Announcing . . . .

⇒ September 5 Education Meeting
  Topic: Marijuana and Mental Health
  Speaker: Ed Betzelberger, Dir. of Addiction Services, at Tazwood Mental Health Services.
  See page 3 for details

⇒ September 21—PhanieRae & the Soul Shakers at 5th Quarter Bar & Grill
  A percentage of food sales all day will go to our organization
  See page 5 for details

⇒ October 5—Trivia Night at the Bonnie Noble Center
  See page 5 for details
  Game Host: Anthony Walraven
  Reserve your place by calling 309-693-0541. Leave your name and number in your party. Pay at the door.

⇒ October 10—Education Meeting for Mental Illness Awareness Week with Roger Mohn as speaker
  Topic: Dealing with Mental Illness Around Me
  See page 3 for details
  See page 6 for review of Roger’s book, A Different Kind of Closet—his personal story.

Announcements

Newsletter topic: The Effects of Marijuana on the Brain

* When TBA (to be announced) is indicated, please go to https://namitri-countyillinois.org/ later for information
* Learn about NAMI Signature Classes. See p. 2 for information and to sign up for the next classes.
* The room number at ICC Peoria Campus for the Connections Support Group has changed to Room 127. Please note room numbers on the door as you enter. Family Support Group continues to meet in Room 132.
* Next Education Meeting is September 5. We will have a speaker and discussion on Marijuana and Mental Health. See p. 3.
* Calendar for additional events is on p. 7

Even if you receive the print version of the Family Forum, you will benefit from going online (namitri-countyillinois.org) and reading some or all the links to Internet sites. Links expand your understanding of the topic. The pictures are sharper also.

The NAMI Tri-County Illinois Family Forum is a quarterly publication. With common use of the Internet, members and friends can find meeting and activity information on our web site as well as on Facebook. We also send out regular email blasts regarding our activities. Contact information:

**Website:** namitri-countyillinois.org
  (click on Contact us at this site to be added to the email blast)

**Facebook:** Nami Tricounty Illinois

NAMI Dues Structure:
- Household: $60 (one vote)
- Individual: $40
- Open Door: $5 (available to those who could not join without a more modest fee)

Joining NAMI includes National, State, and Local organizations and all the publications and resources available from each.
Educational Opportunities

NAMI Family to Family Class
Please call to register for the next class
Parents, spouses, friends, or adult children of people with mental illnesses are invited to participate in the next 12-week class. There is no charge for this NAMI signature program. Participants will learn valuable information to help them understand and support an ill relative while maintaining their own wellbeing. Please call 309 693-0541 or 309 251-5830 for information or to register for the next class.

NAMI Peer to Peer Class
The next class will be held when there are sufficient numbers to offer it. Please call 309 693-0541 to express interest, ask questions, or register. This class has been redesigned as a 6-week class rather than a 10-week class. You must be 18 or older, have a psychiatric diagnosis, and have someone with whom you can talk about any issues/problems the classes unearth. The classes teach information about the various mental illnesses, tell how different medications function, help you create a relapse prevention plan, and start you toward creating an advance medical directive. The class will be facilitated by Dean and Larry. There is no charge for this NAMI signature program.

NAMI Basics Education Program
Please call to register for the next class
This course is for parents and caregivers of children and adolescents with mental illness. Basics is taught by parents who have lived similar experiences with their own kids and have received training to teach the course. The class covers the biology of mental illness, treatment, school interventions, and the latest research as well as the trauma of brain disorders for the child and the family. If you are interested in this class, please call 309 251-5830. There is no charge for this NAMI signature program.
Also, check out www.NAMI.org "Basics" video on You Tube for further description of the course.

IDHS/DMH Recovery & Empowerment Statewide Calls
Submitted by Karen Rose

Bringing Balance into Our Lives
Please mark your calendars now for the 2019 Recovery & Empowerment Statewide Calls.
Calls: 4th Thursday of each month except Nov. & Dec.
From 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
Call-In Number: (800) 230-1059. No password required
September 26: Regaining Power through Change
October 24: Living Well on a Shoestring Budget

Happy Fall

Thank You!
Monetary Donations
Anonymous, several through Network for Good
Anonymous, several through Abbvie YourCause
Amazon Smile
Genna Buhr
Fondulac District Library Staff
Jane Groeper
Jaycees, Firecracker 5000

In Memory of Christopher T. Anderson
R. Gene Humke

Shopping on Amazon?
Please choose
NAMI Tri-County Illinois

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Dear Members and Friends,

One summer afternoon recently, some friends and I visited the Ronald Reagan Museum at Eureka College. Mr. Reagan is quoted, “The most valuable lesson I learned at Eureka College is that each individual makes a difference.” What a timeless statement that in our world is decidedly worth restating on organizational, familial, local, national and international levels. Yes, every individual makes a difference.

