUSSION GUIDE**



5. Three days before he died, Johnny went to his parents' home for dinner. After arriving, Johnny expressed he wanted to go to church. Laura told him church had been that morning, but he didn't have to go to church to ask the Lord to come back into his life. He seemed content with her explanation, and they proceeded to continue dinner preparations. He hugged his mom, which Laura recalls vividly as an act of reconciliation, which at the time pleased her. Looking back, she believes it was a suicide indicator she missed. If you're willing to share, have you experienced suicidal ideation, an attempt, or suicide of a loved one? Looking back, can you see any indicators that might help someone else in a similar situation?
  
6. What influence do you think watching the series "The Good Place" might have had on his decision to die by suicide?

### **My Reflections on Chapter 7**

### **Write Your Own Discussion Question**

### **RELATED CHAPTER VIDEOS**

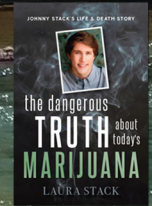
"CANNABIS: The Basics and Beyond from the Emergency Room" with Karen Randall, MD:  
<https://johnnysambassadors.org/ja201218>

"I'm Still Here: A Personal Story and Practical Plan for Suicide Prevention" with Dave Crenshaw:  
<https://johnnysambassadors.org/ja200821>

"Youth Suicide Prevention in Colorado: Risk and Protective Factors" with Lena Heilmann, Ph.D., MNM:  
<https://johnnysambassadors.org/ja200828>

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

## DISCUSSION GUIDE

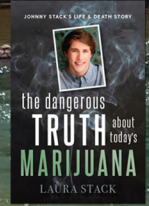


### Discussion Questions for Chapter 8: THE AFTERMATH

1. This chapter gives valuable advice about the grieving process. Do you have experiences you are willing to share regarding these topics that may benefit others going through similar challenges?
2. There is no one right way to grieve, but what were some key elements of the Stack's grieving process that were very helpful to them?
3. "He wasn't depressed, neglected, on drugs, or unloved. He was psychotic, paranoid, and delusional from the marijuana. His torment caused him to take his own life to escape his pain and his imagined persecutors" (page 196). After reading about Johnny's struggle, do you have compassion for him? How do you describe the state of mind he must have been in?
4. Laura received this message from a young lady who had been in the second mental hospital with Johnny, "I am SO SORRY he chose this path. As a suicide survivor, I can tell you, he NEVER wanted to hurt you. We see it as stopping the pain. We don't see it as it is and what it does to the rest of the family. If I can offer anything to you, it would be that Johnny was a beautiful young man, just terribly lost. But he did love you very much." How does hearing this view from a suicide survivor affect your views about suicide?
5. On August 20, 2019, Johnny wrote an essay entitled "Values I Believe are the Most Important," which Laura shared in her eulogy for Johnny at the celebration of life service. These values are altruism, patience, conviction, enthusiasm, and gratitude. Which one of these do you most resonate with? How did Johnny's marijuana use impact his values?

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6. On pages 214-215, you find Johnny's Ambassadors C-A-R-E model (Circumstances, Actions, Remarks, and Emotions) to help monitor indicators and warning sign of suicide. Review these warning signs and share any that relate to your personal experience with someone who is suicidal.

### **My Reflections on Chapter 8**

### **Write Your Own Discussion Question**

### **RELATED CHAPTER VIDEOS**

"Getting Through It Together: How to Support Teens in Crisis" with Charly Jaffe:

<https://johnnysambassadors.org/ja201106>

"Six Ways to Repel Your Son: Winning the Race for the Heart of Your Son" with John Davis:

<https://johnnysambassadors.org/ja201030>

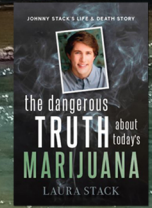
"What Every Parent Should Know About Today's Marijuana" with Jo McGuire:

<https://johnnysambassadors.org/ja201113>



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

## DISCUSSION GUIDE



### Week Six: Chapters 9 & 10

#### Discussion Questions for Chapter 9: THE MISSION

1. This chapter begins with Laura recalling January 2020 when she outlined five resolutions/reminders and lessons learned from her tragic loss of Johnny which had occurred only two months prior. Laura lessons are:
  - a. "Change what I CAN change."
  - b. "I must let go of my anger at my inability to control what happened."
  - c. "Forge ahead despite your pain and give meaning to your loss."
  - d. "Forgive those involved and do what I can to prevent others from making the same mistakes."
  - e. "Err on the side of being an annoying adult by warning the young people in my life. Keep talking about it and never stop."

