

Psycho-Education for Patients and Family Members

# Session 11: Marijuana

# The Importance of Total Abstinence

- Abstinence from all substances that affect the brain—even alcohol and marijuana—greatly increases the chances of a successful recovery.

## Questions:

- *What do you know about Marijuana?*
- *Is marijuana harmless?*

# Is Marijuana Harmless?

- Marijuana is the most widely used illegal drug in the world.
- Marijuana use affects nearly every organ system in the body. It can have a profound impact on people's education, employment, and personal life.

# What Is Marijuana?

- Marijuana is a greenish gray mixture of dried parts of the *Cannabis sativa* plant.
- It is usually smoked.
- Concentrated forms are called Hashish or Hash Oil

# Medical Marijuana

- In other countries, Marijuana has been used for medical purposes to treat:
  - Loss of vision from glaucoma
  - Nausea that can come with AIDS and cancer treatments
  - The pain of multiple sclerosis

# Active Ingredient

- Today's marijuana has 3 times as much tetrahydrocannabinol (THC; the active ingredient) as marijuana of 20 years ago, making it more potent.

# Short-Term Effects

## While high (1-3 hours)

- Relaxed, euphoric feelings
- Increased heart rate
- Poor balance and coordination
- Slow reaction time
- Disorientation
- Panic

## After high fades

- Sleepiness
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Distrust



# Long-Term Effects

- Marijuana can impair learning and memory.
- Lower grades and poor work performance can result.
- Workers have problems more frequently, including accidents, absence, lateness, and job loss.

# Cancer Risks

- Puff for puff, smoking marijuana is more dangerous than smoking cigarettes.
- Marijuana is linked to head and neck cancer.

# Risk of Infection and Disease

- THC makes it harder for the body to fight infection and disease.

# Marijuana and Driving

- Marijuana is a factor in many fatal car crashes.
- Driving ability is impaired for hours even after the high fades.

# Marijuana and Pregnancy

*Using marijuana during pregnancy can cause:*

- Low birth weight
- Problems with fetal brain and nerve development

# Marijuana Addiction

- People can be psychologically addicted to marijuana.
- People who keep using marijuana even though it hurts their family, school, and work may be addicted.
- Withdrawal can include
  - Cravings
  - Anxiety
  - Irritability and anger
  - Trouble sleeping

# Marijuana and Relapse

- People who use marijuana have relapse rates to stimulants 2 to 3 times higher than people who abstain from marijuana.

# Marijuana and Families

- People may use marijuana as a way to avoid coping with important family problems.
- Marijuana use can contribute to the deterioration of personal and family life.