It’s a new NAMI year and I’d like to introduce five individuals who make a difference, our new board members. Pat Edwards, a frequent presenter, strong supporter and professional counselor has returned. Sonya Bolden is the keeper of our email communications’ list, sends you reminders of our monthly programs and made the Mental Health Jeopardy game we’ve used mostly with teens. Brian Roskuszka is our youngest board member, two years out of Bradley University with a degree in electrical engineering. He has a knack for drawing young people into conversations about mental health. Kim Blundy and Mary Cooley came to us with their own family experiences with mental health challenges and have jumped right into participating. In welcoming each new member I want to acknowledge and thank Kim Modglin, Karen Rose, Deb Shaw and Larry Fordham for their many years and diverse contributions to us.

Each individual makes a difference and so does his/her voice. Many of you know that we have an information line and we make an effort to keep those messages confidential. Not this time. One call that came in July was from a man from out of town, calling in connection with the Chicago-based band STYX. Kevin Compton explained that STYX strives to contact non-profit organizations as the band tours. NAMI is one that they favor. Kevin asked for people from our affiliate to attend their concert at the Peoria Civic Center, set up an informational table about NAMI and sell CDs for STYX as well as raffle tickets. They shared those proceeds and sent us away with $741 that evening.

Another unusual contact we received was from Abbie Alsene of the Peoria Jaycees. They, too, sought NAMI’s involvement in their Firecracker 5000 5K race. Eleven of us participated and we expect to receive a percentage of the money they raised. Our thanks to the Peoria Jaycees.

In our mission of education, support and advocacy, we are in greatest need right now of additional leaders for our Connections Support Group. Each must be a person who is in recovery of any mental health condition, ready to listen to others expressing the challenges they face in their own journeys and be willing to be trained to follow NAMI support group guidelines. Connections is where each individual should be welcomed and encouraged to express himself in an accepting environment. Isn’t this why we exist? Please contact me with recommendations.

This fall season offers many opportunities to get to know NAMI people. In addition to our monthly Education Meetings and support groups we have Mental Illness Awareness Week in October. Save October 10 to hear Roger Mohn’s message and invite friends to come to this awareness event. You won’t forget it! See p. 3.

On September 21, PhanieRae will entertain us. See p. 5. It’s a fundraiser.

For those of you who’ve missed the Trivia games of the past, you can play on October 5. Newcomers are welcome also. Get a table of 8 and have some fun. See p. 5.

Yes, every individual makes a difference—each of you!

Beth Lawrence
Introduction of Our New Board Members

Elected at or appointed after the June 2019 Meeting

We welcome four new and one returning members to the NAMI Tri-County Illinois Board of Directors and look forward to the gifts and expertise they bring. We introduce them here so our membership knows who they are.

Kim Blundy

Kim says, “I’m thrilled to be able to give back to an organization that provided support to my family when we needed it without us even having to ask.” Kim is an Operations Group Manager at Caterpillar and loves camping with her husband, John, their two boys, Jack and Tucker, and their English Bulldog, Captain. She says her life is filled with hard work, family and weird sounds and smells from Captain!

Sonya Bolden

Sonya is a native North Carolinian, having lived in Peoria for close to 18 years. She grew up in Durham, NC, and came to Illinois to pursue graduate studies. Sonya works as a social worker at Fresenius Kidney Care in Peoria. She enjoys tracing her family history, reading, traveling, and learning new things. Sonya became interested in NAMI to learn more about local mental health programming in Peoria.

Mary Cooley

Mary said, “I’m an optimist, and I am hopeful for the future.” Mary is a part-time charge nurse working with residents with special needs. She became aware of NAMI recently after someone she knew passed away from suicide. She realized that mental illness is prevalent, and we need to talk about it more and let people know they are not alone. Mary hopes to affect political attitudes about funding of mental health initiatives; in addition, as she nears retirement, she wants to help our local NAMI however she can.

Pat Edwards

Pat is returning to our board, and we appreciate her expertise. She works as a therapist for The Antioch Group in Peoria and has worked in the field of medical social work for over 30 years. She is married to Larry and they attend Grace Presbyterian Church and are involved in music there. They are the parents of Nathan and Paul (deceased) and the grandparents of Emmelia, Eli, Eden and Evelyn.

