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A wellness newsletter from your local EFAP.

ISSUE

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Fall 2018



As the summer's long, dry, hot days led all of us to hope for rain, our hopes came true when September hit us over the head with rain and cooler temperatures. For many people this creates mixed emotions; on one hand grateful for the rain and the change of seasons, on the other hand sad that summer is over and it's another nine months before it comes back. This, in essence, captures the nature of perspective taking, and where we have opportunities to choose a perspective that supports positivity and an uplifted mood, or one that brings us down. Which perspective on the changing weather and seasons are you choosing this fall?

For this newsletter our team decided to focus on the upcoming cannabis legalization, in attempt to answer some questions you may have, and direct you toward further reading to continue your understanding of the changes, and how they could impact you and your loved ones. Like any issue that is complicated, political, legal, and open to many differing beliefs and opinions; education and awareness is key.

Our offices typically slow only slightly in the summer, and then pick up steadily in the fall. I liken this to summer's attempt to give us a vacation from our struggles. Then fall's routines set in and we are reminded that perhaps they've just been on pause. If things are feeling heavy for you this fall, and you are struggling to find the perspectives, activities, and routines that lift your mood and spirit, know that we are here to support you.

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Fast Facts...

- Even though cannabis use will be legalized on October 17, 2018, there is a limit to the amount an individual can possess at one time.
- It is illegal to operate a motor vehicle while impaired by marijuana. Law enforcement are trained to detect drug-impaired driving.
- Each province has its own unique legislation around the legalization of cannabis, including legal minimum age, where you can buy it, where you can use it and how much you can possess. If you are going to use, it would be wise to check out the laws for your province.
- The brain does not stop developing until around age 25. The younger you are when you begin cannabis use and the more you use it, the more likely that it will have a negative impact on your brain's development.
- It will still be illegal to transport any amount, medicinal or recreational, of cannabis across the national border. This applies to both entering or leaving Canada.

Talking to Your Kids About Marijuana

Watching an illegal substance become legal and available for sale is an unusual occurrence in modern day society. No generation since the days of prohibition can recall this sort of transition from illegal to legal, so it's understandable that there are fears and concerns surrounding the legalization of marijuana. Like most issues parents are forced to face, this topic, regardless of how one feels about it, can serve as a wonderful spring board for parents to discuss the reality of substance use and abuse in our culture.

First and foremost, it's important for parents and kids to understand what the legalization of marijuana means for all of us. It is important to note that even once legal, the use of marijuana is considered a substance reserved strictly for adults and it is illegal for all individuals to drive while under the influence of marijuana. In Canada, the legal age to use marijuana may vary by province, but is likely to be age 18 or older in many places. While these details may seem unimportant, they are critical facts to keep in mind when you begin the discussion with your child about marijuana use.

When you discuss any difficult topic with your child, the best place to begin is educating them with the best facts and information you can find. Beginning a computer search with your child to explore what cannabis is and its effects on the body can be a great place to start. For instance, you can uncover facts such as how the chemicals in marijuana affect the body, the developing brain of a teen or pre-teen, judgment, sleep, and overall health. Like with alcohol, you can tell

your child that marijuana is a mind-altering substance that can have negative consequences for all people, but especially for teenagers who are still developing physically and emotionally. You can assign your child the "homework" of finding one or two articles that discuss, from a medical perspective, how marijuana affects the brain and what the side effects can be when used. Use these articles as a springboard for discussing marijuana together.

If you are against legalizing marijuana, having this conversation with your child may be easy. If you are in support of legalization, or are currently using marijuana yourself, it may be harder to encourage your child to see the downside of marijuana use. Keep in mind that regardless of your personal feelings about marijuana use and legalization, it is still illegal for minors to use marijuana, even once it is legal for adults. This knowledge should guide you in what information you decide to impart to your child.

Next, keep in mind the age of your child when discussing marijuana. For younger children (elementary age), providing simple, basic information (e.g. illegal and unhealthy for children) can be best. For older kids (middle school, high school age), helping sort fact from fiction about what marijuana is and what its effects are is useful. Your child may protest, stating that they "already know all about it," but don't let them off the hook that easily. Kids this age may think they already know all the facts based upon information passed through peer groups, but just as with sex and alcohol, many times their information is false.

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Talking to Your Kids About Marijuana (cont'd)

Begin the conversation by asking, “Okay, so tell me what you know about marijuana.” Let your child talk, uninterrupted, until they tell you all they know. If some of their information is incorrect, before supplying them with the correct information, ask them the following questions:

“I’m curious how you got that idea about marijuana?” or “I hear you saying that kids at school told you about marijuana. Where do

you think they got their information?”

