



# THC INC.

LEGALIZATION WASN'T THE EXPERIMENT, THE PUBLIC WAS.

## Table of Contents

- 3 How to Use This Guide
- 4 Film Overview - Synopsis & Production Credits
- 5 Producer's Statement
- 6 Common Concepts, Language & Key Data
- 8 Discussion Questions
- 10 Learn More & Resources
- 11 References

### Content Advisory

**THC INC** includes discussions and depictions related to substance use, addiction, mental health challenges, and suicide. The film features personal stories from individuals and families affected by cannabis use and its potential impacts on young people, including references to psychosis, hospitalization, and suicide. Some viewers may find these topics emotionally difficult. **THC INC** contains material comparable to a **PG-13 rating** and is generally recommended for **high-school-age students and adult audiences**.

This film is intended to support informed conversations about youth health, cannabis use, and public understanding of today's high-potency THC landscape. Viewer discretion is advised, and audiences may wish to access the film alongside supportive discussion and credible health resources.

# How to Use This Guide

This discussion guide is designed to help audiences engage more deeply with the themes explored in **THC INC**, which examines how today's cannabis marketplace, shaped by increasing THC potency, evolving cultural attitudes, and expanding commercialization, affects youth health, families, and public understanding.

The guide can be used in a variety of settings, including community and educational screenings, classrooms, parent groups, youth programs, and professional trainings. It provides context, reflection questions, and resources to support thoughtful discussion and learning.

## Participants may use this guide in several ways:

- |                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Before the film                      | Introduce the topic and reflect on existing knowledge or perceptions about cannabis, youth health, and THC potency.                       |
| After the screening                  | Facilitate discussion and reflection on how the film connects to participants' experiences and communities.                               |
| Educational or professional settings | Support workshops, training sessions, or conversations on prevention, mental health, and informed decision-making.                        |
| <b>For continued learning</b>        | Explore the included resources offering credible, science-based information on cannabis, adolescent brain development, and mental health. |

Because the subject matter touches on **HEALTH AND FAMILY EXPERIENCES**, discussions should be approached with empathy and openness. The goal is to encourage respectful dialogue, reflection, and greater understanding.

# Film Overview ✨

## Film Synopsis

**THC INC** is an independent documentary exploring the history of cannabis, from prohibition through decriminalization and legalization. It delves into the legal and public health effects on individuals, minorities, communities, and particularly children. The film examines how youth are impacted by changes in cannabis laws, addressing concerns such as increased exposure and potential targeting by marketing efforts.

The documentary culminates in posing the question of "Where do we go from here?" while hoping to offer some possible options. Extremists on both sides of the issue propose either rolling things back to prohibition or the opposite: complete legalization with no oversight. Maybe there's a more level-headed approach somewhere in the middle; an approach that wouldn't end with people in prison for minor offenses but would also educate the public on possible hazards and protect children from predatory marketing.

## Film Credits

### Directed By

Eric Burton & Jesse Russell

### Produced By

Nenad Cicin-Sain

### Executive Producers

Steve Sarowitz, Jamey Heath, Kevin Sabet

### Co-Producer

Rick Vickers

### Director Of Photography

Bradley Stonesifer

### Editor Eric Burton

Music By James Bartlett

## Film Collaborators

- [Kevin A Sabet](#) - EP, Author of Smokescreen, which inspired THC INC, and founder of Smart Approaches to Marijuana (SAM)
- [Laura Bianchi](#)
- [Leighton Woodhouse](#) Journalist
- [Lauren Davis](#) - Attorney
- [Dr. Roneet Lev](#)
- [Maritza Perez Medina](#) - Director of Federal Affairs at [Drug Policy Alliance](#)
- [Dr. Amy Turncliff](#)
- [Dr. Stu Gitlow](#) - former head of the American Society of Addiction Medicine
- [Heather Bacchus and Randy Bacchus](#) – Authors whose son Randy committed suicide following cannabis-induced psychosis

## Website | Social Media

[www.wayfarerstudios.com](http://www.wayfarerstudios.com)

<https://www.instagram.com/wayfarerstudios/>

<https://www.youtube.com/@wayfarerstudiosla>

<https://www.facebook.com/wayfarerstudios/>

# Producer's Statement ✨

**THC INC** was created to explore how the modern cannabis landscape has evolved, and how those changes are affecting young people, families, and communities across the United States. Over the past decade, cannabis legalization has transformed public perception and expanded access to a wide range of new products. At the same time, the potency of many THC products has increased significantly, raising new questions about health, safety, and public understanding.