Brian Roskuszka

I came to NAMI though the suggestion of a member who told me to get involved. He heard my story of diagnosis and recovery and saw inside of me the passion to help others like me. I look forward to giving those who struggle a voice to be heard.
Two Fun Events to help Support NAMI Tri-County Illinois
Please join Us

The 5th Quarter Sports Bar and Grill Pizzeria is teaming up with NAMI Tri-County Illinois for an evening of music, food, information, and fundraising.

Where: The 5th Quarter Sports Bar and Pizzeria
1110 N. Main Street, East Peoria, IL

When: Sat., September 21, 2019, 7 to 10 pm
What: PhanieRae & the Soul Shakers
A group of Soulful Rockers with a little hip hop and blues in between.

A percentage of food sales for the entire day will be donated to Nami Tri-County Illinois.
There will be a $5 cover charge for the cost of the band.

Saturday, October 5, 2019

Please get your teams ready for TRIVIA 2019! Come ready to eat, have fun, and meet new friends—all for the price of $25 per person/$135 for table of 6.

The event will be at the Noble Center (Peoria Park District) at Lake & University, Peoria, and will begin with doors opening at 6:30 pm. At 6:45 we will serve dinner including Chicken Parmesan and Mostaccioli with Meat Sauce, House Salad, Rolls and Butter, catered by Bernardis/Mona’s Catering.

You will have time to peruse the items for the SILENT AUCTION and to purchase your 50-50 TICKETS before the games begin. Please have your teams of 6 to 8 people lined up, or we will pair you with some great folks so you can offer your trivia expertise! At 7:45 the trivia questioning will begin with our Trivia Game Host, ANTHONY ARNARDIS/MONA WALRAVEN.

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Book Reviews

A Different Kind of Closet: The Struggles of Mental Illness
By Roger Mohn, review from amazon with remarks by Lila Gammon

What’s it like to be raised in a dysfunctional home where your mother is bipolar, your father a highly functioning alcoholic? Roger Mohn’s story is not unique. Most families that deal and struggle with mental illness among them live in a different world because so much negative stigma surrounds “mental illness.” It’s like those people, for whatever reason, that live in a closet of secrecy about their lives, only this is a Different Kind of Closet.

NAMI Tri-County Illinois is proud to promote this book as it was written by our board member, treasurer, Family-to-Family class teacher, tech specialist, speaker and very willing leader or participant in our fundraisers and other activities, Roger Mohn. Once Roger chose to reveal his background and struggles, he became a tireless advocate for reducing the stigma of behavioral health issues and educating people who live with those issues or people who have concerns for their family members.

Marijuana: The Unbiased Truth about the World’s Most Popular Weed
By Kevin P. Hill, 2015; review from Amazon.com

A nationally recognized clinical expert and leading researcher on marijuana, Kevin P. Hill, provides a comprehensive guide to understanding the drug in Marijuana: The Unbiased Truth about the World’s Most Popular Weed. Through research-based historical, scientific, and medical information, Hill will help you sort through what you hear on the streets and in the media and cut straight to the facts. Whether you’re a parent concerned about your child’s use, someone with an illness considering medical marijuana as a treatment option, a user who has questions about its effect on your health, or if you’re just trying to make up your mind about legalization, this book will give you the most current and unbiased information you need to make informed decisions about marijuana.

Weed, Inc.: The Truth About the Pot Lobby, THC, and the Commercial Marijuana Industry
By Ben Cort, 2017; review from Amazon.com

The truth about what happens when capitalism meets a mind-altering substance. Colorado’s Amendment 64, the game-changing amendment that authorized the use and regulation of marijuana in the state, sounded to most people who voted for it like a victory for social justice, a way to solve the problem of prison overcrowding, and a windfall for state and local governments that could reap the benefits from sales taxes. In Weed, Inc., author Ben Cort shows the truth. This was not simple legalization of a plant or decriminalization for those possessing it. Instead, the law was written to allow for the commercialization of the mind-altering component of marijuana, THC, by an industry now seeking to make it stronger and to get it into the hands of as many new users as possible. Controlled by a powerful, wealthy lobby, the industry has no federal oversight and has grown at a pace that’s made building and enforcing responsible regulation totally impossible, with adverse impacts to society, health, and the environment.
NAMI TRI-COUNTY ILLINOIS
CALENDAR OF EVENTS
September, October & November 2019
~ Illinois Central College Peoria Campus, 5407 N. University, Peoria ~
Education Meetings, Poplar Hall, Room 127
Support Groups, Poplar Hall: Family—Room 132 & Connections—Room 127