Which of Laura's lessons learned resonate with you the most and do you have an experience that you can apply these lessons to that you would like to share?

2. Through grief counseling, Laura was able to identify gifts she has received as a result of Johnny's death. These gifts include a closer relationship with the Lord; the Stack family has drawn closer to one another; they have received love and comfort from their community; an incredible army of friends, old and new, have come together to educate others on the dangers of high-potency marijuana; and lives are being saved by their ability to share Johnny's story through the nonprofit Johnny's Ambassadors. Through their new mission to educate others on the dangers of today's marijuana, they have met incredible people they otherwise wouldn't have met. You may be part of this book study because you fall into one or more of Laura's "gift" categories. Can you share your connection to this story and what inspired you to be part of this book study?
3. When the Stack family traveled to Hawaii to scatter Johnny's ashes on what would have been his 20th birthday, there were multiple "God winks" that occurred upon the ashes being spread. Which one stands out to you the most and why?

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

## DISCUSSION GUIDE



### My Reflections on Chapter 9

### Write Your Own Discussion Question

#### RELATED CHAPTER VIDEOS

“Vaping Me Crazy: Weed Between the Lines” with Michael DeLeon:

<https://johnnysambassadors.org/ja210723>

“Turning Pain into Purpose: An Emotionally Naked Story of Depression, Addiction, Loss, and Hope” with

Anne Moss Rogers: <https://johnnysambassadors.org/ja200619>

“Today’s High-Potency THC: Harming Our Most Vulnerable Citizens” with Libby Stuyt, MD:

<https://johnnysambassadors.org/ja210102>

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

## **DISCUSSION GUIDE**



### **Discussion Questions for Chapter 10: THE RESEARCH**

1. What was the single most complex and difficult section for you in this Chapter?
2. What was the most surprising information you learned?
3. How do we convey this complex, scientific research to young people?
4. Notice in the Endnotes that item #99 refers to a 1971 article titled, "Mental Ills Linked to Marijuana." Does it surprise you that these harms have been known for this long and much of the U.S. has supported the commercialization of this drug?

### **My Reflections on Chapter 10**

### **Write Your Own Discussion Question**



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

## **DISCUSSION GUIDE**



### **RELATED CHAPTER VIDEOS**

“Marijuana: State of the Science” with Bertha D. Madras, Ph.D.:

<https://johnnysambassadors.org/ja210507>

“The Marijuana Harm Gap: Busting Myths and Upending Popular Narrative with Contemporary Research” with Prof. Mary Cannon, Ph.D.: <https://johnnysambassadors.org/ja210129>

“What Parents Need to Know About Medical Marijuana: Pot Has NOT Helped the Opioid Crisis, and It Doesn't Help Your Kids” with Ken Finn, MD: <https://johnnysambassadors.org/ja201002>

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

## **DISCUSSION GUIDE**



### **CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

**After having read this book, if you could ask author Laura Stack anything, what would it be?**  
*(She might write about it in a future blog post.)*

**What words of comfort, encouragement, or affirmation would you say to Laura?**

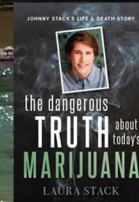
**What additional discussion questions could be added to which chapters?**

**As one of Johnny's Ambassadors, what can you do to spread the word about the harms of today's marijuana on youth?**

**(Please share your answers with Laura at <https://JohnnysAmbassadors.org/contact>)**

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

## **DISCUSSION GUIDE**



### **Post-Read Assessment**

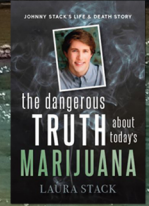
After you have completed reading the book, test your knowledge by answering the following questions:

1. What is dabbing?
2. Define a cannabinoid.
3. What is the difference between THC and CBD?
4. How does marijuana make a user “high”?
5. What is the difference between cannabis and marijuana and hemp?
6. What is the Endocannabinoid System (ECS)?
7. What’s the difference between flower and concentrate?
8. What does potency mean?
9. How many different ways can a user consume marijuana (what products)?
10. How has marijuana changed since “Woodstock days” in the 70s, 80s, and 90s?