This documentary brings together scientists, physicians, policymakers, educators, young people, and families who have experienced the impacts of cannabis use firsthand. By combining expert insights with personal stories, the film seeks to examine the intersection of public health, commercialization, and youth exposure in a rapidly changing marketplace.

Our goal in creating **THC INC** is not to stigmatize individuals or prescribe simple answers. Instead, we hope the film encourages thoughtful dialogue grounded in credible information and lived experience. As communities continue to navigate the evolving role of cannabis in society, we believe it is essential to foster informed conversations, especially about how today's high-potency THC products may affect developing brains and mental health.



Ultimately, **THC INC** is an invitation to learn, reflect, and engage. By bringing together diverse voices and perspectives, the film aims to support parents, educators, healthcare professionals, and young people in having open and constructive conversations about risk, wellbeing, and the future of public health.

# Common Concepts, Language & **Key Data** ✨

## Key Data Points About Today's Cannabis Landscape

Some cannabis products  
now contain up to

**90% THC**

About **one-third** of  
**adolescent users** report  
hallucinations or paranoia

Nearly **29%**  
of **young adults (19–30)**  
report cannabis use

Around **30%**  
of **cannabis users**  
develop some level  
of cannabis use  
disorder

Average **THC potency**  
in cannabis increased from  
**~4% in 1995** to  
**~16% by 2022.** (NIDA)

The following terms and concepts appear throughout *THC INC* and may help audiences understand the film before or after viewing it. These definitions provide context for the conversations explored in the documentary and can help support informed discussion.

**THC (Tetrahydrocannabinol):** the primary psychoactive compound found in cannabis. It is responsible for the “high” associated with marijuana use. THC interacts with the brain’s endocannabinoid system, which plays a role in mood, memory, and reward processing. The film highlights how modern cannabis products often contain significantly higher concentrations of THC than in previous decades.

**Cannabis Potency:** Potency refers to the concentration of THC in a cannabis product. In the 1960s and 1970s, cannabis typically contained around 3–5% THC. Today, some cannabis concentrates and extracts can contain 80–95% THC, representing a major shift in the strength of available products.

**Cannabis Concentrates:** products created by extracting THC and other compounds from the cannabis plant. These products include wax, shatter, oils, and vape cartridges. Because they contain concentrated THC, they can be much more potent than traditional cannabis flower.

**Edibles:** food or beverage products infused with cannabis compounds such as THC. These can include gummies, chocolates, baked goods, and drinks. Because edibles are digested rather than inhaled, their effects may take longer to appear and can sometimes be stronger or longer-lasting than expected.

**Endocannabinoid System:** a network of receptors in the human body that helps regulate processes such as mood, memory, appetite, and brain development. THC interacts with this system, which is one reason scientists study its potential effects on cognitive and emotional functioning.

## Adolescent Brain

**Development:** The human brain continues developing into the mid-20s. During adolescence, the brain undergoes processes that strengthen frequently used neural pathways and remove others. Because of this developmental stage, young people may be more sensitive to substances that affect brain chemistry.

**Cannabis Use Disorder (CUD):** is a medical diagnosis describing a pattern of cannabis use that leads to significant impairment or distress. Symptoms may include difficulty controlling use, continued use despite negative consequences, and reduced ability to meet responsibilities at school, work, or home.

**Psychosis:** refers to a condition in which a person loses contact with reality and may experience hallucinations, delusions, or disorganized thinking. The film discusses research exploring possible links between high-potency cannabis use and psychotic episodes, particularly among individuals with certain vulnerabilities.

## Commercialization of

**Cannabis:** refers to the development of cannabis as a large-scale consumer industry. The film explores how legalization has led to expanded product development, marketing strategies, and corporate investment in cannabis markets.