September
Tuesday, September 3, 7:00 p.m. Survivors of Suicide, The Chapel, Proctor Hospital. Hinrichs, 309 697-3342 or Sylvia Murphy 309 208-3027
Thursday, September 5, 7:00 p.m. Monthly Education Meeting, ICC Peoria Campus, Room 127, Poplar Hall. Speaker: Ed Bettezberger, Dir. of Addiction Services, at Tazwood Mental Health Services. Topic: Marijuana and Mental Health. (see p. 3)
Thursday, September 12, 6:30–8:30 p.m. Mood-Challenge meeting at Trinity Lutheran Church, 135 NE Randolph Ave., Peoria
Tuesday, September 17, 7:00 p.m. Survivors of Suicide, The Chapel, Proctor Hospital. Hinrichs, 309 697-3342 or Sylvia Murphy 309 208-3027
Thursday, September 19, 7:00–8:30 p.m. Monthly Support Groups, ICC Peoria Campus, Poplar Hall Family and friends of people with mental health conditions. Room 132. For further information call 309 693-0541. Connections—individuals participating in recovery. Room 127. For further information call John 309 472-5907.
Saturday, September 21, fundraiser with great music by PhanieRae & the Soulshakers, at 5th Quarter Bar & Grill (see p. 5)
Thursday, September 26, 6:30–8:30 p.m. Mood-Challenge meeting at Trinity Lutheran Church, 135 NE Randolph Ave., Peoria

October
Tuesday, October 1, 7:00 p.m. Survivors of Suicide, The Chapel, Proctor Hospital. Hinrichs, 309 697-3342 or Sylvia Murphy 309 208-3027
Thursday, October 3—No Education Meeting—see October 10 for Mental Illness Awareness Week program
Saturday, October 5, Trivia night: Noble Center, Game Host—Anthony Walraven (see p. 5)
Thursday, October 10, Mental Illness Aware Week exclusive Education Meeting, ICC Peoria Campus, Student Center. Speaker: Roger Mohn, author and NAMI Tri-County Illinois Board Member. Topic: Dealing with Mental Illness around Me.
Thursday, October 10, 6:30–8:30 p.m. Mood-Challenge meeting at Trinity Lutheran Church, 135 NE Randolph Ave., Peoria
Tuesday, October 15, 7:00 p.m. Survivors of Suicide, The Chapel, Proctor Hospital. Hinrichs, 309 697-3342 or Sylvia Murphy 309 208-3027
Thursday, October 17, 7:00–8:30 p.m. Monthly Support Groups, ICC Peoria Campus, Poplar Hall Family and friends of people with mental health conditions. Room 132. For further information call 309 693-0541. Connections—individuals participating in recovery. Room 127. For further information call John 309 472-5907.
Thursday, October 24, Mood-Challenge meeting at Trinity Lutheran Church, 135 NE Randolph Ave., Peoria

November
Tuesday, November 5, 7:00 p.m. Survivors of Suicide, The Chapel, Proctor Hospital. Hinrichs, 309 697-3342 or Sylvia Murphy 309 208-3027
Thursday, November 7, 7:00–8:30 p.m. Monthly Education Meeting, ICC Peoria Campus, Room 127, Poplar Hall. Speaker: TBA. Topic: TBA
Thursday, November 14, 6:30–8:30 p.m. Mood-Challenge meeting at Trinity Lutheran Church, 135 NE Randolph Ave., Peoria
Tuesday, November 19, 7:00 p.m. Survivors of Suicide, The Chapel, Proctor Hospital. Hinrichs, 309 697-3342 or Sylvia Murphy 309 208-3027
Thursday, November 21, 7:00–8:30 p.m. Monthly Support Groups, ICC Peoria Campus, Poplar Hall Family and friends of people with mental health conditions. Room 132. For further information call 309 693-0541. Connections—individuals participating in recovery. Room 127. For further information call John 309 472-5907.
Thursday, November 28, No meeting; enjoy Thanksgiving.

Looking Ahead:
No education or support group meetings in December; Holiday Party for all on December 12.

~~Save the Date! Everyone is invited~~
Christmas Party at Immanuel Lutheran Church, East Peoria
December 12, 6 p.m.

