



CHOOSE YOUR WAY

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**ACTIVITY FOR
RED RIBBON WEEK**

October 23-30, 2009

“Choose Your Way: Using weed or...”

Students in the Valley Hi Students Reaching Out (SRO) program created the *Choose Your Way* anti-marijuana social marketing piece to use with middle and high school youth to identify what prevents them from using weed.

In most communities, marijuana is one of the highest used substances by youth. With the recent push to legalize it, it is important to understand the effects of marijuana use on a young person’s brain. Present the facts about marijuana use below to your students and then have them complete the following activity.

The Facts About Marijuana Use

*Information taken from the National Institute on Drug Abuse and [thewww.antidrug.com](http://www.antidrug.com).

The main active chemical in marijuana is THC (delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol). Short-term effects of marijuana use include problems with memory and learning; distorted perception; difficulty in thinking and problem-solving; loss of coordination; and increased heart rate, anxiety, and panic attacks.

Effects of Marijuana on the Brain: Researchers have found that THC changes the way in which sensory information gets into and is acted on by the hippocampus. This is a part of the brain that is crucial for learning, memory, and the integration of sensory experiences with emotions and motivations. Investigations have shown that THC suppresses neurons in the information-processing system of the hippocampus, which can affect memory and emotions experienced by the user.

Effects on the Lungs: Someone who smokes marijuana regularly may have many of the same respiratory problems that tobacco smokers have. These individuals may have daily cough and phlegm, symptoms of chronic bronchitis, and more frequent chest colds. Continuing to smoke marijuana can lead to abnormal functioning of lung tissue injured or destroyed by marijuana smoke.

Regardless of the THC content, the amount of tar inhaled by marijuana smokers and the level of carbon monoxide absorbed are three to five times greater than among tobacco smokers. This may be due to marijuana users inhaling more deeply and holding the smoke in the lungs.

Longitudinal research on marijuana use among young people below college age indicates those who used have lower achievement than the non-users, more acceptance of deviant behavior, more delinquent behavior and aggression, greater rebelliousness, poorer relationships with parents, and more associations with delinquent and drug-using friends.



“Choose Your Way: Using weed or...”

Activity Materials:

1. Activity directions (below)
2. Facts about Marijuana Use information (attached)
3. Copies of the blank road signs (attached)
4. Poster board
5. Tape

Activity Directions:

1. Print out the attached road signs for each student.
2. Students or teacher create a road map on the poster board.
3. Have each student describe their reason for NOT using weed in the road signs. Some examples may be “sports, family, college, healthy lifestyle, etc”.
4. Have students place their anti-weed road signs on the road map poster board and display in front of the classroom during red ribbon week.

