Cannabis Use Guidelines and Recommendations for Ontario’s Campuses

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Partnership between the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health, Canadian Mental Health Association and the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities.

- Explores issues related to cannabis use and provides an overview of health approaches that can reduce the harms
- Inspired by CARBC’s “Clearing the Air”
- Developed to support campus professionals

https://campusmentalhealth.ca/toolkits/cannabis/
• PSSP works together with partners across the province to move evidence to action in support of Ontario’s *Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy*.

• Has offices throughout Ontario.

• Provides capacity and expertise in:
  – Knowledge exchange
  – Information management
  – Implementation
  – Coaching
  – Equity and engagement
  – Evaluation
Section 1: Cannabis and Substance Use

- About cannabis
- Cannabis use in Ontario
- Understanding substance use
- Public health and harm reduction approaches
- Prohibition/legalization paradox
What Happened on October 17th?

The purchase and consumption of cannabis is now legal for adults across Canada.

- Available initially:
  - Dried and fresh cannabis
  - Cannabis oil
  - No edibles until 2019

- No changes to the medical cannabis system
About Cannabis

• Includes all products from the plant

• Contains cannabinoids, tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), and other chemicals

• Modes of consumption:
  o Inhalation
  o Ingestion
  o Applied to skin
Cannabis use in Ontario
Past Year Cannabis Use (Gr. 7-12, 2017)

Cannabis Use on Ontario Campuses

- 19% of students reported using cannabis 30 days preceding the survey
- 3% reported using cannabis almost daily

Cannabis Use on Ontario Campuses: Reported vs. Perceived Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marijuana</th>
<th>Actual Use</th>
<th>Perceived Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never used</td>
<td>56.9</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used, but not in the last 30 days</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used 1-9 days</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used 10-29 days</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used all 30 days</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any use within the last 30 days</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reported use for all students within the past 30 days compared with how often students perceived the typical student on campus used substances within the same time period.

Understanding Substance Use

Abstinence

Non-problematic

Beneficial

Potentially Harmful

Problematic

Substance Use Disorder

Public Health Approach

• Promotes health of whole population while focusing on those at risk

• Public health approach to cannabis seeks to reduce harms and use targeted measures for those at increased risk

• Legalization and regulation allow cannabis use to be treated as a health issue

CPHA, 2014; CAMH, 2014; Task Force on Cannabis Legalization and Regulation, 2016
Harm Reduction

- Harm reduction are any efforts to reduce harms associated with substance use
- Acknowledges some may not be able to or want to stop using
- Recognizes right to choose and respects individuals
- Promotes safer use to prevent harms

International Harm Reduction Association, 2010;
Canadian Nurses Association Canadian Association of Nurses in AIDS Care, 2012
Prohibition and Legalization Paradox

CANNABIS POLICIES AND HARM: A CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Adapted from Apfel 2014. Cannabis: From Prohibition to Regulation.
About the Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario Division

• Founded in 1952, the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Ontario, is a non-profit, charitable organization committed to making mental health possible for all.

• CMHA Ontario works closely with its 30 local branches in communities across the province to ensure the utilization of best practices in the organization, management and delivery of services to consumers and families of individuals with mental illnesses, dual diagnosis and concurrent disorders.

• All CMHAs in Ontario work in a variety of partnerships to provide a coordinated, continuum of care using the social determinants of health model.
Section 2: Cannabis Use on Campus

This section will assist campus professionals in providing information to students about the risks of cannabis use and intervention strategies to reduce harms. This section covers:

• Reasons for Cannabis use and non-use
• Information about potential risks
• Language and stigma
• Education, harm reduction strategies, and suggestions for engaging with students about substance use
• Information about the Lower Risk Cannabis Use Guidelines (LRCUG’s)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for Use</th>
<th>Reasons for non-use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To feel good (improve mood, appetite and sleep)</td>
<td>Fear of consequences (legal or parental)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be more sociable and fit in with peers</td>
<td>Negative effects on the body and mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s available and acceptable</td>
<td>To avoid social consequences and stigma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assists in gaining an alternative perspective of their experience</td>
<td>To avoid stereotypes of people who use cannabis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Youth, Frequent Cannabis Users and Mental Health

• Consistent evidence that links frequent, early onset cannabis use with negative effects, including mental health problems.

• Frequent use is a risk factor for the development of psychosis, especially if there is a personal or family history of psychosis, or cannabis is used frequently.

• For young adults who have psychosis, ongoing cannabis use can worsen symptoms over the long term.

• Symptoms such as depression, insomnia, anxiety and disturbances in appetite are also reported by some cannabis users in the context of withdrawal from high-frequency use.

