



## **Marijuana Education Initiative Infraction Response Curriculum Resource Manual**

The curriculum described in this resource manual is designed to address the problem of marijuana use by students, specifically those who have been suspended for a marijuana infraction or those who would be eligible for an alternative to suspension enhancement opportunity related to their violation of school marijuana policies. The material in this curriculum allows students an opportunity to “take stock” of their use and to talk confidentially with a nonjudgmental adult who won’t tell them what to do or not do but rather who will help them explore their unique relationship with marijuana and how they may or may not want marijuana to fit into their lives. This curriculum is an adaptation of the University of Washington’s School of Social Work’s Teen Marijuana Check-Up program.

This curriculum is delivered through individual instruction and can be used as an opportunity to increase awareness of marijuana patterns that can be addressed more thoroughly by following up with the Marijuana Education Initiative Intervention curriculum. It utilizes motivational interviewing (MI), motivational interviewing specific techniques, and a feedback report (FR).

### **Goals for Alternative to Suspension**

1. Build and maintain rapport through reflective listening and genuine interest in understanding the student’s unique experience with marijuana.
2. Gain solid understanding of the student’s patterns, what he/she enjoys about marijuana, and what concerns he/she has related to marijuana use.
3. Review the personalized feedback report.
4. Explore ambivalence, build momentum for change through use of motivational interviewing skills (OARS and RULE), and elicit change talk.
5. Elicit the student’s thinking about next steps.
6. Introduce the idea of participating in the Intervention group.

**Facilitation** The ideal facilitator for this curriculum is a staff member who has the ability to establish quick rapport and who can easily connect with students on difficult topics such as substance abuse. The facilitator could be a school counselor, the At-Risk counselor, a district interventionist, or a

skilled teacher who can act in a dual role as facilitator of this curriculum and a teacher outside of this process.

**Confidentiality** In this curriculum the student is best served and the outcome is most likely if confidentiality is provided. Facilitators can speak with school administrators about the option of keeping the student's confidence while providing the administration only information about whether the student followed through with the curriculum. The facilitator may need to identify the student's participation in more detail through specific descriptions such as follows:

- Student fully participated with integrity
- Student fully participated though reserved in the process
- Student physically participated though was unwilling to participate in the discussion
- Student chose to leave the discussion early and did not complete the curriculum
- Student didn't show up

If confidentiality is offered, facilitators must let students know of any exceptions to maintaining the confidentiality, such as mandatory reporting requirements for when students say they are planning to hurt themselves or someone else or mention elder or child abuse. Many facilitators are not legally obligated to maintain confidentiality. If they have a feeling or a gut reaction that a student or someone in his/her circle may be unsafe in a life-threatening way, they might consider making an exception to maintaining confidentiality in such cases.

### **The Use of Motivational Interviewing**

Motivational interviewing is a therapeutic approach that helps people make positive behavioral changes to support better choices and health. It is an effective method in supporting change with those who use or abuse substances. The approach upholds four principles: expressing empathy and avoiding arguing, challenging discrepancies, rolling with resistance, and supporting self-efficacy (a person's belief that he/she can successfully make a change).

### **The Use of the Feedback Report**

The feedback report (FR) includes normative data and prompts the student to identify his/her frequency and quantity of use while considering the impact marijuana use has in number of areas, including school, finances, abuse and dependence symptoms, and general life goals.

Research supports the effectiveness of sharing normative data and personalized feedback in reducing substance use. However, the style and delivery of information greatly affect the response. The goal is to provide

personal information to the student and have the student interpret the meaning. The FR serves as a tool to further student self-assessment of marijuana use, to continue to build on the student's motivation for change, to elicit the student's thinking about next steps, and to transition into creating a plan of change.

## **Overview of Motivational Interviewing and Techniques**

Motivational interviewing is a particular kind of conversation about change in which the interviewer uses specific principles to elicit the change. This overview introduces motivational interviewing techniques and is broken into five parts:

1. Stages of Change (SOC)
2. Basic Principles (RULE)
3. Motivational Interviewing Skills (OARS)
4. Change Talk (DARN)
5. Responding to Change Talk (EARS)

***The introduction and overview in this manual are not meant to provide specific training in motivational interviewing. For more information about training and skill building, go to [www.motivationalinterviewing.org](http://www.motivationalinterviewing.org).***

### **1. Stages of Change (SOC)**

How do people begin to contemplate their marijuana use? How do they actually get started in changing their marijuana use? How can we understand their attitudes about making a commitment, coming up with a plan, and actually taking the first steps to reduce their use? And after deciding to make a change, what skills do they need to be successful?

The Stages of Change model (SOC) is one way of thinking about the behavioral change process. SOC is the sequence of stages through which individuals progress as they think about and initiate behavior change. Part of the value of SOC is that it gives the facilitator a direction in which to aim the intervention. Understanding what the student is thinking and feeling about his/her marijuana use helps the facilitator know which stage the student is in and then select counseling strategies that are specific to that stage.

Movement in reducing marijuana use depends upon readiness for change, and this readiness may shift and evolve. The model emphasizes the fact that individuals typically move back and forth between the stages and progress through changes at different rates.

Today, an individual may be firmly committed to quitting marijuana, but next week he or she may be ambivalent about this goal. Over time, this person may move through the stages of readiness (see the following table) and experience some or all of the attitudes associated with each stage.

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Attitudes and Behaviors</b>
Precontemplation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not considering change</li> <li>• May be unwilling to change behaviors</li> <li>• Not personally aware of having experienced adverse consequences because of marijuana use, although others may believe that there are problems</li> </ul>
Contemplation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aware that a problem exists</li> <li>• Perceives that there may be cause for concern and reasons to change behavior</li> <li>• Typically ambivalent and usually continues to engage in marijuana use</li> <li>• May seek information and reevaluate using behavior</li> <li>• Weighs the pros and cons of making a change</li> <li>• Could remain in this stage for years</li> </ul>
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sees the advantages of change outweighing the benefits of not changing</li> <li>• Thinks about his/her capabilities in being successful (i.e., self-efficacy)</li> <li>• Continues engaging in marijuana use but with the intention to reduce or abstain very soon</li> <li>• May have already attempted to reduce marijuana use</li> <li>• Begins to set goals and may tell others about intentions</li> </ul>
Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chooses a goal for change and begins to pursue it</li> <li>• Actively modifies habits</li> </ul>
Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes efforts to sustain the gains achieved during the Action phase</li> <li>• Works to prevent recurrence of marijuana use (or use at previous levels)</li> <li>• Learns how to detect and guard against risky situations</li> <li>• Requires prolonged behavior change and continued vigilance for at least 6 months to several years</li> </ul>

## **2. Basic Principles (RULE)**

RULE describes the tone, approach, and spirit of motivational interviewing. Specific skills are described in the next section.

**Resist the righting reflex.** The facilitator must resist the natural urge to try to actively fix or solve the student's problems and must engage the student in exploring possible options for him- or herself instead of coming up with solutions for him/her. When a participant sounds uninterested, offers several "yeah, but," or the conversation sounds more like a disagreement, the facilitator notes these signs of dissonance in the relationship and shifts the style of interaction. Facilitators can listen and explore more.