Survivors of Suicide - Peoria
Contact: Rev. Eimo Hinrichs or Mrs. Pat Hinrichs, 309 697-3342 or Sylvia Murphy, 309 208-3027
Meeting Place: Chapel at Proctor Hospital, 5409 North Knoxville Ave., Peoria, IL 61614
Meeting Day(s)/Meeting Time: 1st and 3rd Tuesday, 7:00 p.m. Facilitated by: Peer/Professional Charge: None

Brighter Days Ahead
513 NE Madison Peoria, Illinois 309 222-2012
“Brighter Days Ahead” offers a positive and uplifting environment for people 18 years of age or older who have experienced a mental illness. Its purpose is for members to have a safe place where they can socialize, receive support, and be part of fun, recovery-oriented activities while envisioning the brighter days ahead.

Hours of Operation
Monday - Saturday from 8 a.m.–4 p.m. Sunday from 12 noon–5 p.m.
If you have any additional questions, we would be happy to talk either by phone 309 222-2012 or at recoverycenter@fayetecompanies.org
Marijuana Potency gets increased Scrutiny

Excerpts from article by Robert McCoppin.
Chicago Tribune, 7/16/19

As Illinois prepares to legalize marijuana next year, one key aspect of public health that regulators will consider is whether and how to limit the amount of THC—the chief component of cannabis that determines how high users get.

The new law signed by Gov. JB Pritzker last month to legalize sales Jan. 1 states that the Department of Agriculture will oversee cannabis growers, including “establishing limits on potency or serving size.”

While the vast majority of adult marijuana users consume it without incident, advocates say, the link between THC potency and psychosis has generated increased concern recently among psychiatrists and researchers. Multiple studies have shown a persistent association between marijuana use and psychosis, including schizophrenia, with symptoms such as paranoia and hallucinations.

In March, a study in the British medical journal Lancet went further, and found that daily cannabis use was associated with increased first episodes of a psychotic disorder. The association was even more pronounced for stronger marijuana, with higher levels of THC. A 2018 study in the Netherlands also found that when potency went up, more people sought drug treatment, and when potency fell, so did the number of patients.

The data fit many of the tests for causality, researchers say, but doesn’t prove that cannabis causes psychosis. Some researchers suspect instead that people predisposed to psychosis may be more likely to use cannabis. But as the Yale University authors of a comprehensive research review put it, “…cannabis may be a component cause in the emergence of psychosis, and this warrants serious consideration from the point of view of public health policy.”

In response to such findings, the Illinois State Medical Society is calling for per-serving limits on THC, strong warning labels, and a ban on claims of health benefits from cannabis. The society was involved in getting public health precautions written into marijuana legalization, and members hope to be involved in drawing up further regulations.

Marijuana potency—measured by the percentage of THC by weight in the total amount of marijuana consumed—has risen in recent decades. The average strength of stronger strains of confiscated pot doubled from about 8 percent in the early 1990s to 16% by 2013, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

Efforts have been made to limit THC in other states. In Florida this spring, lawmakers tried but failed to limit the strength of marijuana flower to 10% THC. In Colorado in 2016, advocates pushed for a referendum to limit THC to 16%, but ultimately withdrew the plan. Medical marijuana laws in some states only allow low-THC products.

Industry officials argued that the limits would have eliminated most of their products, and would only push demand to the black market, costing jobs and tax revenue.

The Illinois medical marijuana program, operating since 2015, simply limits the amount of THC in edibles, so that a candy bar contains a maximum of 100 milligrams of THC, and is scored into servings of 10 milligrams each.

Cannabis continues to get stronger since legalization. Colorado reported that the average amount of THC in legal marijuana flower there rose from about 16% in 2014 to 20% in 2017. The products generating the most concern are concentrates—in which solvents are used to extract THC into wax-like substances—which are far stronger and can exceed 80% THC.

In Massachusetts, which recently legalized cannabis, a group of doctors and scientists recently called for strict THC potency limits and warnings on packages to include “increased risk of serious mental illness including psychosis, paranoia, suicidal thoughts, and depression.” The group also advocates tracking marijuana transactions to limit how much someone may buy.

But trying to regulate THC percentage is misguided, in the view of Jeremy Unruh, director of public and regulatory affairs for PharmaCann, a multistate cannabis business based in Chicago. People who use high-THC concentrates are generally experienced users, he said. Smokers feel the effects within minutes, so if it’s stronger pot, they simply smoke less. Most overdoses of cannabis, he believes, are due to new users who eat too much.

