

# TRUTH SPOTLIGHT

## marijuana's social impact

As an educator, it's critical to learn about secondhand cannabis smoke, its impact on students, and how to work with students who may be affected by it.

### SECONDHAND SMOKE

Secondhand marijuana (cannabis) smoke happens when people breathe in marijuana smoke or vapor breathed out by people who smoke or use a vape pen.

### THE SECONDHAND IMPACT ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL IMPACT

- The constant smell of marijuana smoke on a teen's clothing can cause others to think the teen uses marijuana.
- Students suspected of using substances must empty their pockets, have their belongings searched, and will miss out on class time.

### HEALTH IMPACT

- Secondhand cannabis smoke contains many of the same toxic and cancer-causing chemicals as smoking it yourself.<sup>1</sup>
- Secondhand cannabis smoke contains Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the compound responsible for most of cannabis's psychoactive effects (or the "high").<sup>1</sup>
- THC levels and ventilation matter. Spending an hour in an unventilated room with cannabis smoke could be enough to get a contact high and may affect a drug test.
- Children exposed to cannabis smoke at home have had positive levels of THC in their urine.<sup>1</sup>

### PRACTICE TIPS FOR EDUCATORS

- Meet privately or away from peers to address concerns.
  - Do not assume the student is using.
  - Use conversation starters to ask if the student is using or if it is someone else.
- Approach the situation with curiosity and not assuming the student has been using.
  - Be curious, not judgmental.
- Offer to trade smelly clothes for clean clothes (if available).

### HAVE THE CONVERSATION—TALK EARLY. TALK OFTEN.

- **Keep an open mind.** When a child feels judged or condemned, they will be less receptive to the message.
- **Put yourself in your kid's shoes.** How would you prefer to be addressed when speaking about a difficult topic?
- **Be clear about your goals.** Know what you want to get from the conversation.
- **Be calm and relaxed.** Coming into the conversation with anger or panic will make it harder to achieve your goals.
- **Be positive.** Approaching the situation with shame, anger, or scare tactics will be counter-productive.

### SECONDHAND SMOKE QUICKFACTS

#### WHERE IT CAN OCCUR:

- homes
- vehicles
- indoor spaces
- outdoor spaces

#### COMPARED TO TOBACCO

- A joint of marijuana equals to 20 tobacco cigarettes.<sup>1</sup>
- Smoking marijuana can be more harmful than using tobacco.<sup>1</sup>

#### SECONDHAND CANNABIS SMOKE HAS...<sup>2</sup>

- Ammonia
- Cadmium
- Chromium
- Hydrogen cyanide
- Lead
- Mercury
- Nickel

#### HEALTH RISKS

- It's possible to get high from secondhand cannabis smoke.
- Increased risk of lung damage, heart disease, and lung cancer.

<sup>1</sup> cdc.gov

<sup>2</sup> ucla.org

<sup>3</sup> nlm.nih.gov

<sup>4</sup> nida.nih.gov

For more information, visit [arborcircle.org/OSAP](http://arborcircle.org/OSAP)

**OSAP** TalkSooner.org