Stigma refers to the negative attitudes, judgements and beliefs that motivate people to fear, reject, avoid and discriminate against others for any physical or social attribute they possess.1

People that use cannabis may experience stigmatization

from peers, family and caregivers based on stereotypes and misconceptions about cannabis. They may be judged or mistreated for their substance use without other aspects of their life being considered.



behaviors and characteristics, including but not limited to... Gender Illness

A person can be judged/stigmatized for a wide range of

- Financial status
- Race
- Sexual Orientation Mental Health
- Substance Use (including cannabis)
- Stigma can be experienced at multiple levels<sup>2</sup>
- Religion
  - Age

Weight

- Interests • Etc.

### Self apply negative attitudes to themselves for a stigmatized characteristic, leading to reduced Stigma

How a person feels about themselves. They may

self-esteem. general public When members the of of a disapprove or person for group characteristics, choices or qualities that they

believe are unacceptable. When professionals (counselors, doctors, teachers, law enforcement) or institutions create barriers to accessing necessary services which,

in turn, affect a person's quality of life.

Social

Stigma



Structural

Stigma

Judgment or stereotyping experienced either by family or friends of a stigmatized person, or by a provider that supports stigmatized individuals or groups.

Expectation of bias or judgment from others if a potentially stigmatizing trait or characteristic

Secondary

Stigma



Anticipated

The Cycle of Cannabis Stigmatization<sup>3</sup> Labeling Stereotyping

### whether or not they use regularly. 'unable to make responsible decisions,' or 'immoral.'

Discrimination &

**Status Loss** 

People may choose not to

interact with people that use

cannabis, excluding or

mistreating them due to their choice to use cannabis.

Someone that uses cannabis may be

labeled as an 'addict,' 'pothead' or 'stoner'

becomes known.

Language Matters: Why We Say "Cannabis" Instead Of "Marijuana" The word 'marijuana' was popularized in the 20th century by cannabis critics. They associated the term marijuana with

nearly a century in Canada.<sup>5</sup>





include pity, anger or fear.

People may stereotype people that use

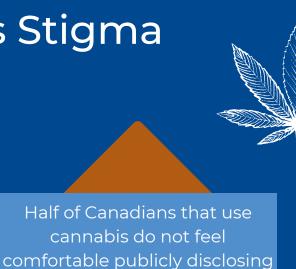
cannabis as 'dangerous,' 'unpredictable,'

## contributed to the stigmatization and illegalization of cannabis for Current legal framework has abandoned use of the word 'marijuana' due to its negative associations and correctly refers to the plant as cannabis in order to reduce the stigma surrounding its use.6

Legalization and Cannabis Stigma Did legalizing cannabis change the way other people view cannabis use?

impoverished, marginalized communities, as well as criminal activity

and violence to provoke negative judgment and fear. This



doing so.

49.2% of people that did not smoke cannabis viewed doing so as acceptable in 2017. 56% of people that did not smoke cannabis viewed doing so as acceptable in 2020.

from seeking support for medical issues. 10 Youth feeling stigmatized for cannabis use may isolate from those around them to avoid judgment, experience poorer mental health and create Stigma additional barriers to seeking help or support for problems in their life." Preventing Help-Seeking

Impact of Stigma on Youth That Use Cannabis

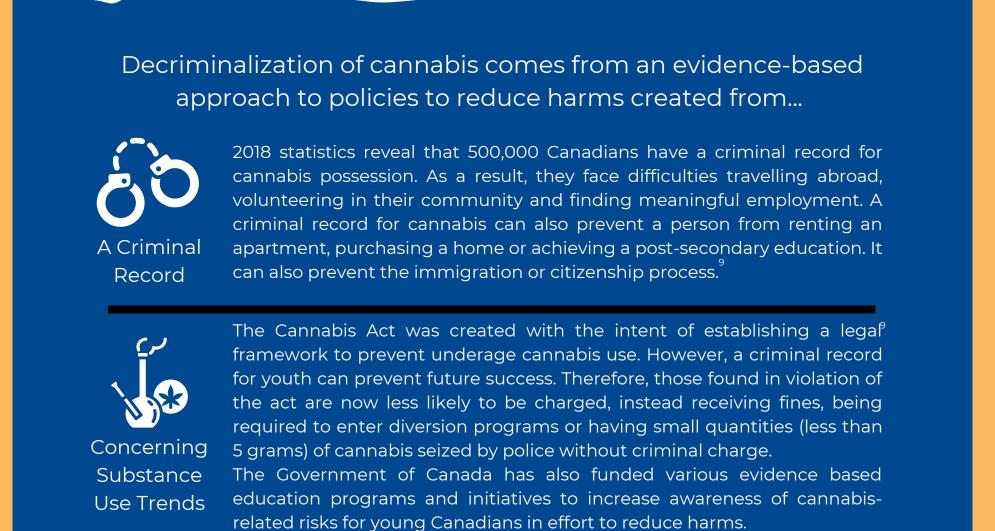
Using Cannabis to Cope with Stigmatization

youth from higher-reported income families."