In states with legal cannabis, such as Colorado, emergency room visits and hospitalizations linked to marijuana use have shot up, often because people try an edible, then eat too much when it doesn’t take immediate effect, leading to an overdose. Many weed-related websites offer advice on how to handle a “freak out,” noting that most users will be fine with time, and generally advising to try to relax in a safe place and wait it out, which may take hours or even all day or night. It’s more important, in Unruh’s view, to set limits on each serving of edibles, so that users know how much they’re taking and start with small amounts until they know what dose is best for them.

Paul Armentano, deputy director for the advocacy group NORML, acknowledged in an email that marijuana use carries risk particularly for young people and those with a family history of mental illness, which is why the group supports age restrictions and public education.

Such awareness campaigns have helped steadily decrease use, particularly among adolescents, of tobacco and alcohol, which unlike marijuana, kill thousands of people each year. And legal cannabis has the advantage of lab testing and potency statements on the label, unlike illegal pot. Armentano also pointed out that the FDA-approved drug Marinol, used to quell nausea, is 100 percent synthetic THC, but is used safely, without the risk of fatal overdose that opioids have.

Dr. Shalini Varma, a psychiatrist and addiction counselor in Vernon Hills, said she has seen patients who were heavy marijuana users who suffered psychotic breaks, such as a patient thinking the television is talking to him, or that his eyes are filming other people. “They can’t function,” she said. But many of her patients won’t admit it’s a problem. “I treat lots of different drug problems. More than any other drug, they hold onto this.”

As for the regulatory process, a spokeswoman for the Department of Agriculture could not say what limits the agency will set, but said the emergency rules will be ready, as required, within 180 days of the law’s signing—a deadline which is just days before legal sales are to begin.
Marijuana

Source: NIDA: National Institute on Drug Abuse, Advancing Addiction Science. Excerpts
https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/marijuana
Revised July 2019; References for footnotes and articles can be found at this website

What is marijuana?
Marijuana refers to the dried leaves, flowers, stems, and seeds from the Cannabis sativa or Cannabis indica plant. The plant contains the mind-altering chemical THC and other similar compounds. Extracts can also be made from the cannabis plant (see "Marijuana Extracts").

Marijuana is the most commonly used illicit drug in the United States. In 2015, more than 11 million young adults ages 18 to 25 used marijuana in the past year.

How do people use marijuana?
People smoke marijuana in hand-rolled cigarettes (joints) or in pipes or water pipes (bongs). They also smoke it in blunts—emptied cigars that have been partly or completely refilled with marijuana. To avoid inhaling smoke, some people are using vaporizers. These devices pull the active ingredients (including THC) from the marijuana and collect their vapor in a storage unit. A person then inhales the vapor, not the smoke. Some vaporizers use a liquid marijuana extract.

Marijuana Extracts
Smoking THC-rich resins extracted from the marijuana plant is on the rise. People call this practice dabbing. These extracts come in various forms, such as:
- hash oil or honey oil—a gooey liquid
- wax or budder—a solid wax with a texture like lip balm
- shatter—a hard, amber-colored solid

These extracts can deliver extremely large amounts of THC to the body, and their use has sent some people to the emergency room. Another danger is in preparing these extracts, which usually involves butane (lighter fluid). A number of people have caused fires and explosions and have been seriously burned from using butane to make extracts at home.

How does marijuana affect the brain?
Marijuana has both short- and long-term effects on the brain. THC acts on numerous areas in the brain (in yellow).

Short-Term Effects
When a person smokes marijuana, THC quickly passes from the lungs into the bloodstream. The blood carries the chemical to the brain and other organs throughout the body. The body absorbs THC more slowly when the person eats or drinks it. In that case, they generally feel the effects after 30 minutes to 1 hour.

THC acts on specific brain cell receptors that ordinarily react to natural THC-like chemicals. These natural chemicals play a role in normal brain development and function.

Marijuana overactivates parts of the brain that contain the highest number of these receptors. This causes the "high" that people feel. Other effects include:
- altered senses (for example, seeing brighter colors)
- altered sense of time
- impaired body movement
- difficulty with thinking and problem-solving
- impaired memory
- hallucinations (when taken in high doses)
- delusions (when taken in high doses)
- psychosis (when taken in high doses)

Long-Term Effects
Marijuana also affects brain development. When people begin using marijuana as teenagers, the drug may impair thinking, memory, and learning functions and affect how the brain builds connections between the areas necessary for these functions. Researchers are still studying how long marijuana's effects last and whether some changes may be permanent.