# Discussion Questions ✨

The following themes are designed to guide thoughtful conversation about the key ideas explored in *THC INC.* Together, they encourage participants to reflect on the evolving cannabis landscape, youth health and development, family communication, and the ways media and culture shape public understanding. These questions are intended to support open dialogue, critical thinking, and shared learning among parents, educators, youth leaders, and community members.



## Theme 1: Understanding Today's Cannabis Landscape

- \* How can communities improve public understanding of the differences between traditional cannabis and newer high-THC products?
- \* What differences between past cannabis products and today's high-potency THC products stood out to you in the film?
- \* How might increased potency change the way people think about cannabis use and its potential risks?
- \* What information about cannabis do you think is widely understood today, and what do you think is misunderstood or missing?

- \* How does medical use of cannabis, such as treating severe childhood seizure disorders, differ from recreational use, and why is it important to distinguish between the two in today's cannabis landscape?
- \* How can conversations about risk and safety account for both therapeutic applications and potential harms?
- \* Historically, how have different racial communities experienced cannabis policies, laws, and enforcement? How might that impact current conversations about cannabis today?



## Theme 2: Youth, Brain Development, and Mental Health

- \* What did the film teach you about adolescent brain development and how can substances affect it?
- \* Why might young people be more vulnerable to the effects of high-potency THC?
- \* How can families, schools, and youth programs help young people better understand potential health and mental health risks?
- \* What types of support systems are important for young people who may be struggling with substance use or mental health challenges?

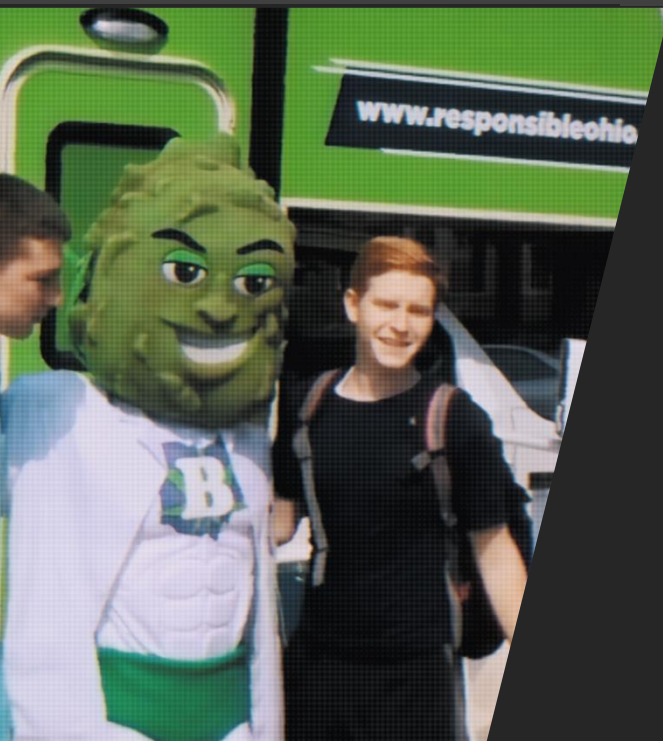
# Discussion Questions ✨

## Theme 3: Family Conversations and Community Responsibility



- \* Why is it often difficult for parents, educators, and mentors to talk with young people about cannabis today, and vice versa?
- \* What approaches help create open, supportive conversations rather than judgment or fear? [Tips for Talking With Your Teen About Marijuana](#)
- \* What resources or information would help families feel more confident discussing substance use and mental health?
- \* After watching the film, what role do you think communities can play in supporting youth wellbeing and informed decision-making?

## Theme 4: Media, Marketing, and Perception



- \* How do marketing, product design, and social media influence the way young people view and purchase cannabis products?
- \* How can media literacy help young people evaluate messages they see online or in advertising?
- \* What role should families and communities play in helping youth navigate mixed messages about cannabis?
- \* The film highlights how commercialization and marketing can affect different communities in different ways. How might advertising, product availability, or economic investment in cannabis businesses impact communities differently across socioeconomic or racial lines?

