



DAMIAN'S STORY

Damian didn't think much of it the first time. Everyone around him said marijuana was harmless: "just a way to relax." At first, it felt that way. Colors seemed brighter. Music hit deeper. Stress faded. But after a while, Damian noticed he wasn't the same. His grades slipped. He stopped showing up for practice. He felt anxious when he wasn't high, and foggy when he was.

One night, his heart started racing so fast he thought he was having a heart attack. Sitting in the ER, scared and shaking, Damian realized something had control over him that he never meant to give away. Recovery wasn't instant, but it was possible. Today, Damian shares his story not with shame, but with honesty, so others don't mistake "harmless" for "safe."

TREATMENT

WHAT ACTUALLY HELPS

There are currently no FDA-approved medications that cure marijuana addiction, but treatment is effective and available.

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
- Motivational Interviewing
- Individual and group counseling
- Family therapy
- Treatment for anxiety, depression, and other mental health conditions
- Support programs and recovery coaching

Early treatment greatly improves outcomes.

YOU A.R.E. IN CONTROL!

- Avoid** – Stay away from places where marijuana is used.
- Refuse** – Say no in your own way.
- Exit** – Leave situations that feel uncomfortable.

TEST YOURSELF

1. Today's marijuana is more potent than in past decades.
 - a. True
 - b. False
2. Marijuana use can affect memory, learning, and motivation.
 - a. True
 - b. False
3. You cannot become addicted to marijuana.
 - a. True
 - b. False
4. Driving while high increases the risk of crashes.
 - a. True
 - b. False
5. There is currently an FDA-approved cure for marijuana addiction.
 - a. True
 - b. False

MARIJUANA



Answers: 1.A 2.A 3.B 4.A 5.B

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BURNED OUT

WHAT IS MARIJUANA?

Marijuana is often seen as “natural” and harmless, but modern cannabis is far more potent than in past decades. Many products today contain very high levels of THC, the main psychoactive chemical that affects the brain. These stronger products increase the risk of addiction, mental health problems, impaired brain development, and physical health complications, especially when use begins at a young age.

MARIJUANA TODAY

Marijuana, also called cannabis, weed, pot, herb, bud, ganja, or Mary Jane, comes from the Cannabis sativa plant. The main mind-altering chemical is delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). THC affects how the brain processes information, emotions, coordination, memory, and judgment.

Marijuana can be:

- Smoked (joints, blunts, bongs)
- Vaped
- Eaten (edibles)
- Drank (infused drinks)
- Used as oils, wax, dabs, or concentrates
- Today’s marijuana products are often highly concentrated, especially dabs, vapes, and edibles, making it easier to accidentally consume too much.

MODERN MARIJUANA RISKS

- THC strength today can be 3–10 times higher than in past decades.
- Edibles can cause delayed overdosing, leading people to take too much.
- High-THC products increase the risk of panic, psychosis, and hospital visits.
- Marijuana is often mixed with or contaminated by other substances, increasing unpredictability.
- Driving while high greatly increases crash risk.



SHORT-TERM EFFECTS

Using marijuana can cause immediate changes in the brain and body, including:

- Memory loss and trouble concentrating
- Impaired judgment and decision-making.
- Slower reaction time and poor coordination.
- Increased heart rate and blood pressure
- Anxiety, panic attacks, paranoia
- Confusion and disorientation
- Trouble sleeping
- Increased appetite and possible weight gain

LONG-TERM EFFECTS

Frequent or heavy marijuana use is linked to:

- Changes in brain development (especially under age 25)
- Cannabis Use Disorder (addiction)
- Anxiety, depression, psychosis, and schizophrenia risk
- Lower motivation and memory problems
- Weakened immune system
- Heart disease risk
- Lung damage, chronic bronchitis, and breathing problems
- Poor academic or work performance
- Cannabinoid Hyperemesis Syndrome (CHS) – repeated severe vomiting caused by long-term cannabis use



LEGAL CONSEQUENCES

Marijuana laws vary by state, but consequences can include:

- Arrests and fines
- Probation or jail time
- School suspensions or alternative school placement
- Loss of scholarships or extracurricular activities
- Trouble getting into college



ADDICTION AND HOW IT HAPPENS

Marijuana affects the brain’s dopamine reward system, which controls pleasure, motivation, and habits. Over time, the brain adapts and may become dependent on THC to function normally. This leads to Cannabis Use Disorder, where a person feels unable to stop using even when there are negative consequences.

Addiction can happen to anyone, especially with frequent use or high-THC products.

WITHDRAWAL AND “CRASH”

When someone stops using marijuana after regular use, withdrawal symptoms may include:

- Irritability and mood swings
- Anxiety and restlessness
- Trouble sleeping
- Loss of appetite
- Headaches
- Strong cravings

These symptoms can last from several days to a few weeks and often cause people to return to use.