**Understand the participant's motivation.** Facilitators can't create motivation for people; rather, they help students explore the discrepancy between what they want for themselves and how their marijuana use affects what they care about. Inviting and listening for the student's motivation are at the heart of this model. Facilitators can bring a curious nature and use the student's energy and momentum to create an environment in which the student is the one arguing for change.

**Listen to the participant.** Facilitators must show profound respect for the student's feelings, values, and opinions and reflect back to him/her your understanding of the situation. This isn't agreement but is showing an understanding and regard for the importance of the student's point of view.

**Empower the participant.** Facilitators must strengthen the student's belief in his/her skill and ability to achieve the desired outcome and share genuine hope and belief in the student's strengths. They can listen for past successes and build off of those.

### **3. Motivational Interviewing Skills (OARS)**

- Open-ended questions
- Affirmations
- Reflective listening
- Summaries

**Asking open-ended questions.** In sessions with students, there's a risk that asking one closed-ended question after another can rapidly train the students to be passive, answering each question and then quietly waiting for the next. This type of questioning tends to be one-sided, disengaging, and ineffective as a communication style: the interviewer is in control, and the interviewee responds to each cue. Rather than encouraging the student to adopt an active role in his or her own treatment, the overuse of closed-ended questions prevents the participant from becoming empowered. Here are two parallel examples of interviewer questioning styles:

#### **Closed-ended questions:**

- *Do you use marijuana?*
- *Do you use marijuana with friends or alone?*
- *Do you understand the risks involved in smoking marijuana?*
- *Have you ever experienced problems with your use?*

- *Do you want to reduce your marijuana use?*
- *How many times a day are you smoking?*
- *How many hours are you high a day?*
- *Are you smoking before or during school?*

**Open-ended questions:**

- *Tell me about your marijuana use.*
- *How does marijuana fit into your life?*
- *What thoughts have you had about reducing your use of marijuana?*
- *What things do you like best about smoking pot?*
- *What kinds of things do you not like so much?*
- *How has your use been effective for you?*
- *How has your use been destructive for you?*

**Affirmations.** For students, taking an objective look at their marijuana use can be difficult. It may involve thinking more critically about their behavior choices, participating in the check-up, making shifts in their use, and changing social groups; none of these is easy. The facilitator can be supportive by periodically offering genuine compliments and expressions of awareness of their efforts, values, and beliefs:

*Your health is important to you; you care about your body and how you feel.*

*You've been thinking about changing your use for a long time, and now you're taking the first steps. It takes determination to start, and you've gotten through some challenging situations.*

*Telling your boyfriend that you're uncomfortable smoking during the school day must have been difficult for you, yet you did it anyway, even though you weren't sure what would happen. That takes courage.*

*Deciding to give up marijuana wasn't a minor decision for you. I'd guess that would require a real commitment to leave this behind. You're committed and determined, the kind of person that makes a decision and then figures out a way to make it happen.*

**Reflective listening.** An alternative to asking a question is to use a reflection. It might take the form of simply repeating the student's words or paraphrasing his or her comments. Sometimes the reflection adds some implied meaning to what the student had said, almost as a way of checking out the facilitator's hunch. The skilled listener can help the participant further explore his/her thoughts and feelings by using reflective listening skills. Here are some examples:

- Student (S): *I've tried quitting marijuana before but have never made it for longer than a month.*
- Facilitator (F): *Keeping it going has been hard.*
- S: *Yeah. I can't help feeling pessimistic about what will happen if I try it again.*
- S: *My sister is always pressuring me to quit. I think I've got to want to do it for me if this is really going to work.*
- F: *In a way, pressure from your sister is distracting you from tuning in to your needs with regard to your marijuana use.*
- S: *It's almost as if I resist this because I don't want to feel that she controls my life.*

- S: *My boyfriend says that he'll support me if I decide to quit smoking before school, but I know there will be times when he'll pressure me to smoke with him.*
- F: *You'd like it if your boyfriend would always be supportive of your efforts to reduce your smoking, and you also want to be ready to handle it when he pressures you to smoke in situations that you don't want to.*
- S: *Yeah, I guess I've been thinking that's not possible.*

**Summaries.** It can be useful to periodically recap the participant's perspectives. As the student reveals and explores various aspects about changing behaviors, the facilitator can be supportive by summarizing key issues. Hearing this consolidation of ideas can prompt greater awareness as well as readiness to seek resolution of mixed motivations. In addition, the facilitator can strategically use summaries (sometimes ended with an open-ended question) to pivot the conversation in a certain direction. An example follows:

*You feel two ways about this. On one hand, you've tried quitting before and it didn't work out very well. You're also worried about losing some of your friends if you quit. On the other hand, you've really noticed a negative impact on your schoolwork, and you're worried about what will happen to your lungs if you keep smoking, and those are both things that you care about. What other concerns do you have if you continued to smoke?*

#### **4. Change Talk (DARN)**

*Change talk* is the term for statements about change related to the target behavior, in this case marijuana use. The acronym DARN represents possible aspects of participant change statements. Facilitators can use open-ended questions and reflective listening to invite “change talk.” See examples below.

##### **Desire for change**

*Between wanting to be a positive role model for your sisters and feeling uncomfortable about how you often find yourself smoking more than you'd planned, part of you really wants to make changes in your marijuana use. Tell me more about that.*

##### **Ability to change**

*Previously you thought you couldn't go a day without smoking, and now you haven't smoked in five days. How were you able to do that?*

##### **Personal reasons for changing**

*It's becoming more clear to you that smoking isn't helping and may actually be hurting some of your bigger life goals and values such as wanting to get a 3.0 and earning back your parents' trust and respect.*

##### **Urgency or need for things to change**

*Things have been building for many months, and you're reaching a point when it's clear that you need to make a change in your marijuana use. What do you think you need to help you be successful making that change?*

**Eliciting change talk.** A main goal of these conversations is for the facilitator to respond in ways that help the participant explore and verbalize his/her own reasons for changing marijuana use. During the session, the facilitator should ask purposeful questions (targeting responses that focus on need, desire, reasons, and ability) and make reflections that could likely bring forth change talk from the student.

**Need**

*How has your smoking pot gotten in the way of things that are important to you?*

*What concerns you about your pot use?*

*What do people say to you about their concerns?*

*(What do you think about their concerns?)*

**Desire**

*How important is it right now to shift your use?*

*What will it be like in six months or a year if you continue to smoke marijuana the way you do now?*

*What would be better if you smoked less or quit?*

**Reasons**

*What are some reasons to continue to smoke the way you are now?*

*And what are some reasons you might reduce or quit?*

**Ability**

*If you did quit or cut down, what would go into that?*

*What strengths do you bring from past changes that might help with this?*

*What part of you is feeling encouraged about changing?*

**5. Responding to Change Talk**

Facilitators must not let change talk pass by unnoticed. When they hear change talk, they can use their **EARS (Elaborate, Affirm, Reflect, Summarize)**.

