

IS IT NORMAL TEEN BEHAVIOR OR CANNABIS WITHDRAWAL SYNDROME?

Is your child acting differently than he or she did just a few weeks ago? Is it normal teen angst, or could your child be suffering the effects of Cannabis Withdrawal Syndrome (CWS)?

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5) specifies six basic types of mental illness marijuana could either contribute to or trigger:

1. Affective disorders of thought and feeling, including bipolar disorder, anxiety disorders, and depression
2. Schizophrenia
3. Amotivational syndrome
4. Disruptive cognitive function
5. Neuropsychological decline
6. Psychotic disorders

When they can't get the drug, those who are addicted or dependent suffer from Cannabis Withdrawal Syndrome (CWS), defined as:

- Nervousness or anxiety
- Hostility (irritability, anger, or aggression)
- Sleep difficulty
- Depressed mood
- Restlessness
- Decreased appetite or weight loss
- Physical symptoms, including headaches, shakiness/tremors, sweating, abdominal pain, chills, and fever

Since there is considerable overlap between symptoms of cannabis withdrawal and depression and anxiety, talk to your child's doctor about screening them for THC if they seem depressed or anxious. Given the increase in public beliefs that THC is an effective treatment for depression—although evidence currently suggests otherwise—your teen may be trying to self-medicate and unintentionally perpetuating cannabis withdrawal.

[pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6359953/](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6359953/)

