



PALMER DRUG ABUSE PROGRAM[®]

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Marijuana Dispensary Photo by Robyn Twomey

Not “Just” Marijuana by Trish Frye, LCDC

Marijuana. It is a substance that can be used for long periods of time, seems harmless and little understood by scientists. Yet recently there have been numerous political actions across the country to not only legalize medicinal marijuana but also decriminalize possession of small quantities for personal use. As a licensed chemical dependency counselor with over 27 years experience, I am alarmed about the message and long term consequences these actions, if passed, would give to our future generations. Our society already tends to be apathetic regarding the issue - treating marijuana as if it were a “lesser drug.” Discussions to decriminalize the substance include both medical and financial arguments, without much attention given to the potential consequences.

While studies have shown that THC (one chemical in marijuana) effectively combats nausea in cancer patients, reduces intraocular pressure in glaucoma patients, and may slow the progression of Alzheimer’s, the majority of people that use marijuana do not suffer from these ailments. As a matter of fact, while much research is still needed, what we do know about marijuana is alarming.

Dr. Nora Volkow, Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse states; “Numerous deleterious health consequences are associated with [marijuana’s] short- and long-term use, including the possibility of becoming addicted.” Marijuana use can have serious effects on short-term memory. It can impair cognitive ability and lead to long-lasting depression or anxiety.

The Office of the National Drug Control Policy long term research studies acknowledges the link between marijuana use and illnesses such as depression, schizophrenia, and suicidal ideation. Research makes a strong case that cannabis smoking itself is a causal agent in psychiatric symptoms, particularly schizophrenia; research shows even more specifically that the age of first use and frequency of use are critical risk factors in later development of these serious mental health problems.

People who smoke marijuana have increased risk of heart attack and often have more chest colds than non-users. They develop breathing problems like tobacco smokers have: coughing and wheezing. They are also at greater risk of getting lung infections like pneumonia. To further complicate matters both animal and human studies have shown that marijuana impairs the ability of T-cells in the lungs’ immune system to fight off some infections. Dr. Sanjay Gupta reports that marijuana smoke contains 33 of the same cancer-causing agents as tobacco smoke. Needless to say smoking anything, whether it’s tobacco or marijuana, can cause serious damage to the body. (See “Not Just Marijuana”, page 3)

Did You Know?

- Signs of marijuana intoxication include red eyes, dilated pupils up to 50% faster heart rate, dry mouth and throat, relaxed muscles, increased blood pressure, slowed speech and paranoia
- Marijuana grown today is 10-20 times more potent than that of the past.
- There are more treatment admissions for marijuana than any other drug.
- Individuals that begin using drugs/alcohol as adults can develop symptoms in 5-15 years. For teenagers to develop the same symptoms it only takes 5-15 months.
- Marijuana is addictive and withdrawal symptoms include headache, anxiety, nausea, loss of appetite, insomnia, irritability, and/or aggression

Contact PDAP

www.pdap.com/sa.htm
210-227-2634

2 Centers at:
10226 Ironside 210-697-9766
122 Woodhull 210-927-4644
FREE & CONFIDENTIAL!



Where Are They Now? By J. Jarison

I came to the program when I was 15 under “duress”. My parents were concerned about me so they called the school counselor. She invited me to be a part of a group on campus. I didn't belong in a drug group. I was just smoking weed on the weekends. My grades were good and I participated in all the things that were expected of me. I told my parents they were going to make me have a worse problem by exposing me to a bunch of drug addicts...and they told me, “You are going to meet a lot of people riding the bus because a drivers license was not in your near future.” So emotionally they dragged me to PDAP through the school—and boy am I ever so grateful they did.

What I got from the program was totally different than what I expected. The people there cared for me unconditionally. They did not require that I “qualify” by giving me a label. They challenged me to try the program 100% and promised if I didn't like it after 30 days that I didn't have to attend anymore.

Well that was 8 years ago and needless to say I stuck around. I didn't get sober right away. Honestly it took me 3 months to get 30 days sober but every time I relapsed they would encourage me to keep trying instead of give up on me.

Where I am today? I graduated college last year with a teaching degree. I still choose to be drug (and alcohol) free. My hope is to get my Masters in counseling so that I can work in the same school where I learned of PDAP, co-facilitating groups with a PDAP counselor on campus.

Parent Perspective by Martha P

Dear PDAP Members,

Before PDAP I was a lone drifter in a hollow boat who lost her paddle of hope, submerged in a sea of unstoppable waves of thoughts and emotions. I had nothing but salty wet pain and mistrust within.

My confusion had a domino effect that grew to the size of a tidal wave. A tsunami with unstoppable force. Black emotions that kept me drowning in a cloud of murky water and in constant exhaust. Frantic fear of losing what I have treasured the most; My family.

I observed my mother in her last days. I saw her calm and her acceptance of a higher power but I lost that memory; Yet I found it again when I came to PDAP. Here I experience the same acceptance and humbleness in members of PDAP to their Higher Power.

Thank you for your sincere, courageous leadership that demonstrates dedication to OUR cause and for your acceptance of me without judgment or prejudice. Your direction has helped to prepare me for a better tomorrow; for today I am no longer trapped within but am equipped and willing to give back.

I hold dear not one individual but a group that has helped me to better understand myself and to remain afloat. I treasure the fact that today I can follow the tide not with anger, mistrust, and pain but with a true knowing of what it is to be held above water by my Higher Power.

A Symbol of Hope...

There are two primary symbols PDAP uses to acknowledge sobriety and family involvement. Teenagers and adults involved in the PDAP recovery groups receive a "Monkey Fist" for 30 days of continuous sobriety. Family members receive the "Heart" for participation in PDAP family group for 30 days.