**Elaborate on the change talk.** Ask for more, and ask about details.  
*You don't like the "fuzzy brain" feeling. Tell me more about that.*

**Affirm the change talk.**

*You're saying that, although your friends still want to smoke daily, you're feeling it's important that you make a change in your use. It's hard and takes courage to be the first in your group to make a shift.*

**Reflect the change talk.**

*You really dislike marijuana's impact on your sleep and athletic abilities, how you and your friends always smoke before you do anything, and basically how it's become a bigger part of your life than you'd ever imagined it would.*

**Summarize it back.**

*On the one hand, you enjoy smoking with your friends and you feel relaxed after you smoke. On the other, you're feeling like you're "growing out" of weed and you want to focus on the bigger goals you have of getting into a good college, becoming more active, and getting a job. It's*



*becoming clear that it would be easier to achieve those goals if you cut out marijuana.*

## **Alternative to Suspension Curriculum Implementation**

The Alternative to Suspension curriculum allows the facilitator the opportunity to get to know participants, their patterns of use, and ways in which they may be concerned about their use. The facilitator demonstrates to students that the style of interaction in their meetings is likely different from conversations about marijuana students may have had with other adults or providers. In line with the spirit of motivational interviewing (MI), students shouldn't feel judged or pressured to do anything they don't want to do outside of fulfilling the expectations of the infraction consequence. By using MI skills, such as resisting the righting reflex, understanding, listening, and empowering (RULE), facilitators can help students experience trust as they explore both sides of their marijuana use and think of their life with and without marijuana. The time with the student is not directionless, and although they make room for all sides of the situation, facilitators purposefully focus on change talk and ambivalence.

The participants' stage of change gauges the content of the meeting and where to start. For example, the content in this resource manual is geared toward working with students who are fulfilling this requirement as a result of their school infraction and who are most likely be in very early stages of change. The curriculum is designed to be attractive to these students to encourage them to consider the idea of "taking a look at their use" while serving their infraction. However, if a student is ready to change (states that he/she has recently stopped or plans to stop in the immediate future), adjust the Alternative to Suspension content to meet the participant's readiness.

Regardless of the stage, the facilitator needs to truly understand the student. Below is an outline of topics that will likely be covered. The different sections can serve as a general road map to guide the facilitator in the meeting. These topics are meant as potential areas for the facilitator to pursue with the student while adhering to the spirit of MI and using the skills referenced in the Overview section above. However, facilitators need not gather information in a linear fashion, and not every section must be covered.

Most important is that the facilitator is present and responsive to the student as an individual and stays true to the overall goals of the discussion. ***This is an opportunity to have a conversation with the student about his or her marijuana use. Reviewing the FR comes later in the session.***

## **Section 1: Confidentiality Limits, Rapport Building, Information Gathering, Gaining Understanding of Student's Marijuana Use**

The facilitator should review details regarding confidentiality.

*Thanks for coming in. Before we begin I would like to remind you of a few things. You might remember from the consent process that what is said in these sessions is completely confidential. I can't speak to teachers, the principal, your parents, student health center staff, or anyone else about what is said in these sessions. My only requirement is to confirm with the principal that you completed the sessions as a requirement for the violation that occurred. There are only a few exceptions to this confidentiality rule. Those exceptions are if you tell me you are planning on hurting yourself or someone else, if you tell me about elder or child abuse, and if I have a gut reaction that you or someone in your circle may be unsafe in a life-threatening way.*

Early in the conversation, the facilitator can set the tone of the discussion by demonstrating the spirit of MI. The facilitator expresses genuine curiosity and gains a solid understanding of how marijuana fits into the student's life using MI skills of open-ended questions, reflections, and strategic summaries (OARS).

*Today, I'd like to learn from you in your own words what your experiences have been like using marijuana. It's often different for different people, and I'm curious how marijuana fits into your life.*

### **Possible open-ended questions to gain a broad understanding of how the student uses:**

*What are some typical situations in which you might smoke?  
Walk me through a typical day, when you might smoke, who you would be with, what you might be doing.  
What about times that you tend to avoid smoking? What do those look like?  
How does marijuana fit into your daily life?*

*With which activities do you for sure use marijuana and not use it?  
How did you start using marijuana?  
Tell me about how and when you began using more regularly.*

## **Section 2: Directive Probing for Motivation/Change Talk and Discussing the Pros and Cons of Using**

After the facilitator has gained a thorough understanding of the student's marijuana use, he/she can more directly explore why the student uses and, more importantly, what concerns the student has related to marijuana use and when and why he/she avoids using. The “pros and cons of using” exercise is a natural next step when talking with precontemplators and contemplators. The facilitator might also ask the student to list the “pros” of continuing to use and the “pros” of quitting or cutting back.

The goal of the pros and cons exercise is multifold. The facilitator truly wants to understand the student's use and why he/she chooses to smoke frequently. Additionally, the facilitator continues to gain the student's trust and proves to the student that the facilitator isn't another “just say no” adult. The “cons” part of this exercise directly invites change talk that the facilitator can then explore further.

The facilitator then summarizes understanding of the student's use, highlights any ambivalence, and explores change talk mentioned by the student.

*We all do things for reasons. As I listen to you talk, I'm curious about what you like about using marijuana.*

Facilitators should be sure to ask “What else do you like about marijuana or its effects?” A lot of times, there is more to this topic and students have given just the answers that came up first.

*These are the things you like about using marijuana: \_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_. What about the other side? What  
have you noticed about using marijuana that is not so good?*

### **TIPS**

- Excavate here, dig around. The “not so good” question directly requests change talk, which is what you're after. Be very interested in change talk. Reflect it, ask for details, and ask for examples when you hear it. Remember, these students are heavy users who are at high risk for developing (if they have not already) substance use problems.
- Compare the good things with change talk by highlighting the ambivalence that you hear. When reflecting ambivalence, always

use “and” to connect the pros and cons, never “but.” “But” erases what you have said before. The experience of ambivalence is one that holds two conflicting experiences in the same space.

*You enjoy the effect weed has on you, making you feel more comfortable and not as anxious in social settings. And at the same time, you've noticed feeling more like you “need” weed these days and that doesn't feel great to you. Tell me more about that.*

- Begin listening for discrepancies here as well. Inquire respectfully about discrepancies that you hear. Allow space for the participant to think about the discrepancies and then talk about them.
- Be aware of two potential pitfalls. First, research shows that the language a participant uses strengthens his/her resolve in that direction. For example, a student who repeatedly talks about all the ways marijuana helps and is beneficial reinforces his/her belief that marijuana benefits him/her. So, although goal one of the pros and cons exercise is for the facilitator and student to clearly understand the student's view of marijuana's pros, be aware of spending too much time exploring the pros because it may have the opposite effect than intended. Specifically, for participants in the later stages of change (preparation, action, maintenance), it is not necessary to explore the pros of using in depth because it can be counterproductive for these individuals to focus on the good aspects of marijuana.