For example, a study from New Zealand conducted in part by researchers at Duke University showed that people who started smoking marijuana heavily in their teens and had an ongoing marijuana use disorder lost an average of 8 IQ points between ages 13 and 38. The lost mental abilities didn't fully return in

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The Effects of Marijuana on the Brain

(Effects of Marijuana Cont. from page 9)

those who quit marijuana as adults. Those who started smoking marijuana as adults didn't show notable IQ declines.5

In another recent study on twins, those who used marijuana showed a significant decline in general knowledge and in verbal ability (equivalent to 4 IQ points) between the preteen years and early adulthood, but no predictable difference was found between twins when one used marijuana and the other didn't. This suggests that the IQ decline in marijuana users may be caused by something other than marijuana, such as shared familial factors (e.g., genetics, family environment).6 NIDA’s Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development (ABCD) study, a major longitudinal study, is tracking a large sample of young Americans from late childhood to early adulthood to help clarify how and to what extent marijuana and other substances, alone and in combination, affect adolescent brain development. Read more about the ABCD study on our Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Brain and Cognitive Development (ABCD Study) webpage.

A Rise in Marijuana’s THC Levels
The amount of THC in marijuana has been increasing steadily over the past few decades.7 For a person who’s new to marijuana use, this may mean exposure to higher THC levels with a greater chance of a harmful reaction. Higher THC levels may explain the rise in emergency room visits involving marijuana use.

The popularity of edibles also increases the chance of harmful reactions. Edibles take longer to digest and produce a high. Therefore, people may consume more to feel the effects faster, leading to dangerous results.

Higher THC levels may also mean a greater risk for addiction if people are regularly exposing themselves to high doses.

What are the other health effects of marijuana?
Marijuana use may have a wide range of effects, both physical and mental.

Physical Effects
Breathing problems. Marijuana smoke irritates the lungs, and people who smoke marijuana frequently can have the same breathing problems as those who smoke tobacco. These problems include daily cough and phlegm, more frequent lung illness, and a higher risk of lung infections. Researchers so far haven’t found a higher risk for lung cancer in people who smoke marijuana.8

Increased heart rate. Marijuana raises heart rate for up to 3 hours after smoking. This effect may increase the chance of heart attack. Older people and those with heart problems may be at higher risk.

Problems with child development during and after pregnancy. One study found that about 20% of pregnant women 24-years-old and younger screened positive for marijuana. However, this study also found that women were about twice as likely to screen positive for marijuana use via a drug test than they state in self-reported measures.9 This suggests that self-reported rates of marijuana use in pregnant females is not an accurate measure of marijuana use and may be underreporting their use. Additionally, in one study of dispensary personnel at marijuana dispensaries were recommending marijuana to pregnant women for nausea, but medical experts warn against it. This concerns medical experts because marijuana use during pregnancy is linked to lower birth weight and increased risk of both brain and behavioral problems in babies. If a pregnant woman uses marijuana, the drug may affect certain developing parts of the fetus’s brain. Children exposed to marijuana in the womb have an increased risk of problems with attention,11 memory, and problem-solving compared to unexposed children.12 Some research also suggests that moderate amounts of THC are excreted into the breast milk of nursing mothers.13 With regular use, THC can reach amounts in breast milk that could affect the baby’s developing brain. Other recent research suggests an increased risk of preterm births.14 More research is needed. Read our Marijuana Research Report for more information about marijuana and pregnancy.

Intense Nausea and Vomiting. Regular, long-term marijuana use can lead some people to develop Cannabinoid Hyperemesis Syndrome. This causes users to experience regular cycles of severe nausea, vomiting, and dehydration, sometimes requiring emergency medical attention.14

Mental Effects
Long-term marijuana use has been linked to mental illness in some people, such as:

- temporary hallucinations
- temporary paranoia
- worsening symptoms in patients with schizophrenia—a severe mental disorder with symptoms such as hallucinations, paranoia, and disorganized thinking

Marijuana use has also been linked to other mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts among teens. However, study findings have been mixed.

