

Many young people at risk for psychosis are torn about using marijuana

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Even after they've experienced episodes of psychosis, many young people who use marijuana are unsure they want to quit the drug, new research shows.

Cannabis has long been linked to a heightened risk for psychosis—a dangerous psychiatric state in which people lose their connection with

reality.

However, "most people with psychosis don't worry about substance use until it detrimentally affects them, and even then they are very reluctant to talk about it," said study lead author Neely Myers, who directs the Mental Health Equity Lab at Southwestern Methodist University in Dallas.

"Adolescents can look at substance use as a way to be social and manage their own health—for example, to reduce anxiety or [physical pain](#)—but using substances like [cannabis](#) can worsen their condition," Myers, a medical and psychological anthropologist, said in a university news release.

Her team published their findings recently in the journal [Early Intervention in Psychiatry](#).

In the study, Myers and her colleagues conducted zoom interviews lasting up to an hour and a half with 18 [young adults](#) ages 18 to 30. Conversations focused on the young people's attitudes toward their [substance use](#).

Most agreed that cutting back on using substances (including cannabis) was probably a good idea, but many were on the fence when it came to the pluses and minuses of doing so.

The researchers noted that, after widespread legalization and normalization, marijuana use among teens has now reached a 30-year high.

That means better approaches to help [young people](#) deal with [cannabis use](#) may be needed.

Many participants in the new study believed that help could come from peers who encouraged healthier alternatives to using weed, or if they were offered "strategies" (other than using cannabis) to help ease their psychological or physical pain.

More information: Neely Lorenzo Myers et al, Perspectives of young adults diagnosed with early psychosis using coordinated specialty care in Texas on substance use and substance use interventions, *Early Intervention in Psychiatry* (2023). [DOI: 10.1111/eip.13488](https://doi.org/10.1111/eip.13488)

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