*You've mentioned that you really look forward to being with your friends on a Friday night and smoking. That's something you would miss. You would look forward to being able to be totally honest with your parents, to waking up for soccer practice alert and having your lungs feel good, and having more energy throughout the weekend. What else?*

- Second, you must strike a delicate balance of communicating “accurate understanding” while not condoning or agreeing with the student's choices to use. Students are particularly susceptible to misinterpreting your reflections as agreement with and permission to use. Instead, carefully choose language that emphasizes these views are the student's.

*You feel that, for you, marijuana serves as a little escape from the stress you constantly deal with [vs. Marijuana is a way to deal with stress].*

- Hold on to the pros listed by the student. At appropriate times in the session, you can incorporate these sentiments in inverted reflections.

*As you think about a life without marijuana, one thing that you would need to find is other ways to relieve stress.*

*One of the scariest parts about not using marijuana is a fear that you would feel anxious a lot of the time.*

### **Section 3: Probing for a Discrepancy, Envisioning the Future, Exploring Goals and Values, Looking Back, and Considering the Impact on Relationships**

At this point in the conversation, the facilitator should have a good idea of what's drawing the student to use, how the student is using, what drawbacks the student is experiencing, and how motivated the student is to change use. The facilitator should be listening for discrepancies between what is important to the student, what the student wants for him/herself in the future and how the current marijuana use may be incongruent with that vision. When the facilitator hears discrepancy, he/she should gently explore further. The facilitator's tone and adherence to the spirit of MI (RULE) are especially important when developing discrepancy because it is essential to avoid any flavor of condescension or sarcasm. Below are some potential topics to explore that may specifically help in developing discrepancy.

#### **Envisioning the Future**

In this exercise, the facilitator summarizes the ambivalence that was heard during the pros and cons exercise and follows any change talk that emerges, continuing to reflect ask for elaboration and details.

*Would you mind if we shifted gears a bit? Let's think down the line here. Where do you see yourself in two or three years? What about in five years?*

*How do you see pot fitting into these plans, if at all?*

The facilitator can follow up with reflections, affirmations, and open-ended questions until the student unveils a clear picture of the future. As the facilitator and student look at this future, the facilitator can ask the student to project marijuana's place in that vision.

Other questions that might relate to this:

*How do you see your relationship with marijuana in the future?  
How could it affect your plans?*

*If you continue using as you have been, where would you expect you would be in 5 or 10 years?*

For a student who is not considering any immediate changes:

*I know this is not something you are planning currently. If you did make a change in your marijuana use in the future, how would you know that you'd want to make a change? What might go into that decision for you?*

*Everyone's different, and for some people it may be a frequency thing, such as using more than three days per week or noticing a decrease in their grades. Others may feel marijuana has become too central in their life. What are the things you care about keeping an eye on for yourself related to marijuana?*

For a student who is considering making a change:

*Let's suppose you did decide you wanted to make a change in your marijuana use. Why would you do that? What goes into making that decision?*

### **Goals/Values**

How might the student's current use pattern influence his/her goals and values? Again, this part of the conversation functions as a way to develop the discrepancy between the student's current behavior/present values and future goals.

The facilitator does not have an opinion or particular outcome in mind for what the participant states as his/her values. Pure reflective listening is utilized in this process. When a student identifies the things that are most important to him/her, the facilitator can explore whether and how the student's use is undermining or inconsistent with these values. The tone here is one of curiosity.

*What are the values and goals that are most important to you?*

*What do you care most about?*

*What do you want to do with your life?*

*How does your smoking pot fit into this picture?*

*A priority for you is to graduate with a good GPA so you can have options for college, and at the same time you've noticed that since your smoking increased your grades have gone down. I'm wondering what your thoughts are on that?*

### **Looking Back**

At times, it can be helpful for a student to remember what life was like before he/she began using regularly and to describe how things have changed. Are there differences between then and now? If, for example, a student says he used to play basketball more often, the facilitator can explore whether and how marijuana may have influenced that behavior.

*What were things like before you began using marijuana regularly?*

*What are the differences that you have noticed?*

*How has pot been a part of that change?*

*So, basketball was a bigger part of your life until the past year.  
How do you think smoking may have affected basketball for you?*

### **Relationships**

Another way to probe for discrepancy is asking students to discuss how their parents, teachers, or others who are close to them or whom they respect view their use. When a student spontaneously acknowledges relationships that are strained in some way because of marijuana use, the facilitator can ask for details (why, how, what is the person concerned about? What does the student think about these concerns?).

*You've mentioned several times that you're close with your parents. I'm curious what their thoughts are on your use. What do you think of those concerns?*

### **Section 4: Exploring and enhancing self-efficacy.**

Part of what informs individuals' motivation to change a behavior is their belief in their ability to do so. Some students may be feeling "stirred up" or their ambivalence regarding their use may have increased over the course of the conversation. For some students, ambivalence regarding use may be low and may continue to be low.

### **Evocative questions/Review past successes.**

For students who identify a time in the future when they are not interested in smoking at all or as much, highlight this intention and the reasons stated for it.

Review past successes with marijuana and also with behavior change more generally. Reinforce the student's resourcefulness, strengths, and abilities to succeed in the past. The idea here is to assess for and reinforce existing skills and knowledge for reducing use.

*You're really clear you don't want to be smoking pot when you become a parent. I know that might seem a ways down the road from here right now. What goes into feeling confident that when or if you decide to reduce or quit you could do it?*

*Tell me about a time that you took a break. What went into that decision and how did it go?*

*How were you able to make those changes?*

*Give me an example of a time when you really wanted something and you went after it.*

*What other changes have you been able to make in your life that you set your mind to?*

*How has it gone when you've tried to cut down or quit in the past?*

This is a natural time to use affirmations, either around successes or to reframe unsuccessful attempts to highlight the student's positive attributes.

*Quitting cigarettes was really hard. All your friends continued to smoke, and yet you stayed true to your values and figured out how*

*to be successful. That's a really difficult thing to do. How did you make that happen?*

*You've tried many times to cut back. It hasn't been easy, but here's where that "stubbornness" in your personality that you talk about comes in handy. Even though it's been tricky, you aren't giving up, and each time you try, you're learning more about what does and doesn't work for you in making a change with marijuana.*

**Social Support.** If applicable, the facilitator can review with students which people they might be able to count on to help them make a change and identify areas of social support. The facilitator can ask the questions in a way that is tailored to the participant's stage of change:

*If you decided to make a change, who could you count on to help?*  
[Precontemplation]

*Who could offer you helpful support in making this change?*  
[Contemplation, Preparation, Action]

### **TIPS**

- Regardless of students' current stage of change, exploring with students their belief in their ability to make a change is beneficial because it plants the seeds of this idea, affirms their inherent skills, and helps them explore and operationalize what might go into successful behavior change. For students who are becoming more motivated to contemplate a change, enhancing self-efficacy continues this momentum. For students who are content with their use, reviewing strengths in their ability to reduce or quit smoking, regardless of whether they choose to, can be beneficial in increasing optimism for change.

- This is another area where language plays a crucial role in behavioral outcomes. Research suggests a facilitator's word choice can affect the student's sense of self-efficacy. The facilitator should consciously use words such as *decide*, *choose*, and *figure out* to emphasize that the behavior of smoking marijuana is under the student's control. It is something he/she is consciously choosing (and can decide not to do) rather than a passive or reactive behavior, something that "just happens." This purposeful use of diction should be sprinkled throughout the sessions and used specifically when directly exploring self-efficacy.