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, 2014; Canadian Centre for Substance use, 2015; Canadian Psychiatric Association, 2017.
### Risk and Protective Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk factor</th>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Protective Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Low self-esteem  
• Health  
• Negative attitude towards education  
• Difficult school transition | Student and Life Events                                               | • Positive social and emotional skills  
• Cognitive skills  
• Supportive relationships  
• Developed coping skills |
| • Family conflict  
• Childhood abuse, trauma or neglect | Family                                                              | • Positive and stable home environment  
• Financial support from family |
| • Bullying  
• Early initiation of problem behaviour of substance use | Peers                                                               | • Positive and supportive social network  
• Opportunities for healthy social interactions |
| • Knowledge of and access to campus supports  
• Disconnection from campus community | Campus Environment                                                   | • Presence of campus approaches and strategies aimed at reducing substance use  
• Access to campus supports  
• Opportunities for involvement in campus activities |
| • Discrimination  
• Lack of access to the social determinants of health  
• Lack of access to support services | Societal                                                             | • Inclusion and community  
• Access to support services  
• Economic security |
Cannabis and Impaired Driving

- Driving under the influence of substances, including cannabis, contributes to fatal road crashes.
- Students in Ontario were more likely to report driving after using cannabis than driving after drinking.
- In 2017, a Health Canada survey showed that many people are unaware of the potential risks of cannabis-impaired driving.
- Campus messaging and harm reduction initiatives can provide accurate information and education regarding the risks of driving after consuming cannabis.

Canadian Centre for Substance Use and Addiction, 2018; Health Canada, 2018;
Language and Stigma

- The language we use is an important component in reducing stigma and breaking down negative stereotypes associated with substance use.

- It is recommended to use language that is neutral and precise whenever possible.

- It is also recommended to use ‘people first’ language that focuses on the individual, not the action.

Adapted from CCSA (2017) and Health Canada (2018)
Education, Harm Reduction, and Skills for Engaging with Students

- Stay open, objective and non-judgemental when a student speaks about substance use.
- Listen carefully and seriously when a student discusses using either medical or non-medical cannabis for coping with specific symptoms or conditions.
- Share accurate information and avoid lecturing. Be compassionate and curious about the student’s perception and experience with cannabis use.
- Educate yourself and use facts where you can.
- Match the language that the student is using. For example, if a student uses the word “weed,” do so as well.
- Don’t assume that you know a student’s experiences, feelings, or interest in cannabis.
Lower Risk Cannabis Use Guidelines

All resources available in French
http://crismontario.ca/research-projects/lower-risk-cannabis-use-guidelines

Fischer, B, et al., 2017
Section 3: Developing, implementing, & evaluating a cannabis-use framework for your campus

A. Considerations For Your Campus

B. Developing a Cannabis Use Framework

C. Implementing and Evaluating Your Framework
Considerations For Your Campus

- Stakeholders
- Campus climate
- Harm reduction lens
- Medical use
Developing a Cannabis-Use Framework

Campus culture and context
- Timing of use
- Prevalence of use
- Champions on campus

Increasing personal confidence of staff and students to discuss problematic cannabis use
- Harm reduction
- Build capacity
- Cultivate a sense of community

The academic and personal development of students
- Tools to manage stress and mental health challenges
What are the rules in Ontario?

Ontario

- Minimum age of 19
- Maximum 30 grams possession
- Online sales only, via a new government agency, until April 2019
- Then, private retail system, regulated by the provincial government
- Municipalities can opt out of allowing cannabis storefronts (until January)
- Wherever public (outdoor) smoking / vaping of tobacco is allowed, smoking / vaping of cannabis will be allowed as well
Who’s doing what?

100% Smoke Free:
- McMaster University
- George Brown College
- Western University
- Mohawk College
- University of Ontario Institute of Technology
- Sheridan College
- Durham College
- Georgian College
- Algonquin College

https://campusmentalhealth.ca/toolkits/cannabis/framework/other-campuses
Other policies:

**Humber College:**
Growing, baking, smoking or selling cannabis on Humber property or in residence is prohibited.

**Ryerson University:**
Smoking/vaping cannabis in Ryerson University Residence buildings is not permitted. The consumption of cannabis by means other than smoking or vaping is permitted within non-public spaces within Ryerson residence buildings (inside suite/bedroom).

**Carleton University:**
Smoking/vaping and growing of cannabis on campus is not allowed. Online delivery of cannabis is not permitted on campus, as is the case with alcohol and edibles are not available for sale and consumption is not permitted on campus.

**Brock University:**
The smoking or vaping of recreational cannabis will not be allowed anywhere on Brock University campuses, including in private or work vehicles, student residences and in any designated smoking areas. Students may possess up to 30 grams of dried leaf cannabis or the equivalent amount of legally-available cannabis product(s), stored in a sealed, scent-proof container.
In general…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO</th>
<th>MAYBE</th>
<th>YES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smoking/vaping</td>
<td>Edibles (Queens* and Ryerson)</td>
<td>Medical use of cannabis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growing plants</td>
<td>Cannabis paraphernalia</td>
<td>Possession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online delivery to campus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selling/buying</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Harm reduction projects
Additional References

- Sensible Cannabis Education: A tool-kit for Educating Youth. Canadian Students for Sensible Drug Policy: [https://cssdp.org/sensiblecannabis toolkit](https://cssdp.org/sensiblecannabis toolkit)
- “More Feet on the ground. Learn How to Recognize, Respond and Refer Students Experiencing Mental Health Issues on Campus. The Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health. [https://morefeetontheground.ca/calls-to-action/](https://morefeetontheground.ca/calls-to-action/)
THANK YOU!

https://campusmentalhealth.ca/toolkits/cannabis/

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