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

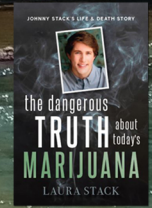
## **DISCUSSION GUIDE**



11. At what age does the brain's frontal lobe, responsible for risk vs. reward decision making, fully develop?
12. How does marijuana affect the development of the human brain?
13. Do you know the significance of 420 Day and 710 Day?
14. What age should you begin educating your child about drugs?
15. What are three (of the 12 mentioned) ways marijuana harms adolescents?
16. Name five potential negative health implications if your child uses marijuana.
17. At what age can a teen obtain a medical marijuana card in Colorado?
18. Is parental approval required to obtain a medical marijuana card if the child is under 21?
19. What is the #1 cause of death for youths aged 10-19 in Colorado?
20. Research shows that use of marijuana with a THC content over 10% increases the risk of suicide by what percentage and a psychotic disorder by what percentage?
21. What two documents should parents have in place before their child leaves for college, so they can have greater control over their child's medical decisions?

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

## DISCUSSION GUIDE



### Resources

Who's Johnny? <https://johnnysambassadors.org/johnny>  
Johnny's tribute video: <https://www.JohnnysAmbassadors.org/tribute>  
Educational offerings: <https://johnnysambassadors.org/education/>  
#StopDabbing walk: <https://www.stopdabbingwalk.com>  
Anti-420 Day Conference April 20: <https://p2p.onecause.com/420>  
About Johnny's mom, Laura: <https://johnnysambassadors.org/speaking>  
What is a dab? <https://johnnysambassadors.org/types-potencies>  
Expert videos on demand: <https://www.JohnnysAmbassadors.org/recorded-webinars>  
Upcoming weekly webinars: <https://www.JohnnysAmbassadors.org/webinars>  
Subscribe to our RUMBLE account: <https://rumble.com/c/johnnysambassadors>  
Research database: <https://www.JohnnysAmbassadors.org/research>  
Online teen marijuana curriculum (in development): <https://johnnysambassadors.org/curriculum>  
Toolkits: <https://www.JohnnysAmbassadors.org/toolkits>  
Videos: <https://www.JohnnysAmbassadors.org/videos>  
Parent resources: <https://johnnysambassadors.org/parents>  
Sign up for weekly articles via newsletter: <https://www.JohnnysAmbassadors.org/blog>  
Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/JohnnysAmbassadors>  
Get involved: <https://johnnysambassadors.org/join>  
Donate: <https://johnnysambassadors.org/donate>

### About Our Johnny's Ambassadors Facilitator

Toni Nuckols has been an elementary educator for 25 years. She currently serves as an Instructional Technology Resource Teacher and leads teachers through the effective use of technology resources which enhance the learning experience for students. Prior to her leadership role in technology, Toni served as a classroom teacher of elementary students for 18 years. Her fondest memory is the magic of teaching literacy through novel studies of both classical and contemporary literature. For many years, she has enjoyed being either a leader or active participant in many small group Bible studies. Toni lives on a small farm in southern Virginia with her husband, Robert, of 25 years, and three children, Madison, Tyler, and Jake. With the recent legalization of marijuana in Virginia, Toni has a desire to use her passion as an educator to reach out to her community and abroad in an effort to educate people on the dangers of Marijuana Induced Psychosis.

*Johnny's Ambassadors is grateful for Toni's passion and thankful for her dedication of time and energy to help us forward our mission to educate parents and teens about the dangers of today's high-THC marijuana on adolescent brain development, mental illness, and suicide.*

### Inspirational Verses and Quotes compiled by Toni