*You feel confident that when you do decide to make a change, you'll be able to do so. Tell me more about that.*



## **Section 5: Affirm and summarize**

Commend the student for sharing his/her experiences and thoughts with you. Summarize the discussion content and highlight ambivalence and change talk that the participant stated.

Offer a key question that invites the student to tell you how this is all adding up for him/her at the moment:

*We've been talking for a while. What do you make of all this?  
At this point, what are you thinking about your use of marijuana?*

*In thinking back to what we have talked about so far, I am struck by how conscientious you are. You seem to care a lot about being a good role model for your younger siblings and taking advantage of your education because your parents sacrificed in order for you to grow up in the United States. And that thoughtfulness is part of the reason why you want to reassess marijuana's role in your life. It seems like you really don't want anything to get in the way of what's most important to you.*

## **Reviewing the Feedback Report**

### **Section 1: Introduce the student's feedback report and provide a copy for the student to review.**

*Let's now look at this feedback report (FR), which combines national data and your specific information that you provided in the questionnaire. We can use the FR as a tool to continue as we think and talk about your marijuana use from a variety of angles. You'll get a copy of the report, which doesn't have your name on it to protect confidentiality. We'll save time at the end to think about next steps for you with marijuana.*

#### **TIPS**

- This meeting utilizes motivational interviewing, motivational interviewing techniques, and personalized feedback. Aim to get through the FR, but also save time for a discussion of next steps. There is a lot of information in the FR, and it's unrealistic to think you will be able to address each part thoroughly. Use your

judgment and gauge student interest to help you decide which sections to spend more time on. Additionally, you may have covered certain topics in the first part of your conversation. If so, briefly acknowledge those topics that have already been discussed.

- As you and student review the various sections of the FR, seek elaboration, use reflections, and listen for expressions of motivation to change. More important than sticking with a schedule is staying true to the motivational interviewing principles (nonjudgment, collaboration, genuine interest) and not rushing participants to commit to change before they are ready.
- If you find that a participant is in the Action stage of change, that is, she has quit or intends to do so very soon, review the FR in a more cursory fashion, highlighting new topics as well as areas the student expresses interest in, before proceeding to talking with the student about how he/she is thinking about making changes. Remember, the foundational goal of the FR is to elicit change talk. If the student is ready to quit, he/she probably already expressed plenty of change talk and commit language.
- Watch the pace. Push gently if the discussion is moving too slowly. Aim for about a 3:1 proportion of reflections to questions.
- Ideally, make transitional statements between pages or provide a brief introduction to different sections of the FR. Avoid falling into the trap of looking at the FR with the student in a rote manner. Transitional sentences help connect the different sections and personalize the content to the student's experiences. Brief intros help give context as to why different sections are included in the FR. Examples of each are included below.
- The information in the FR may heighten defensiveness for some students, particularly precontemplators. Tune in to student's mood and reactions, and if defensiveness arises, use it as a great opportunity to touch base with the student, affirm, clarify the purpose of the FR and the meetings in general and emphasize autonomy. The facilitator should roll with resistance.

*F: Hey, I want to press pause for a minute and check in. How is this feeling for you?*

*S: It's kind of weird, it makes me feel a little judged or like I have a problem.*

*F: Thanks for bringing that up. As we talked about briefly, the purpose of this feedback report is not to judge anyone or make them feel bad. The intent is to help you think about your use from a variety of angles. What we know from research is the more thoroughly and honestly someone can think through their use, the more likely they'll be happy with the choices they make in the long run. What do you think about that?*

- In rare cases, despite repeated attempts to diffuse tension, students may continue to feel uncomfortable and irritated with the FR to the point where continuing to look at the feedback report together may be counterproductive for overall goals of the session. In these rare circumstances the facilitator may decide to stop reviewing the FR together.

*I feel like this FR is getting in the way of us having a meaningful conversation. The goal of these conversations is to provide a safe, nonjudgmental space for you to think through your use. These pictures and specific words get in the way for some people. I'm wondering if we should set this feedback report aside and go back to talking. We can cover these topics in conversation, and what I really want is for this to be a chance for you to take stock of where you are with marijuana and think about what you want for yourself moving forward.*

## **Section 2: Age of First Use**

The first page of the FR shows normative data regarding the student's marijuana use as it compared to the use of other students of the same age/grade nationwide. The normative data inform participants how common or uncommon use by kids their age is. This information may highlight discrepancies between the student's use and his/her perceptions of other adolescents' use, which may generate a sense of discomfort that often precedes a decision to make a change.

The normative data are a very important part of the FR. Normative feedback alone has been shown to influence behavior change. It should not be skipped, but the facilitator should be closely attuned to the student's reactions and respond appropriately. If you have local data available, please feel free to use it in this portion of the conversation.

*You first tried marijuana when you were 14. These people here represent all of the kids in the country. The green part represents the percentage of kids who tried marijuana around the same age as you did. So about \_\_\_\_% of 14-year-olds have ever tried marijuana.*

*How does that look to you?  
What do you make of that?*

**Use reflections and probe for additional reactions.**

**TIPS**

- You may encounter surprise or resistance to this information. Roll with it. Do not get into an argument with the student; rather, reflect the student's thoughts and feelings. You may reframe the situation by saying, *"So, this doesn't really fit with your perception of student marijuana use."*

- Be prepared to present information about perceived norms versus actual norms. If applicable, discuss the fact that people tend to think the amount that their friends and family use is "normal" but that "normal" is different from "average." Indicate that we often misperceive other people's actual level of a behavior.

*In your social group, the frequency of use is higher than this number here, so this information doesn't match your experience. What you and your friends do is really called "normal." We often misperceive the actual level of use of most people because we base our perceptions on what we see our friends do. If we asked all the kids in your grade, not just your closest friends, the rate might be different from what you experience with just your circle of friends. What are your thoughts on that?*

- Let the student sit with feelings and reactions to comparisons. Don't "hammer" them with the statistics or "rescue" them from their discomfort. It's part of the process.

### **Section 3: Age of First Regular Use (This question is automatically skipped if the student does not identify using regularly in the survey)**

*When you were 15 years old, you started smoking marijuana regularly. "Regularly" means using three or more days per week. How did smoking evolve from every once in awhile when you first started to more frequent?*

### **Section 4: Average Number of Days Used Per Month**

*You've been smoking pot an average of 12 days per month. So, the big section here shows that \_\_\_% of high school students in your grade have not smoked pot in the last 30 days. This smaller section says that \_\_\_% have smoked pot at least once this month.*

*What do you make of the information on this graph?*

What do you think when you see this graph?

**Use reflections and probe for additional reaction.**

**TIPS**

- Again, expect surprised reactions or disbelief from some students and utilize MI skills when responding.