How Does Marijuana Affect a Person’s Life?
Compared to those who don't use marijuana, those who frequently use large amounts report the following:

- lower life satisfaction
- poorer mental health
- poorer physical health
- more relationship problems

People also report less academic and career success. For example, marijuana use is linked to a higher likelihood of dropping out of school.15 It’s also linked to more job absences, accidents, and injuries.16

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The Effects of Marijuana on the Brain

Is marijuana a gateway drug?
Use of alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana are likely to come before use of other drugs.21,22 Animal studies have shown that early exposure to addictive substances, including THC, may change how the brain responds to other drugs. For example, when rodents are repeatedly exposed to THC when they're young, they later show an enhanced response to other addictive substances—such as morphine or nicotine—in the areas of the brain that control reward, and they’re more likely to show addiction-like behaviors.23,24

Although these findings support the idea of marijuana as a “gateway drug,” the majority of people who use marijuana don't go on to use other “harder” drugs. It's also important to note that other factors besides biological mechanisms, such as a person’s social environment, are also critical in a person’s risk for drug use and addiction. Read more about marijuana as a gateway drug in our Marijuana Research Report.

Can a person overdose on marijuana?
An overdose occurs when a person uses enough of the drug to produce life-threatening symptoms or death. There are no reports of teens or adults dying from marijuana alone. However, some people who use marijuana can feel some very uncomfortable side effects, especially when using marijuana products with high THC levels. People have reported symptoms such as anxiety and paranoia, and in rare cases, an extreme psychotic reaction (which can include delusions and hallucinations) that can lead them to seek treatment in an emergency room.

While a psychotic reaction can occur following any method of use, emergency room responders have seen an increasing number of cases involving marijuana edibles. Some people (especially preteens and teens) who know very little about edibles don't realize that it takes longer for the body to feel marijuana’s effects when eaten rather than smoked. So they consume more of the edible, trying to get high faster or thinking they haven't taken enough. In addition, some babies and toddlers have been seriously ill after ingesting marijuana or marijuana edibles left around the house.

Is marijuana addictive?
Marijuana use can lead to the development of a substance use disorder, a medical illness in which the person is unable to stop using even though it's causing health and social problems in their life. Severe substance use disorders are also known as addiction. Research suggests that between 9 and 30 percent of those who use marijuana may develop some degree of marijuana use disorder.25 People who begin using marijuana before age 18 are four to seven times more likely than adults to develop a marijuana use disorder.26

Many people who use marijuana long term and are trying to quit report mild withdrawal symptoms that make quitting difficult. These include:
- grouchiness
- sleeplessness
- decreased appetite
- anxiety
- Cravings

What treatments are available for marijuana use disorder?
No medications are currently available to treat marijuana use disorder, but behavioral support has been shown to be effective. Examples include therapy and motivational incentives (providing rewards to patients who remain drug-free). Continuing research may lead to new medications that help ease withdrawal symptoms, block the effects of marijuana, and prevent relapse.

Points to Remember
- Marijuana refers to the dried leaves, flowers, stems, and seeds from the Cannabis sativa or Cannabis indica plant.
- The plant contains the mind-altering chemical THC and other related compounds.
- People use marijuana by smoking, eating, drinking, or inhaling it.
- Smoking and vaping THC-rich extracts from the marijuana plant (a practice called dabbing) is on the rise.
- THC overactivates certain brain cell receptors, resulting in effects such as:
  - altered senses
  - changes in mood
  - impaired body movement
  - difficulty with thinking and problem-solving
  - impaired memory and learning
- Marijuana use can have a wide range of health effects, including:
  - hallucinations and paranoia
  - breathing problems
  - possible harm to a fetus's brain in pregnant women
- The amount of THC in marijuana has been increasing steadily in recent decades, creating more harmful effects in some people.
- It’s unlikely that a person will fail a drug test or get high from passive exposure by inhaling secondhand marijuana smoke.
- There aren’t any reports of teens and adults dying from using marijuana alone, but marijuana use can cause some very uncomfortable side effects, such as anxiety and paranoia and, in rare cases, extreme psychotic reactions.
- Marijuana use can lead to a substance use disorder, which can develop into an addiction in severe cases.
- No medications are currently available to treat marijuana use disorder, but behavioral support can be effective.

Vaping—Marijuana Connection
Summarized by Dr. Sanjay Gupta

In yet another strike against vaping by adolescents, a review of research published 8/11/19 finds teens who vape are 3½ times more likely to use marijuana. The analysis found the connection between vaping and marijuana use was stronger for teens under 17 than those ages 18-24. Researchers said the findings support the theory that nicotine can rewire the developing brain and make it crave additional rewarding sensations, thus making the use of marijuana more appealing. Other reports have shown that kids are using e-cigarette pens and cartridges to vape marijuana in its leaf or oil form.
We provide education, support groups, and advocacy for families, friends, and individuals with mental illness in Peoria, Tazewell, and Woodford Counties.

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Choose one:

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  - $40

- Open Door Membership
  - $5

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