

Treatment of cannabis use disorder: What works?

Psychosocial interventions, in particular those that use Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Motivational Enhancement Therapy (MET) techniques, reduce the frequency and severity of cannabis use. Interventions that include at least 4 sessions offered over longer than a month have been found to be most effective.

References:

Prevalence of cannabis use in New Brunswick:
(<http://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/h-s/pdf/en/Publications/Profiles/ProfilesHealthMentalHealthSubstanceUseDisorders.pdf>)

Lower-risk cannabis use guidelines:
https://www.camh.ca/en/research/news_and_publications/reports_and_books/Documents/LRCUG.KT.Professional.15June2017.pdf

Psychosocial interventions for Cannabis Use Disorders:
http://www.cochrane.org/CD005336/ADDICTN_psychosocial-interventions-cannabis-use-disorder

Who We Are

About Us

The College of Psychologists of New Brunswick a mission to protect the public by regulating the professional practice of psychology and to advance the practice of psychology in New Brunswick.

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*Position Statement on the
Legalization of Cannabis in
the Province of New
Brunswick*

New legislation in Canada will make the sale and use of cannabis legal. The mission of the College of Psychologists of New Brunswick is the protection of the public by regulating the professional practice of psychology and advancing the practice of psychology in the province. Hence, the legalization of cannabis has implications for psychological practice and public safety which are highlighted in this statement.

How risky is cannabis use?

After alcohol and tobacco, cannabis is the third most commonly used substance by New Brunswickers. Approximately 11% of residents in New Brunswick report past year use. There is some evidence that cannabis and its derivatives (i.e., cannabinoids) may have some therapeutic benefits for certain conditions (e.g., nausea caused by chemotherapy). However, use of cannabis may lead to Cannabis Use Disorder which is when negative consequences for the individual (i.e., family, social, health, and work difficulties) emerge.

Cannabis Use Disorder affects a small but significant proportion of cannabis users, with 5.3% of New Brunswickers meeting lifetime criteria for this disorder. Furthermore, use of cannabis, especially during adolescence, has been associated with an increased risk of developing psychosis.

What increases risks?

Individuals living with mental illness are more likely to experience adverse consequences from cannabis use. Using cannabis before the age of 16 also increases the chance of experiencing mental health problems. In addition, those with a family history of psychosis should be aware of their increased risk of cannabis-induced psychosis. A family history of substance misuse is a risk factor for developing problematic cannabis use. Individuals falling within these groups should be advised to avoid cannabis or follow the guidelines for lower risk use.

Lower risk cannabis use guidelines

The Canadian lower-risk cannabis use guidelines were published in 2017 to

offer evidence-based recommendations on reducing harms associated with cannabis use. These guidelines recommend that Canadians abstain from use, but if a person makes the decision to use, then choose cannabis products with lower THC content, prefer non-smoking routes of administration, and use only occasionally.

How to recognize warning signs?

Individuals who notice that their cannabis consumption (or that of a loved one) has increased, are unable to cut down on the amount used despite desiring to, or are experiencing family, social, work and health -related problems because of cannabis may wish to seek professional help. It is possible to search, by region, for a psychologist experienced in substance misuse interventions on the website for the College of Psychologists of New Brunswick (www.cpnb.ca). Local addiction and mental health services are also publically available throughout New Brunswick.