*S: Yeah, I don't believe that. If this survey was taken at our school, it would be a lot higher.*

*F: It's hard for you to believe these numbers. Your experience doesn't match up.*

*S: Ha, I think all these people were lying.*

*F: Although it was a confidential and anonymous survey, it's hard to know if everyone was honest. At the same time, when you look around and think about the people you know, you would guess the percentages would be way different from what's on this page. What would you put them at? What do you make of the difference between your guess and the data?*

**Section 5: Average Number of Days per Week Student Used Before or During School**

This section shares what students reported about how often they used marijuana before and during school in the last 60 days. Dig around for change talk here. Explore times when the student doesn't use and what concerns he/she has about marijuana's impact on school.

Use a transitional statement such as the following:

*We looked at how often you and others use marijuana. Next, we'll think about when during the day you choose to use it.*

*Because school takes up a big part of a student's time, this section is on marijuana and the school day. On average, you reported using marijuana on 2 days a week before school and on 5 days per week while at school. How does that sound?*

*Tell me about the days you typically smoke before (or during) school.*

*You've been very clear about how important going to college is to you. Here, we see that you've chosen to avoid smoking before school and rarely smoke during school. How do you do that? What's that like for you?*

*You smoke most days during lunch, but never before school. Why is it important to you that you don't smoke before school?*

**Section 6: Amount of Money Spent on Marijuana**

The section on money spent the approximate amount of money the student reported spending on marijuana in a typical month. It then calculates how much that would be for a year and how many of certain other items the student could buy with that amount of money.

The intention of this section is to allow students the opportunity to reflect on how much their use is costing them and whether the money they are spending on marijuana is interfering with other financial-related goals (getting a car, saving for college, paying for driver's ed, etc.). Are they satisfied with how they are spending their money?

*In addition to marijuana's relationship to school, another aspect to think about is money. You said that in an average month you might spend \$100 on marijuana, which would be about \$1,200 per year. What are your thoughts as you see that figure?*

*If you had \$1,200, what would you buy with it?*

*Where else might you be interested in putting that money?*

*How satisfied are you with how you are spending your money?*

*You've mentioned that you really want to buy a car. What would it be like if one year from now you had \$1,200 to put toward a car?*

### **TIP**

- Some students can be dismissive about the items shown on the page. When that happens, it is an opportunity to personalize this information further and explore with student what he/she does care about putting money toward.

*S: I would never buy 200 Frappuccinos or 11 pair of shoes. I just don't need that.*

*F: For you, it wouldn't be drinks or shoes, so these examples don't apply to you. What is it that you care about? What would you spend money on?*

## **Section 7: Unintended Consequences in the Past 60 Days**

### **[Abuse Indicators]**

This section on abuse indicators, and Section 8 on more serious consequences, shows the student some of the experiences with marijuana that are negative. These items are not meant to be diagnostic. The student endorsed them as part of a self-report measure in the baseline assessment. The items the student endorses serve as conversation points about problematic use. The participant may or may not identify these effects as “problems.”

## TIP

- Use words like “problem” and “concern” only if the student does. Don't assume that an item is a concern for him/her.

### **Introduce this section and inquire about each item.**

*We've spent time talking about the enjoyable parts of your use, how it compares to others', and how you are making sure you don't spend too much money on it. Now we'll take a look at how marijuana might have crept into your life in some ways you don't like as much.*

*This section puts into perspective some of the experiences you have been having and provides you with information so you can make educated decisions about your use.*

*Here are some things you said have happened recently that are related to your marijuana use.*

*You said that, in the last 60 days, you \_\_\_\_\_ [read the first item on list]. When have you noticed this one?*

Where a participant checked off several consequences, proceed through the list in a similar manner. Inquire about feelings about items and reflect and explore ambivalence or concerns voiced by participant.

Offer a summary reflection:

*For the most part, you enjoy smoking with your friends. What you don't like so much is that you haven't studied for a couple of tests because of your marijuana use, and getting in trouble at home has had some serious consequences.*

## TIPS

- If the student checked off that he/she has driven while high, this is a good opportunity to provide information on the effects of driving under the influence of marijuana. It should be approached in an MI style: asking permission to share information, sharing information, and then eliciting the student's thoughts.

*In general, you try to avoid it, but at times you do drive after smoking. What are your thoughts and experiences in terms of marijuana and driving? I wonder whether you'd be interested in me sharing what research has found related on the subject? [Student expresses interest.] It's confusing because a lot of people say that it has no impact or even makes them better drivers, but when they've done scientific studies assessing driving while high, it turns out a number of skills important for driving are impaired. People who are high are less attentive, more distractible, and their reaction time is slower compared to people who haven't smoked. Even small changes in those areas can make a big difference when driving, and studies have found*

*that someone is twice as likely to get into a car accident while driving after they've smoked weed. And we know that anytime marijuana is combined with anything else such as alcohol the risks go up significantly. I'm curious to hear your thoughts on all that.*

- Some students may be sensitive or resistant to this information. Strive to reach a balance of sharing information about the risks because this topic is a public health concern and avoiding getting into a disagreement with the student. Do not avoid sharing information because of potential discomfort the student might experience. However, embracing the spirit of MI, using MI skills wisely, and being sensitive and responsive to the student's reactions can be especially helpful in this area.
- In certain cases you may choose to avoid a detailed conversation about driving and instead might share minimal information and let the student know he/she will receive a booklet summarizing the most up-to-date scientific information on marijuana's effects in different areas, including a chapter on driving.

*It sounds like your thoughts and experiences differ somewhat from what research has found. We don't need to spend a lot of time talking about it together, but I want you to know you'll leave today with a booklet that summarizes the most up-to-date scientific research on marijuana's effects. A specific chapter on driving shares more in-depth information that you can check out on your own time.*

## **Section 8: More Serious Consequences in the Past 60 Days [Dependence Indicators]**

A brief overview of the purpose of this page can be helpful; however, these items are not meant to be diagnostic. The student endorsed them as part of a self-report measure in the baseline assessment. The items the student endorses serve as conversation points about problematic use. The participant may or may not identify these effects as “problems.”

You can gently explore the term *dependence* and what it means to the student, emphasizing that the goal is not to diagnose. Provide a similar review of the items in this section. Reflect the student's thoughts and feelings about these items. Ask for elaboration on some of the items or ask for the student to give examples.

*I want to be really clear that in no way is this meant to “diagnose” anyone; that's not my role and it wouldn't be appropriate. Rather, the purpose of this page is so you can be aware of the different signs and think through how they may relate to your life. It's*



*another way to look at your use as you figure out what's right for you.*

*I can see that you said four of these seven consequences had happened to you. At the bottom of this page, your answers indicate your risk of a serious pattern of use is high. What's it like for you to look at this information?*

**Reflect the student's response and probe for additional reactions.**

**TIP**

- It is appropriate to express genuine concern about student's substance use and explain why you have these concerns.  
*As I'm looking at this, I find myself having some thoughts and feelings. I wonder whether it's okay for me to share them with you, and then I'll want to hear from you. Some of your responses imply a bit of a red flag for potential bigger problems. We know that although substances do often feel like they "work" or help someone deal with negative emotions in the moment, there's a flip side that people don't always consider. Basically, if someone is using marijuana to manage their feelings or stress, they're not exploring and finding other, substance-free ways to feel better. And in the long run it gets harder and harder to stop using and find other healthier strategies to manage their emotions. I just shared quite a bit, and now I want to hear what you think of all of that.*

**Section 9: Student's Five Most Important Goals**

The purpose of the goals section is to look at the participant's general goals for the future and the role of marijuana use in reaching those goals.