The "Monkey Fist" is a mariner's knot used by ships to help them dock. A baseball sized knot with lines attached is thrown from the ship to the dock-the first contact the ship has with land. The crew on shore catches the knot, secures the line to the dock and pulls the ship to shore. At PDAP we have adopted this as a symbol representing our sobriety as we are being pulled in from the sea of drugs and alcohol. The fist symbolizes first contact to solid ground, with the group symbolizing the crew that pulls the newcomer safely to shore. Traditionally, the small leather monkey fist is suspended on a leather thong around the PDAPer's neck. This symbol also serves as the PDAP logo.

The Johnson Institute reports that if a family is involved in a recovery program then the users have an 80% higher chance of success than those who do not have family involved. In the PDAP Family Group the symbol for program participation is the Heart. The heart is made from carved wood, and is also suspended on a leather thong. Embossed on the heart is a Monkey Fist. When presented the words “embossed in this heart is the monkey's fist. May it represent a symbol of hope to replace the knot in your gut for the loved one in your heart”.



Not Just Marijuana

(continued from page 1). Many advocates use the argument that marijuana taxes would bring needed revenue to the economy. These advocates typically ignore the social costs - including increased drug dependence, greater use by minors, increased medical expenses, and (because the drug impairs motor skills) more traffic deaths and injuries. The fact of the matter is that substance abuse, regardless of the substance, costs money and the taxes collected for marijuana sales will not balance the budget.

Bob Stutman in Business Week recently countered the argument about taxes by paralleling the economics of alcohol. He pointed out "If we legalize marijuana, everyone (even anti-prohibitionists) agrees we will have far more users and the latest studies show that the U.S. collects about \$8 billion yearly in taxes from alcohol. The total cost to the U.S. in 2008 due to alcohol-related problems was \$185 billion, and the government pays about 38% of that cost (about \$72 billion. For every dollar the government collects in alcohol taxes, it expends about \$9.

As stated earlier, for 27 years I have worked with substance abusers and most abusers report marijuana as the first drug they ever used; most also say it is their personal drug of choice. As a matter of fact many of the teens I deal with don't even consider marijuana as a drug. "It's natural," "God made it," "If everyone would quit making it a big deal then it wouldn't be a big deal," "It's not as bad as alcohol." I even have had parents tell me

that they wouldn't be concerned for their child if the drug use was limited to "just marijuana" because they smoked when they were younger and figure their child will "grow out of it." So recently I have changed my tactic and asked the kids "If marijuana were legal do you think it would be less of a problem?" Their response? "No, it'll still be a problem".

Wow! These are pot smoking teenagers who have told me they wish it were legal, so they could access it and won't get into trouble for it. They are saying that making marijuana legal, even for medicinal purposes, will not solve our society's woes. They tell me that if it were legal - even if the age limit is 21 and up - it would be easier to obtain. "So why would that be a problem?" I asked. "Because, we like it and if we could get it everyday we'd smoke it every day and a lot of the kids who don't smoke it because it's not legal will smoke it too".

NEEDS & WISHES

- ◆ Paper Towels, Toilet Paper
- ◆ Copy Paper
- ◆ HEB/Walmart Gas Cards
- ◆ Afterschool snacks
- ◆ Cleaning Supplies
- ◆ Liquid Hand Soap
- ◆ Trashbags (Large)
- ◆ Paper cups/plates
- ◆ File Folders

Giving Back By Scott B.

My daughter, Nicole Bates, introduced me to Tom Mooney in the summer of 2011. Both Nicole and Tom, Certified Volunteer Chaplain Assistants, work at State prisons for men - she at the Torres unit in Hondo, he at the Joe Nye unit at Hondo and at the McConnell prison in Beeville.

We were all three attending a Kairos graduation ceremony at the Torres prison. In passing, Tom mentioned that he needed clothing for men who were being released from prison. Not until months later - when one of the PDAP men mentioned his humiliating experience of being released and having to wear a "clown outfit" home - did I allow my Higher Power to show me the obvious: PDAP could help furnish men's clothing.

I mentioned the need to the PDAP family group; the response has been overwhelming. Yesterday I delivered another truckload of shirts and pants to Tom - the fourth truckload in ten months. More are needed.

In Texas the State sends their inmates to the McConnell prison in Beeville for a pre-release program. Upon release all men are given a one-way bus ticket to the destination of their choice - as long as that destination is in Texas. They are given a check for \$50.00, which can only be redeemed by their parole officers at the points of destination. After the checks are cashed, the men receive an additional \$50.00. And the State obligations are finished.

At Beeville, the released men are given one set of clothing (a shirt with a collar and long pants). They wear their own underwear and whatever shoes they wore in prison. They are not supplied a belt; nor any warmer clothing in cold weather.

Because the men vary in size, 180 sets of clothing can only begin to cover monthly needs. One man weighed over 400 pounds and had no choice but to wear his prison whites on the bus. (He tried to pass himself off as a baker.)

So thank you for all your help thus far; but keep the clothing coming, guys. Contact me or Trish at 210-697-9766 and I'll pick up whatever you have to give.

The Average cost to provide a PDAP participant with services is \$400 per year.

SAY YES! I want to be part of the PDAP solution with my tax-deductible contribution.

- I want to sponsor _____ kids,. Each @ \$400 per year.
- I'm not able to fully sponsor a person at this time, but I would like to contribute a total of \$ _____.

Payment will be made in the following way (Circle One)

- My Check is enclosed

Or bill me:

- Monthly
- Quarterly
- Semi – Annually
- Annually

By Credit Card

(Phone # if contributing by credit card)

Signature

Return to PDAP. PO Box 782155, San Antonio, TX 78278

Name _____

Address _____

City, Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

PDAP
PO BOX 782155
San Antonio, TX 78278

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