Youth that use continue to use cannabis into adulthood may be labelled as

lazy, irresponsible or immature. Non-users may also fear being judged for

having friends or family members that use cannabis. Friends or family of





Representation in Media The media tends to portray drug use as distorted or exaggerated, focusing only on the most extreme cases in society. Marginalized or underprivileged people are portrayed negatively for cannabis use, often shown connected to criminal behavior, which furthers negative stereotypes of racial minorities.<sup>12</sup>

Research suggests that cannabis can be used as a coping mechanism by

Marginalized youth (including those from lower-income families, LGBTQ+

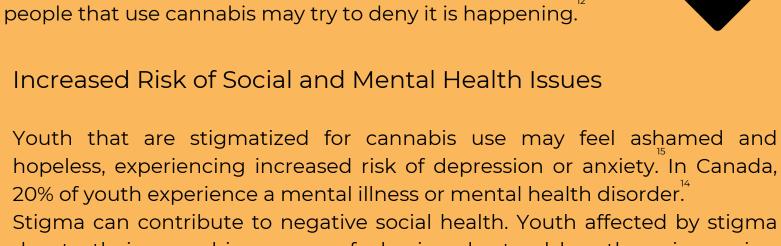
or Indigenous youth) experience elevated rates of discrimination, and also

report higher rates of cannabis use than white, heterosexual youth and/or

Fear of Labeling Due To Cannabis Use

youth in response to trauma and lack of support from family and peers."

Approximately 40% of Canadians overall report that stigma prevents them



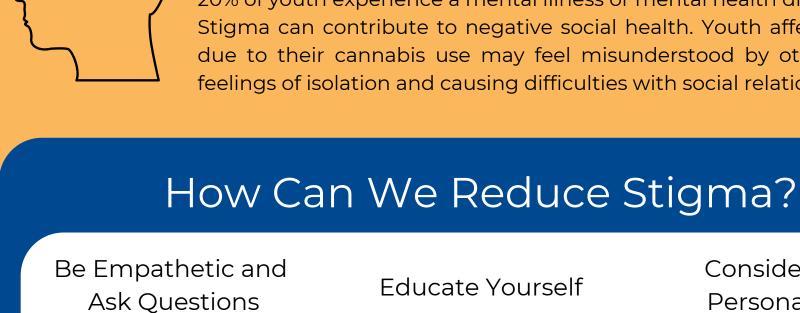
Consider Any

Personal Bias

Identify the person first, separate

from the substance. This can

encourage individuals to seek the



Stigmatizing

Language

Marijuana

• Drug Habit

15. CAMH, 2021. Addressing Stigma.

Youth.

2.

3.

4. 5.

6.

7.

Stigma can contribute to negative social health. Youth affected by stigma due to their cannabis use may feel misunderstood by others, increasing feelings of isolation and causing difficulties with social relationships.

**Educate Yourself** 

that use cannabis.

Language Matters

Being able to understand Use facts to support Reflect on your own opinions about substance why people use cannabis conversation to prevent helps us see them as a use when speaking to misconceptions from whole person and lowers clouding feelings, thoughts others while respecting judgment. their values and decisions. and actions towards people

#### help they need, can positively affect Addict · Person with a the quality of health services and Stoner Person who consumes influence policies surrounding cannabis treatment options and accessibility

.CAMH, 2021. <u>Stigma: Understanding the Impact of prejudice</u>
Stangl, Earnshaw, Logie, van Brakel, Simbayi, Barre & Dovidio
Framework: a global, crosscutting framework to inform resea
health-related stigmas
. Yang, L. H., Wong, L. Y., Grivel, M. M., & Hasin, D. S., 2017. <u>Stigm</u>
international phenomenon. Current opinion in psychiatry, 30
Wilcox, Anna, 2014. <u>The Origin of the Word Marijuana</u> .
The Canadian Press, <u>A timeline of some significant events in </u>
Miller, Jacquie, 2017. <u>Here's Why You Shouldn't Use The Word</u>
Statistics Canada, 2020. What Has Changed Since Cannabis \

16. American Psychiatric Association, 2020. Stigma and Discrimination.

**Preferred** 

Language

Regular substance use

• Cannabis

the history of medical marijuana in Canada. <u>d Marijuana Anymore.</u>

Reference List

8. Government of Canada, 2020. 2020 Canadian Cannabis Survey (CCS). 9. Owusu-Bempah, A. 2018. <u>Cannabis Amnesty Key Facts</u>. 10. Canadian Institute for Health Information, 2019. Cannabis and alcohol responsible for majority of hospitalizations for substance use among youth.

**Education & Behavior.** 13. Mortensen, T.M., Moscowitz, L., Wan, A., & Yang, A., 2020. The marijuana user in US news media: an examination of visual stereotypes of race, culture, criminality and normification. Visual Communication,

o, 2019. The Health Stigma and Discrimination arch, intervention development, and policy on na and substance use disorders: an )(5), 378–388.

Was Legalized?

and discrimination.

11. CAMH, 2021. Mental Illness and Addiction: Facts and Statistics.

12. Buttazzoni, A., Tariq, U., Thompson-Haile, A., Burkhalter, R., Cooke, M., & Minaker, L., 2021. Adolescent Gender Identity, Sexual Orientation, and Cannabis Use: Potential Mediations by Internalizing Disorder Risk. Health

<u>19(2)</u>. 14. CMHA, 2021. Fast Facts About Mental Health and Mental Illness.

# 17. Canadian Students for Sensible Drug Policy, 2018. Sensible Cannabis Education: A Toolkit for Educating ymcagta.org/ycap