

Cannabis and Mental Health Webinar

We thank you for all your questions submitted both before and during the webinar! While we weren't able to answer them all over the course of the webinar, Dr. Robert Gabrys from CCSA has kindly answered some of your outstanding questions.

For additional questions on the webinar content, you may contact the speakers:

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	Question	Answer	Suggested Resources/Articles?
1	What does the evidence say about cannabis use from a young age and the onset of mental illness and increased risk of psychosis and schizophrenia?	Research has consistently shown that initiating <u>regular</u> cannabis use at a young age (before the age of 16) significantly increases the risk of developing psychosis and schizophrenia, especially among those with a family history of these conditions. However, this does not mean that most adolescence who use cannabis will go on to develop psychosis and schizophrenia. In fact, most will not go on to develop these conditions. It is just that the risk for schizophrenia and psychosis is especially high during adolescence.	Clearing the Smoke on Cannabis: Regular Use and Mental Health
2	Is there evidence that supports cannabis as a treatment for anxiety and depression?	There are studies in animals and some human studies showing that <u>cannabinoids</u> (and not necessarily cannabis) might be beneficial in treating symptoms associated with these mental health disorders. However, there is currently no high quality evidence (e.g., clinical trials) to support cannabis as a treatment for	https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/31577377

		<p>anxiety or depression. Instead, it seems that regular cannabis use among individuals living with anxiety and depression worsens symptoms and increases the risk of cannabis use disorder.</p> <p>Randomized clinical trials are needed before we can confidently answer this question.</p>	
3	<p>What are the impacts/effects of cannabis use/exposure in pregnancy, both to the mother and the baby in terms of mental and physical health immediately and later in life?</p>	<p>Frequent cannabis use during is associated with low birth weight and is part of a cluster of risk-factors correlated with other adverse birth outcomes. Prenatal and early exposure to cannabis can alter neurodevelopment leading to adverse effects on cognition and academic achievement. There are also effects on behaviour in children and young adults, including attention deficits, increased hyperactivity and impulsivity, and increased likelihood of substance use.</p>	<p>Clearing the Smoke on Cannabis: Maternal Cannabis Use during Pregnancy</p>
4	<p>Are there interactions between cannabis and prescription drugs?</p>	<p>The chemicals in cannabis (e.g., THC and CBD) can interact with some prescription (and over the counter) drugs, especially, opioids, sleeping pills, and certain anti-depressants and anti-anxiety medications.</p>	<p>https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6678684/</p> <p>CCSA will be releasing some resources on the interaction between cannabis and drugs in the next few months.</p>
5	<p>Are you aware of any studies, to date, focusing on the positive effects of cannabis use (strain by strain) on mental health? Are there any therapeutic benefits of cannabis use for individuals with certain mental health concerns?</p>	<p>There is a growing body of research showing that certain cannabinoids might have beneficial effects on certain mental health conditions. For example, preclinical studies suggest that CBD might be useful for anxiety, and certain combinations of THC and CBD can be useful for pain and insomnia. That being said, we need more clinical trials to determine the benefits and harms associated with THC and CBD.</p>	<p>CCSA's Clearing the Smoke on Cannabis Medical Use of Cannabis and Cannabinoids</p>