

In fact, because of our past addictive behavior, we even have to be very careful of prescribed medications! We addicts have a dangerous tendency to self-medicate. If the doctor tells us to take one pill, we figure two will be better. If we have three pills left over after an injury or surgery, we save them instead of throwing them away. After all, we tell ourselves, we might need them the next time we are in real (or imagined) physical pain. We cannot deviate from prescribed use without placing our sobriety in jeopardy. As recovering marijuana addicts, we have learned that we must be very vigilant about our sobriety at all times, in all ways.

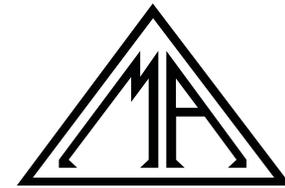
The belief that marijuana cannot be addictive is widely circulated throughout the world. Well, somehow, we managed to get addicted to this “non-addictive” substance. We recovering marijuana addicts don’t need to play with fire by checking out other addictive substances.

To reiterate, the only requirement for membership in Marijuana Anonymous is a desire to stop using marijuana. It is important, however, to recognize the potential to create another problem as we strive to recover from this one.

*Excerpted from the fourth paragraph of Step 2 in Life with Hope*

*We came to realize that trying to fix our lives with marijuana hadn’t worked. Marijuana had once seemed to be the most effective way to help us cope with the problem of living, at least temporarily. When we stopped using marijuana, we didn’t automatically feel worthwhile and full of purpose. Our overwhelming feelings, character defects, and negative actions were still there. Sometimes they seemed even stronger than before, because we had no anesthetic to dull them. We were not problem users whose problems went away when we threw away our stash. When we stopped using, we found we had a problem with living; we were addicts.*

## Dangers of Cross Addiction



### MARIJUANA ANONYMOUS

A Twelve Step Program of Recovery  
for Marijuana Addicts

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## Marijuana Anonymous

### Tradition 3

*The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using marijuana.*

Marijuana Anonymous was formed so that marijuana abusers would have a safe haven for recovery, without being ridiculed for “only” being marijuana addicts. However, many of us have found that the only way that we can keep our sobriety is to abstain from all mind and mood altering chemicals, including alcohol. As stated in our Third Tradition, the only requirement for membership in Marijuana Anonymous is a desire to stop using marijuana. In fact, there’s not even a demand that we stop using, only that we have a desire to stop. There is no mention of alcohol or any other substances. This is to adhere to the “singleness of purpose” concept.

When we give up the drug of our choice, a void is created. The initial struggle to abstain from marijuana use often leaves us vulnerable. For the first time in years, we no longer have marijuana clouding our feelings; we don’t even have a name for some of these feelings. We may experience happiness, pleasure, satisfaction, enjoyment, fulfillment, and other positive feelings; we may

also experience anger, depression, resentment, sorrow, dejection, fear, emptiness, and other negative feelings. To fill these voids or numb the pain, we may start to use, or increase the use of, other substances such as alcohol, cocaine, pills, or other drugs. Since we’ve never done feelings, of any kind, too well, we may use mind or mood altering chemicals to take the edge off our powerful new feelings, both positive and negative. Although we may not now be addicted to these substances, their use can lower our inhibitions and leave us open to repeating old patterns of thinking and behavior, which can lead back to marijuana use or on to new addictions.

Many of the addicts who come to MA have just not been able to stay clean and sober. While a few have gone back to using marijuana right from the start, most have started with another substance. It is usually alcohol since it’s so readily available and socially acceptable. They felt safe since alcohol had not been a problem for them in the past.

They also wanted to be “a part of”, and not be different from their non-addict friends. However, we are

different from our non-addict friends! That’s one of the things we have to learn if we are going to turn our lives around. There is an old saying, “Once you’re a pickle, you cannot go back to being a cucumber.” For many of us, a drink on Friday night can become a few drinks on Friday night, and then a few drinks a few nights a week, and so on and so on. We know the story. We played that one out with marijuana. Or maybe we just have a couple of drinks, lower our resistance, then pick up a joint and there we are out using again.

Those of us who have managed to put together a few years in this program have learned to think of other substances as something we haven’t gotten addicted to...yet. It doesn’t mean we can’t and won’t, if given a chance. The fact that we became addicted to marijuana reflects a tendency towards behavior that may lead to cross addiction (addiction to other substances). Particularly during the first few shaky months, we might find ourselves drawn to new obsessive behavior, that might have been unacceptable before. We may overeat, become addicted to our jobs, find ourselves on shopping sprees we can’t afford, etc.