



PRAIRIE RIDGE

PREVENTION SERVICES

“CLEAN MIND; CLEAN BODY; CLEAN SPIRIT; DRUG FREE”

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Newsletter

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Is Marijuana Really More Safe Compared to Alcohol?

By Melissa Deckard, CPS

The troublesome news is that marijuana use has been trending upwards in the last few years. The amount of attention that has been given to medical marijuana has been significant in changing the perception of risk associated with marijuana. Many will argue that if it's called medicine and it's given to patients by caregivers, marijuana is far less harmful than alcohol.

Arguments will point out that marijuana doesn't contribute to violence; there is no danger of a deadly overdose, you can't become addicted to marijuana, and you typically don't hear about marijuana impaired car crashes. Are all these things true? If any of them are, does that make marijuana safer than alcohol?

The rate of past-month marijuana use and the number of users in 2009 was 6.6 percent or 16.7 million Americans in comparison to 131.3 million or 51.8 percent that report being current drinkers of alcohol. According to the CDC, in 2009, 10,839 people were killed in alcohol-impaired driving crashes, accounting for nearly one-third (32 percent) of all traffic-related deaths in the United States. The reason you hear more about alcohol related car crashes is simply because there are 8 times more alcohol users in one month than those who are using marijuana. In addition, these other drugs are often used in combination with alcohol.

While there are no documented overdose deaths from marijuana, this does not suggest that it is safer than alcohol. In fact, the vast majority of deaths from both substances are impairment related, for example- falls, drowning, car crashes, as opposed to overdoses. Marijuana can affect concentration, perception and reaction time up to 24 hours after it's smoked.

Recent research has shown that marijuana can produce withdrawal symptoms, but often go unnoticed due to the slow release of THC (marijuana's primary psychoactive compound) from the fat cells. Research shows that marijuana, the most commonly used illicit drug in our society, is also the most commonly diagnosed for abuse/dependence by people seeking treatment.

Overdose from prescription painkillers like Oxycontin and Xanax is now the leading cause of accidental death in 17 states, proving the point: a prescription does not make a drug safe, nor does it create responsibility in its users.

Long term effects of marijuana use include: Psychosis of the brain, increased risk of schizophrenia, Amotivational Syndrome, and both psychological and physical addiction, which constitute real risk to health and quality of life. The risk associated with marijuana is comparable to any other mood altering substance.

Prairie Ridge Prevention Services

THE

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Informed Feedback Treatment

By Mark Dodd, Clinical Director

Both research and common sense tell us that when clients regularly measure their progress and feel an alignment with their counselor, they have better outcomes from treatment. They are less likely to drop out and they are more likely to achieve the goals and hopes they have for their lives. To help measure progress and therapeutic connection with clients, Prairie Ridge has recently begun using two measurement tools, both of which are client reporting/rating tools to provide feedback to the counselor on how clients perceive their ongoing treatment experience. The first tool is the Outcomes Rating Scale (ORS) which clients use to rate how well they see themselves doing on four life areas:

1. Individually
2. Interpersonally
3. Social/Work
4. Overall

Feedback from clients to counselors on this scale assists with identifying whether the services they are participating in are helping to improve their lives. If improvement isn't seen, we know we need to adjust the services or the client is likely to drop out.

The second tool is the Session Rating Scale (SRS) which is a measure of how weak or strong clients feel their therapeutic relationship is with the counselor, also on four areas: Relationship, Goals and Topics, Approach or Method and Overall. Here too, if the client does feel they have been heard and understood, that they are working on what they think is important, in a way that makes sense and they can understand the client is more likely to continue in treatment and have a successful experience.

The tools were created by Scott Miller and Barry Duncan and have been used with over 10,000 people to establish validity and reliability. So far, clients have told us that they like using the feedback tools and believe it helps them stay on track. We have only been using the tools for three months, so do not yet have data on whether these tools have improved the outcomes of our clients. If you have questions or would like more information on how we are using the ORS and SRS and/or information on services at Prairie Ridge, please contact Mark Dodd, Clinical Director at 641-424-2391 ext. 232.

PARENT ALERT:

The movie that prides itself on being “a parent’s worst nightmare”.
Releases on March 2nd



Questions & Answers:

Question: I heard that smoking marijuana is shown to be less damaging to your lungs than tobacco, is this true?

Answer: The headlines streaming from the recent Journal of the American Medical Association study on marijuana use and pulmonary function all suggest that marijuana is safe (“Marijuana doesn’t harm lung function,” Web, Jan. 10). Omitted from the calculation is the large number of marijuana users who believed that they would always be occasional users but progressed to heavy use. If the researchers included chronic, heavy marijuana users as part of the cost of occasional marijuana use, the risks of occasional marijuana use would have been more complete and served as compelling evidence for not using marijuana. Consider the estimated 9 percent of marijuana users who become addicted. That number goes up to 17 percent for users who start at young ages. This study is comparable to a study on drivers who occasionally speed and who, over the past 20 years, have had no crashes and no arrests. The conclusion of such findings would have been that the study found no evidence that speeding leads to arrest or crashes. Let us not forget the large body of evidence of serious negative effects of marijuana use, including those related to cognitive and physical impairment, psychosis, and motor vehicle crashes.

Upcoming Events

March 17, 2012 Youth Diversion Program at Prairie Ridge, Mason City. The program will be from 8:00-4:30 p.m. Saturday.

For more information please contact the Prairie Ridge Mason City Office 1-866-429-2391.

March 17 & 19, 2012 Adolescent Prime for Life at Prairie Ridge, Mason City. The program will be from 8:00-4:30 p.m. Saturday & Monday 4:00-8:00 p.m.

For more information please contact the Prairie Ridge Mason City Office 1-866-429-2391.