



November

Upcoming Events

- Family Caregivers Month
- Stress Awareness Day / 2
- **CHC SAP Consortium / 13**
- World Kindness Day / 13
- Great American Smokeout / 16
- Giving Tuesday / 28



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Recreational Cannabis Use By Teens Linked to Risk of Depression, Suicidality

A Columbia University study has found that teens who use cannabis recreationally are two to four times as likely to develop psychiatric disorders, such as depression and suicidality, than teens who don't use cannabis at all. The research, also finds that casual cannabis use puts teens at risk for problem behaviors, including poor grades, truancy, and trouble with the law, which can have long-term negative consequences that may keep youth from developing their full potential in adulthood.

"Perceptions exist among youth, parents, and educators that casual cannabis use is benign," said lead study author Ryan Sultan, MD, assistant professor of clinical psychiatry, Department of Psychiatry, Columbia. "We were surprised to see that cannabis use had such strong associations to adverse mental health and life outcomes for teens who did not meet the criteria for having a substance use condition." The Columbia study, is the first to identify that subclinical, or nondisordered, cannabis use—symptoms and behavior that do not meet the criteria for clinical disorder—has clear adverse and impairing associations for youth.

1 in 10 youth recreational users

The study included 70,000 adolescents between the ages of 12-17. The researchers found that more than 2.5 million U.S. teens, or about 1 in 10, were casual cannabis users. More than 600,000 teens—roughly 1 in 40, met the criteria for cannabis addiction. To be considered to have cannabis use disorder, an individual must meet at least two of 11 criteria, which include an inability to reduce consumption, constant cravings, and relationship and social problems. Additionally, nondisordered cannabis users were 2-2.5 times more likely to have adverse mental health outcomes and behavioral problems, compared to teens who didn't use cannabis at all. Teens with an addiction to cannabis were 3.5 to 4.5 times more likely to have these issues.

Immature brain put teens at elevated risk

Numerous studies note that cannabis use can alter the development of the cerebral cortex, the brain's center of reasoning and executive function, posing a risk to young people whose brains have not matured. Marijuana use in adolescence is associated with difficulty thinking, problem-solving, and reduced memory, as well as a risk of long-term addiction. "Exposing developing brains to dependency forming substances appears to prime the brain for being susceptible to developing other forms of addiction later in life," said Frances Levin, MD, Professor of Psychiatry at Columbia and addiction psychiatrist, New York-Presbyterian/Columbia University Irving Medical Center. Mental health problems and cannabis use are closely linked. Having depression or suicidality may drive teens to use cannabis as a way to relieve their suffering. Using cannabis likely worsens depressive and suicidal symptoms.

Legalization of recreational cannabis

The findings are concerning given the popularity of cannabis as states have moved to make the drug legal. Twenty two states have legalized recreational marijuana. Thirty-eight states allow the use of medical marijuana. This raises questions if the criteria used for establishing a diagnosis of a substance use disorder need to be re-evaluated for youth. While teenage use is illegal, even in states with legalized cannabis, there are no protections for teens, such as educational campaigns. Federal legalization offers the opportunity to address those safeguards.

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 —Ryan Sultan, MD

Time with Peers Can Improve Mental Health



Young adults' social experiences and connections are increasingly happening online according to the CDC. 40% of children/teens are experiencing elevated rates of depression and sadness. Even scarier is that about 20% of high school students have reported thoughts of suicide. This is due to a combination of psychosocial and environmental factors: rise in social media usage, onset of a pandemic, greater school demands, family stress, etc. However, many of these factors are difficult to predict or control. One factor we *can* control is the quality and quantity of our children's connection to peers.

The Importance of Peer Connections

The benefits to prioritize social time is important. Some parents have shown apprehensiveness about letting their children have sleepovers, go ride bikes with friends, etc. because of their own anxieties; however, data has shown that if children know how to avoid danger and be safe, their chances of harm significantly declines.

Some children may not want to leave their bedrooms because they prefer the comfort of the technology available to them. This is where parents should set strict limits and demand their children get some face-to-face time with peers. Here are some tips to accomplish this:

- 1. One-to-One Ratio:** If you have a child that refuses to leave the house or spend time with peers, use the one-to-one ratio of one hour of time with peers to one hour of technology time.
- 2. Your Comfort Level:** If you are nervous about your child doing certain activities with peers, find options that you are comfortable with, including having friends come to your house, meeting at a park/trampoline park/mall or staying close by when your children are with peers.
- 3. Take the First Step:** Initiating these interactions can be difficult, so help them by taking the first step. This may look like the families hanging out at first while they become more comfortable.
- 4. Encourage Structured Peer Time:** Any time children and teens get to spend with peers is going to be beneficial because they are constantly learning and connecting in ways they cannot do online. For older children, you can require part-time jobs or joining clubs in school. For younger children, it may look like having weekly meetups with other children.

Children and teens need meaningful connections in their lives. They need face-to-face opportunities with peers in non-school settings. Many things get in the way of accomplishing this—but it must become a priority if we want to see the rates of childhood and teen depression diminish.

Source: NAMI

CHC/SAP CONSORTIUM

Priming the Brain for Healing and Learning

Monday / November 13,
2023 / 1-2:30 pm



Dr. Susan Tarasevich

For nearly 30 years, Susan has empowered educators with the understanding and skills needed to make positive changes in the lives of students and families. Susan believes deeply in building systems to support staff, practices to support students, and using data appropriately to drive change. These together create safer schools and more supportive learning environments. Working with a variety of schools, pre-K through higher education, Dr. Tarasevich focuses on designing, implementing, and evaluating sustainable, equitable and effective multi-tiered frameworks for mental health promotion and substance use prevention.

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED: https://www.thehc.org/event_calendar/event_calendar.html/event/2023/11/13/2023-fall-sap-consortium/455702

"I am not a teacher, but an awakener."
-Robert Frost

THINGS TO REMEMBER

@SIMPLY SOPHIEDESIGNS

IT'S OKAY TO BE SELECTIVE WITH WHO YOU ALLOW INTO YOUR LIFE, PROTECT YOUR SPACE

YOUR PURPOSE IN LIFE IS NOT TO PLEASE OTHERS

IF CERTAIN ACCOUNTS ON INSTAGRAM MAKE YOU FEEL BAD ABOUT YOURSELF, IT'S OKAY TO UNFOLLOW THEM

IF YOU'RE KIND TO OTHERS, WHY WOULDN'T YOU BE KIND TO YOURSELF? BE GENTLE WITH YOURSELF

THERE ARE JUST SOME DAYS WHEN YOU NEED TO CRY & LET IT ALL OUT. EMBRACE YOUR EMOTIONS

YOU REALLY DON'T HAVE TO BE SO HARD ON YOURSELF

BEING BUSY 24/7 IS NOT A BADGE OF HONOR, TIME FOR REST IS NOT ONLY NEEDED, BUT NECESSARY