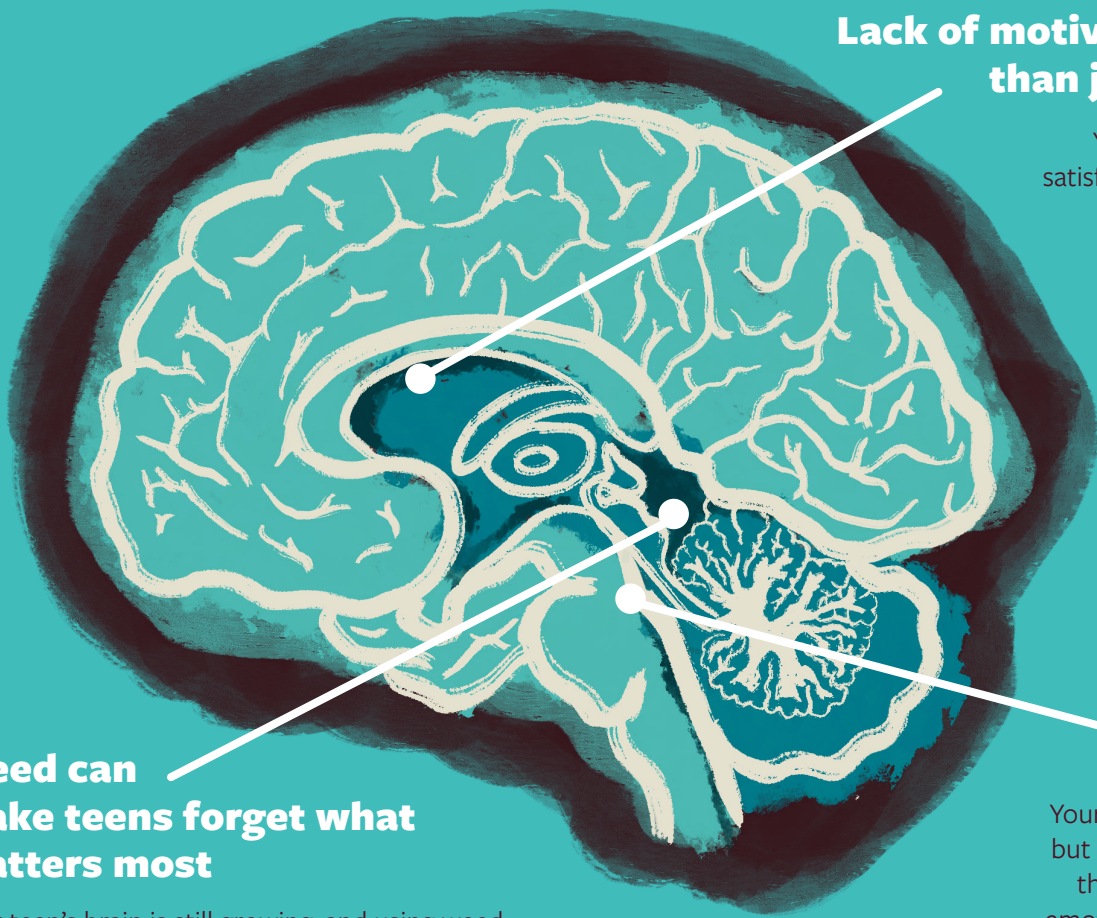


# Could weed be messing with your teen's mental health?

Today's weed is stronger, which can amplify the negative effects on growing brains. Learn how weed could be harming your teen more than they know.



## Lack of motivation may be more than just a state of mind

Your teen's loss of motivation or satisfaction could be related to using weed. Cannabis can mess with dopamine production in the brain's **basal ganglia** region, affecting their motivation and drive.

## Weed can make teens forget what matters most

Your teen's brain is still growing, and using weed can disrupt this growth. It can actually block areas of the **hippocampus**, the part of the brain responsible for creating new memories, making teens forget things they may want to remember.

## Using can actually make your teen more stressed

Your teen may use weed to chill out, but weed can affect the **amygdala**, the part of the brain that controls emotions. This can make it harder to manage stress and leave your teen feeling worse instead of better.

Talking with your teen about the risks of using weed is important. Check out these tips to help start the conversation. → → →

# Talking with your teen about weed can be hard, but it's not impossible

## Starting a good conversation:

1. Look for a casual moment to talk, like in the car on the way to school.
2. Keep it fact-based and avoid exaggerations.
3. Make it a two-way conversation. Invite questions and let them share their thoughts.
4. Show you care by actively listening and avoiding distractions.
5. Praise them for their answers and avoid judging their thoughts or feelings.

For more tips, check out this **guide** from SAMHSA.



## How to Answer Hard Questions:

### Teen:

**“I heard it helps with mental health—like stress”**

**“Isn't it natural and not as bad as tobacco or other drugs?”**

**“But why is it legal for adults to use?”**

### Parent:

“I remember being your age and feeling the pressure of school, friends, and everything. Sometimes people used weed to cope with stress and anxiety. Today, we know a lot more about how weed affects teens. Since your brain is still maturing, instead of making things better, cannabis can actually intensify these feelings, making stress and anxiety worse. If you're feeling this way, let me know.”

“Your brain is still developing, and weed can affect the parts responsible for forming memories. And it doesn't just make you forget things. It can actually block areas of your hippocampus, making it harder to recall the things you want to remember most. It's better to let your brain grow to its full potential before using.”

“Adult brains are fully developed. The human brain keeps growing until our mid-20s. When you're young, connectors and receptors in your brain are expanding and growing, but weed can disrupt this process, causing damage and affecting how your brain matures.”

## KEEP TRYING

**You're the number one influence in your teen's life.** It can be challenging to have these conversations, but talking with your teen makes them less likely to use weed—and **that's worth it.**

1. [An advisory released by the U.S. Surgeon General](#)
2. [An Evidence-Based Resource Guide produced by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)](#)

**Learn more at [ParentUpVT.org](https://parentupvt.org)**