It can be a useful way to explore how decreasing marijuana use might affect the likelihood the student will reach his/her goals (which may provide information that is useful in developing discrepancy).

The initial questionnaire asks for the student's goals, and they are included in the PFR, but completion of response scales occurs in the session.

Introduce the response scales so the participant can rate how current marijuana use affects each goal and how reducing marijuana use would affect each goal (very positively to very negatively).

This section can be completed in one of two ways. Either the participant can write his/her responses on the FR; afterward you can ask him/her to show you the numbers so you can write them down on your copy (this may be collected as data), or you and student can talk through the responses and record them simultaneously.

*Last time, you listed some of your goals for the future. You said [name one goal] was an important goal. What makes that goal*

*important to you?*

*You said your current marijuana use affects that goal [name the rating]. Tell me more about that. Why do you think your use would affect this goal that way?*

*You also feel that, if you reduced your marijuana use, it would have a [name rating] effect on your reaching the same goal. Tell me about that.*

*Thinking about your goals for the future, how does marijuana use fit in?*

### **TIP**

- It isn't uncommon for students to put “3's” or no positive or negative effect of their current marijuana use on goal and put that reducing marijuana use would have a positive impact. In these cases, the facilitator should focus on the reduction piece, asking for elaboration and examples. It is not necessary to highlight any inconsistencies.

## **Additional Discussion about next steps following the Feedback Report**

### **Section 1: How to help identify and describe the student's Readiness Today**

This ladder section is a crucial part of the intervention. It is very important to leave enough time to have significant conversations exploring what they want moving forward, what situations would signal concern to them related to their use, and detailed discussion of change plans, if appropriate.

This section is intended to get the student to talk about how they feel about changing right now. This is a chance to summarize the content of the discussion and hand it back to the student with a key question, what's next for him/her with marijuana?

*We've covered a lot of ground in in our conversation and thinking about your marijuana use from a variety of different angles. You've talked about how you enjoy smoking with friends and the relaxed feeling you get and at the same time you've started to notice some things that concern you. You don't like how you don't have as much energy or motivation as you used to and that you're falling behind in school. You notice a connection with those things and marijuana. Now we'll take some time to tie it all together, step back and think about what you want for yourself moving forward*

**Have the student consider what description fits them best when considering where they are in moving forward after this experience.**

Do you fit in the position of someone who is having a good time and doesn't want to make changes in your marijuana use right now? This description symbolizes someone who is clear about where they want to be right now with the commitment to their use.



Do you fit into the the position of someone who is possibly at a crossroads and could ahead, to the left, or to the right? You could even turn around and walk back to where you came from. This symbolizes someone who is unsure what they want to do right now in regards to their use.



Do you fit in the position of someone who knows you want some sort of change with your marijuana use and is ready to start moving forward with this decision and could use assistance in figuring out the details of what the change is and how to get there.



**Use reflections to capture the students responses.**

TIPS

- In this section, the facilitator may find it helpful to ask the where the student is by utilizing the scale concept. Using scales such as an *Importance Scale* and a *Confidence Scale* allows for questions which can help gauge actual interest in change and confidence in making a change. *The Importance Scale* moves the student from building motivation to strengthening commitment to change (for those who wish to reduce).

*I'd like to ask you to rate how important it is to you to make changes in your marijuana use. If "0" is "not at all important" and "10" is "extremely important," what number on this scale would you say best describes your importance level?*

- Query about their answer in a way that may favor motivation to change. For example, if the student reports that they are at a 4 on the Importance Scale, the facilitator might ask, "How come a 4 and not a 2 or 1?" Follow with reflections.

- The purpose of the *Confidence Scale* question is to elicit the student's sense of self-efficacy in changing their marijuana use if they choose to make that change. It also informs the facilitator which aspects of change may be hard for the student and how beneficial the intervention curriculum will be for them.

*Here's another question. How confident you are that you could make a change in your pot use if you decided to make a change? If "0" is "not at all confident" and "10" is "extremely confident," what number on this scale would you say best describes your confidence level?*

- If the student reports that they are at a 4 on the Confidence Scale, the facilitator might ask, "How come a 4 and not a 2 or 1?" Or the facilitator could ask, "What would it take to get to a 7?" Or, "How confident would you need to be to try?" Follow with reflections.

*You're pretty sure that you could handle this change. What makes you feel confident?*

*You think that you could avoid smoking by yourself but not smoking with your friends at parties, which is what you guys normally do, would probably be pretty tricky.*

- The facilitator should be aware there may be a mismatch between desire and ability. The student may want to make changes in their use but not feel confident they could do so successfully. The motivation to make changes needs to be internal however, the skills involved in successfully making a change can be taught through the intervention curricula.

*You're not alone when you say that you really wish you weren't smoking as much but you don't feel confident that you can make those changes on your own. I hear that it's really important for you to cut back significantly and I want to take a minute to tell you about some optional sessions where you and I can meet, decide on the goal that is right for you, and figure out which topics or skills to think through and practice to help you be successful.*

**If the student fits the description that symbolizes someone who is clear about where they want to be right now with the commitment to their use:**

Make sure you have clearly and fully restated their position that they are comfortable with their use and not interested in making any changes.

Explain that in order to make sure that their use stays within a range that is acceptable for them, it is important to think about how they could clearly identify it if their use were to become unacceptably harmful or excessive. Push for details. The more concrete examples or signs the participant can generate the better.

- F: How would you know if you were using too much?*  
*S: I'd know I was smoking too much if my grades dropped.*  
*F: What would that drop look like? For example, would it be a drop to a B average, or C average, or getting a D?*  
*S: I'd cut back if I was smoking too often.*  
*F: How much would be 'too often'? Everyday? Every other day? Two times a day? During school and after school?*

Encourage them to identify amount, frequency, effects and consequence indicators, keeping the tone curious and non-confrontational.

Work with the student to put together the information they give to form a fairly specific description of signs they are smoking too much. Ask what they think their reaction would be if they recognized that they were in that situation.

Remind them that the intervention group will remain available to them if they decide to change their mind. If a student in this situation does express interest, facilitator should spend a little time clearly describing intervention group and how it differs from The Infraction Response Meeting(s).

*Right now you're feeling mostly good about the way marijuana is fitting in your life. You have some things you want to keep an eye on including if you find yourself smoking more days than not, if it impacts family relationships, and if your grades decrease. In those situations you would probably do some cutting back. Let's say you do find yourself in a place like that, I'd like to let you know about some optional support that is available to you. You've mentioned*

*that figuring out other fun activities could be hard; a lot of other people experience that as well, so we provide a group where we go over ways that would especially and specifically be helpful to you and others in the group as you all find other fun activities to get involved in. We know that at times people find themselves in a place where they do want to make a change with their use and having some support can be helpful in that process. You'll have that option available to you in many ways, including participating in our intervention group. If at anytime, you want to hear more about what they're like, just get in touch with me and we can check into that option. How does that sound?*

**If the student fits the description that symbolizes someone who is unsure what they want to do right now in regards to their use.**

Make sure you have clearly and fully restated their position that they are unsure about making any changes. Explore ambivalence and utilize change talk.

