Isn’t everyone doing it?

Over 75% of Northeastern students have not used marijuana in the last month.* People frequently overestimate how much alcohol or drugs people use because it’s more noticeable when someone is using than when someone is not. And often people who do indulge a lot tend to assume that everyone uses the same way that they or their group of friends do. As the numbers show, that may not be the case.

*In 2012, a representative sample of 2600+ NU undergrads were selected to take a survey on alcohol & drug use; 1500+ completed the paid anonymous questionnaire.

Marijuana can affect:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANXIETY</th>
<th>COGNITIVE ABILITIES</th>
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<td>Marijuana raises the resting heart rate by 29 beats per minute and increases blood pressure. Increased resting heart rate and blood pressure can both magnify the symptoms of anxiety.</td>
<td>Marijuana use affects attention, concentration, and short-term memory. For students with a diagnosis of ADD or ADHD, using marijuana can worsen pre-existing attention difficulties.</td>
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Heavier marijuana users have higher deficits in these areas than those who use at lower levels. The cognitive effects of marijuana may vary by age. In research with adults, most cognitive deficits related to marijuana use seem to be temporary, with improvement after several weeks of abstinence. However, new research with adolescent samples (age 15-19) is showing that it may take longer for the adolescent brain to recover from deficits related to marijuana use, particular when it comes to attention.

DID YOU KNOW...?

! Marijuana impairs ability to drive. Researchers are investigating the development of a per se limit as it relates to impairment from marijuana use much in the way that we have the .08 threshold in Massachusetts for alcohol. Know that there is a risk when it comes to driving under the influence of marijuana and that this risk appears to be present for a minimum of three hours after smoking.

! Marijuana can cause hangovers. The strains of marijuana being grown and distributed today are much more potent—with about five times the THC level on average than marijuana that was available in the 1970s. These higher THC levels—upwards of 10%—can make it difficult for heavier smokers to stop, meaning that people can and do develop a dependency on marijuana.

Checking in about marijuana use

- Do you use before trying and/or attending new activities?
- In your current group of friends, does any one not smoke?
- Do you ever use marijuana in the morning or at bedtime to steady your nerves, feel better, or fall asleep?
- Does your marijuana use relieve stress, anxiety, depression, or attention difficulties?
- Have you ever thought about cutting down or quitting?

Contact OPEN for a confidential check-in about your alcohol and/or other drug use. OPEN provides non-judgmental personalized feedback.

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Provided by: OPEN-Office of Prevention & Education at Northeastern, Alcohol & Drugs: Get smart, choose smart.

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