The following organizations and resources provide credible, research-based information related to youth health, substance use prevention, mental health, and cannabis education. These organizations represent a range of perspectives from public health, prevention, family advocacy, and recovery communities. They may be useful for individuals, families, educators, and community leaders seeking to continue learning after watching THC INC.

**SAM (Smart Approaches to Marijuana):** SAM's primary focus is educating the public about the harms of marijuana legalization—a policy which has consistently placed corporate profits and addiction ahead of public health. They provide information on the harms of such policies to interested parties for use in messaging and educate federal and state legislators on the benefits of a science-based marijuana policy.

Website: <https://learnaboutsam.org/resources/>

**Shatterproof:** a national nonprofit organization focused on ending addiction and improving treatment systems for substance use disorders. The organization works to reduce stigma, support families affected by addiction, and promote science-based prevention and treatment approaches.

Website: <https://www.shatterproof.org>

**Johnny's Ambassadors:** Johnny's Ambassadors Youth THC Prevention is a nonprofit providing substance abuse prevention education. They provide school assemblies, educational resources, and conference speaking.

Website: <https://johnnysambassadors.org>

**The Jed Foundation (JED):** a leading nonprofit that protects emotional health and prevents suicide among teens and young adults by equipping individuals with resiliency and life skills and strengthening school and campus mental health systems. JED's Mental Health Resource Center provides easy-to-use tools and tips for managing feelings like anxiety and sadness, as well as guides to supporting loved ones, including how to get professional support for yourself and others.

Website: <https://jedfoundation.org/mental-health-resource-center/>

**American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP):** works for every child's future. The AAP's global mission is to attain optimal physical, mental, and social health and well-being for all children around the world.

Website: <https://www.aap.org>

**National Institutes of Health (NIH):** NIH's mission is to seek fundamental knowledge about the nature and behavior of living systems and the application of that knowledge to enhance health, lengthen life, and reduce illness and disability.

Website: <https://www.nih.gov>

**National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA):** Their mission is to advance science on drug use and addiction and to apply that knowledge to improve individual and public health.

Website: <https://nida.nih.gov>

The following sources informed the educational content and background information included in this discussion guide. These references provide research, public health guidance, and prevention insights related to cannabis use, adolescent brain development, and mental health.

**American Academy of Pediatrics. (2023).** *Marijuana Use During Adolescence.* <https://www.aap.org>

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (CDC). (2024).** *Cannabis and Teens: Health Effects and Prevention.* <https://www.cdc.gov>

**Finley, A. (2024).** *What You Aren't Hearing About Marijuana's Health Effects.* Wall Street Journal, May 10, 2024. <https://www.wsj.com/opinion/what-you-arent-reading-about-marijuana-permanent-brain-damage-biden-schedule-iii-9660395e>

**Impact Instagram Post:** [LINK](#)

**National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). (2024).** *Marijuana Research Report.* <https://nida.nih.gov>

**National Institutes of Health (NIH). (2023).** *Cannabis (Marijuana) Research and Public Health Information.* <https://www.nih.gov>

**NPR.** *A huge study finds a link between cannabis use in teens and psychosis later.* <https://www.npr.org/2026/02/21/nx-s1-5719338/cannabis-marijuana-weed-teens-psychosis-jama>

**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2024).** *Substance Use Prevention Resources for Youth and Families.* <https://www.hhs.gov>

**Turncliff, A., Lev, R., Gitlow, S., Davis, L., et al.** Expert commentary and interviews featured in *THC INC* documentary.

**Using Social Media to Support Youth Cannabis Prevention: A Strategy Guide for Preventionists and Community Coalitions.** Prevention strategy guide informing youth communication approaches. <https://pittcnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Using-Social-Media-to-Support-Youth-Cannabis-Prevention-A-Strategy-Guide-for-Preventionists-and-Community-Coalitions.pdf>

**U.S. News.** *Teens Using Weed Have Doubled Risk For Psychosis, Bipolar Disorder.* <https://www.usnews.com/news/health-news/articles/2026-02-23/teens-using-weed-have-doubled-risk-for-psychosis-bipolar-disorder>