The conversation outlined in addressing students who present they are clear about their commitment to their use can be utilized to assist the student anticipate and identify signs that their use has become problematic is also applicable with students that identify the uncertainty of where they are in their decisions about their use.

*Right now you're feeling two ways. You like marijuana and its effects and nothing really bad has happened from your use yet. At the same time, you're aware of some ways it's not helping you get where you want to go in terms of getting a job and into a good college. For some people, just like you, they're figuring out what feels right with marijuana. We provide an intervention group for students that decide they do want to try out reducing or quitting and are interested in getting some help in doing so. You would get to choose the goal that feels right to you, like how you've talked about cutting back to one day/week, and then choose from a variety of topics or skills that sound like they'd be helpful in getting you to that goal. So a couple areas that come to mind to me might be finding ways to deal with sadness other than smoking and preparing for unexpected situations, like when your friend offered you to smoke at lunch the other day. What are your thoughts about that type of group for you right now?*

If they're interested tell them more and look to schedule in the closest group. If not interested highlight availability when they are.

**If the student fits the description that symbolizes someone who knows they want change with their marijuana use and is ready to start moving forward in this decision with others assistance.**

Make sure you have clearly and fully restated their position that they are ready to begin making changes. Get the student to verbalize their own desire, ability, reasons and need (DARN) as to why they want to change. Explore the student's change plans in depth, operationalizing the goal and

thinking through what will help them be successful and what barriers they may experience.

*You're clear that you're ready to quit. This has been building for many months and you feel like you've grown out of marijuana. How do you feel about quitting?*

*What do you need to be successful/what will help you quit?*

*What parts do you see being tricky or challenging?*

*Have you got a plan for how you'll handle friends who want you to get high?*

*I wonder if you think you'll have cravings and how you'll handle them.*

*Do you expect to feel irritable, or angry, or depressed for a while? How will you handle these feelings?*

*Who will you ask to support you while you're doing this?*

The facilitator can share their own thoughts or concerns about student's change plans based on the past two meetings.

Explore his/her thoughts about participating in the intervention group.

*Based on everything you've told me, I have been wondering if it might be tough to avoid smoking when things are really stressful and also when you're hanging out with friends after school. I want to let you know there is additional support here in school for students who've decided to change their marijuana use through our Marijuana Education intervention group.*

*Student's who've participated in this group have learned a lot about how to be successful. Things like how to handle temptations to get high, what to do when feeling bored or depressed, and what to do when friends urge someone to get high with them.*

*What are your thoughts about participating in this group?  
If you did participate, how might it be helpful to you?  
Why might you decide to not participate in the group?*

Summarize the students views about the pros and cons of participating.

If a student wants to begin the intervention group, let them know you will let them know when the next available group is.

If a student doesn't want to participate right now, remind them that the options will continue to be available to them and they can connect with you if that time comes. Also remind the student about outside counseling resources that you are aware of in your community.

## **Section 2: Who's Important and Who Can Be Counted on for Help or Support**

The purpose of this section is for the student to identify important people in his/her life and to understand how marijuana use relates to important relationships. It can be a useful way to learn about key people in the student's life, find out whether or not these people know about the student's marijuana use, and explore the student's perception of his/her support network's feelings (or expected feelings) about his/her marijuana use.

This information may be helpful in continuing to build discrepancies and identifying people who might support or not support the student if he/she decides to make changes in use.

Review the names of important people, whether or not they know about the student's use, and their reactions or potential reactions. Remind the student that he/she is free to use relationship descriptors (ex: best friend, boyfriend, etc.) or initials of people rather than their names.

*It can be really useful to identify some of the main people you can talk with about things and then look to see how these relationships and your marijuana use fit together.*

Explore with the student, going through each important person mentioned.

*How does this person feel about your marijuana use?  
How would they react if they knew?  
What are their concerns about your use?*

Reflect and reframe to help the participant explore their feelings and concerns about the effect marijuana has on them and their relationships.

*So it sounds like at times it feels like your parents are nagging you, and your sense is that they nag because they're concerned marijuana is harming your schoolwork and your chances for a good summer job. What do you think about their concerns?*

*Your mom doesn't know you smoke pot, but you think she would be upset if she found out. What do you think she would be upset about?*

*How do you think the conversation would go if she found out?*

*How do you feel about the fact that she doesn't know about this part of your life?*

*It seems to you that your mom doesn't worry about your smoking marijuana as long as you don't get in trouble with the law. What do you think of her view?*

*What do you think her concern about getting in trouble with the law would be?*

**TIPS**



- Don't assume students disregard their parents' opinions and concerns. Remember students can find their parent's concerns persuasive and they can find it stressful to worry their parents.
- Don't assume that students like to have secrets from parents or others. Provide time for exploration of feelings.
- If the student can't think of people to list, help them brainstorm. If the student can't think of any adults, help them brainstorm.

*If you had to choose someone to talk with, who might that be? Even if you don't think you would carry through with talking with a person, who would you consider talking with? Who else?*

*At times it's useful to have a range of ages and relationships of people to talk with. Can you think of any adults that you would feel secure in talking with?*

*Might there be anyone at school who you could consider speaking with? It doesn't have to be about pot, but just if anything was on your mind.*

*Affirm and praise the participant's connections with others, his/her willingness to talk about issues with people. Help students see that they can and do build networks of support and that they can purposefully foster connections that promote their health.*

### **Section 3: Next Steps and Summary**

Affirm the student for sharing his/her experiences and thoughts with you. Summarize any areas from the discussion content that you want the student to walk away with. Provide the student with a copy of his/her Feedback Report, if applicable, give the student contact information of any outside resources that you want to refer him/her to and provide logistical information about the intervention group if they committed to going. Provide the student with any written paperwork needed for the administration to confirm his/her participation.

*I just wanted to say that even though you were required to be here, I personally am glad you were here. I have really enjoyed our conversations and appreciated your thoughtfulness and willingness to really think through your marijuana use.*

## TIPS

- It is important at the closure of your discussion to be aware if you need to give the student any necessary referrals to outside professionals based on the knowledge that you obtained. Please follow your school protocol in this area.
- If the student isn't fully committed to the intervention group, provide them information on who to contact if they change their mind in the future.

Do you fit in the position of someone who is having a good time and doesn't want to make changes in your marijuana use right now? This description symbolizes someone who is clear about where they want to be right now with the commitment to their use.



Do you fit into the the position of someone who is possibly at a crossroads and could ahead, to the left, or to the right? You could even turn around and walk back to where you came from. This symbolizes someone who is unsure what they want to do right now in regards to their use.



Do you fit in the position of someone who knows you want some sort of change with your marijuana use and is ready to start moving forward with this decision and could use assistance in figuring out the details of what the change is and how to get there.