Your child may have some difficult questions for you about marijuana use and you should be prepared to answer them as honestly and intelligently as possible.

Adapted from: EmpoweringParents.com See full article here

<https://www.empoweringparents.com/article/how-to-talk-to-your-child-about-marijuana-4-responses-for-parents/>

Couples’ Corner – Addiction In Relationships

Some of the most complicated relationships in life can be those we actually choose: the people we date, the people we live with, the people we marry, the people we have children with.

Anyone who has been married or in a committed relationship with a person who is addicted knows, without a doubt, that addiction is destructive. In some committed relationships, addiction isn’t something that comes up right away. Addiction in a marriage:


- May not be apparent at the beginning of the relationship
- May seem like normal drinking behaviors early in the relationship
- May develop after a short time together
- May develop after years together
- May have been there all along
- May have been hidden from you by your partner

If you’re married to a person in active addiction, here are seven things you need to consider and do – whether or not you plan to stay in the marriage.

1. Avoid denial
2. Read Up On Addiction.
3. Learn About Codependent Relationships.
4. Cut Out Enabling.
5. Connect With A Support Group.
6. Draw A Line In The Sand.
7. Take Care Of You.

For the full article, go to <https://www.addictioncampuses.com/blog/7-things-you-need-to-do-when-your-spouse-is-addicted/>

Online Resources

For more info on  cannabis and the law, health and kids & cannabis:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-medication/cannabis/laws-regulations.html>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-medication/cannabis.html>

<https://www.drugfreekidscanada.org/prevention/drug-info/cannabis/>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/news/2018/06/top-10-things-you-need-to-know-about-cannabis-in-canada.html>

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/public-safety/cannabis>

<https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-topics/abl2153>

About Marijuana and the Workplace

Although cannabis use may soon be legal this does not give a person an automatic pass to use it in the workplace. Or even just prior to reporting for work.

Your employer's drug and alcohol policy, along with WorkSafe BC's Occupational Health and Safety regulations, are still the final authority in the workplace.

The old saying might be "ignorance is bliss", but there is no good excuse to not know the rules at your job.

If you have any questions about the drug and alcohol policy or about the rules around the use of medicinal cannabis at your workplace, you should consult your employer.

For additional information, you can also visit <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/law-policy/act-amendments/workplace-impairment-primer-preparing-cannabis-legalization?lang=en>

Cannabis Use and Driving Impairment

Some research highlights

Cannabis and Driving Definition: Drug-impaired driving refers to the operation of a motor vehicle, including snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles, boats, trains and airplanes, while one's ability is adversely affected by a drug, including illegal drugs, prescription drugs, over-the-counter medications and volatile inhalants such as toluene or nitrous oxide.

Key Findings:

- Among young drivers in Canada, driving after using cannabis is more prevalent than driving after drinking.
- Males are three times more likely than females to drive after using cannabis.
- Cannabis impairs the cognitive and motor abilities necessary to operate a motor vehicle and doubles the risk of crash involvement.
- After alcohol, cannabis is the most commonly detected substance among drivers who die in traffic crashes in Canada.
- The police have the tools and authority required to detect and arrest drivers who are impaired by cannabis.
- Increased use of cannabis in Canada may contribute to increasing rates of cannabis impaired driving.

Efforts to prevent, reduce or delay cannabis use—especially in youth—will help to prevent or decrease rates of cannabis impaired driving in Canada.

- Many people are not aware that cannabis use impairs their ability to drive, that cannabis use can be detected in drivers, and that those caught will be charged just as if they were impaired by alcohol. Greater efforts are needed to ensure that drivers understand the risks of driving after using cannabis.
- To be successful, any approach to reduce cannabis-impaired driving—and cannabis use in general—must target high-risk groups (such as youth) and will require a combination of research, prevention, enforcement and treatment or rehabilitation.

Effects of Cannabis on Driving Performance

Cannabis can compromise a driver's reaction time and visual ability. While experienced drivers might be able to compensate for some of these effects, decreased attention and impaired decision making can increase the likelihood of a crash.

Detecting Drivers Impaired by Cannabis

Unlike alcohol, cannabis cannot be detected by a breath test. But the Drug Evaluation and Classification (DEC) program is used to help law enforcement recognize and evaluate behaviours and other psychological indicators that are common with cannabis and six other drugs. This information, together with a urine, oral fluid and/or blood test, can provide enough evidence for drug-impaired driving charges to be laid.

Clearing the Smoke on Cannabis, Highlights. Canadian Center on Substance Abuse, 2016. www.ccdus.ca

