

Considerations for using the terminology *Cannabis* or *Marijuana**

Audience	Term	Considerations
Youth (12-17)	Marijuana	<p>In DOH audience research, youth have not identified one slang term that is universally known. Although not all teens <i>use</i> the term marijuana, it is generally well <i>understood</i>.</p> <p>This term is also mostly used by clinicians and prevention experts, which lends an element of credibility to messages.</p>
Young adults (18-20)	Marijuana	<p>In DOH audience research, young adults have not identified one slang term that is universally known. Although few young adults <i>use</i> the term marijuana, it is well <i>understood</i> across the entire audience.</p>
Parents & influential adults	Marijuana	<p>In DOH audience research and from a general understanding from parents in the field, not all parents or influential adults understand the term cannabis or most slang terms. Marijuana seems to be well understood across the adult population.</p>
Adult consumers (21+)	Cannabis	<p>Although the term marijuana is widely understood across adult consumers, DOH audience research and LCB collaboration with industry has identified that many consumers do not respond positively to messaging that does not use the term cannabis.</p>
Medical marijuana consumers	Cannabis	<p>The term cannabis has a strong association with medical marijuana use and is widely used by this audience.</p>
Prevention field	Marijuana	<p>Typically when discussing this topic among colleagues, the term marijuana is used most widely.</p>

General guidance:

- To avoid confusion and be as inclusive as possible, it is best practice to lead with the appropriate term but also weave in additional terms throughout the message. Examples:
 - Marijuana (also known as *kush, cannabis, weed, pot, etc.*) can harm the developing brain.
 - Cannabis (aka marijuana) can impair a person's ability to drive.
- Alternating terminology on websites also improves search engine optimization (how high up your website is listed on search engines like Google and Bing).
- Language is dynamic and changes over time. These recommendations were developed by the prevention field in Washington State to reflect our current knowledge, expertise, and community needs. These recommendations will be adapted as the field evolves.

**Disclaimer: This document is a tool for prevention partners to utilize when in doubt about which term makes the most sense for which audience. The intention is to bring consistency across prevention messaging in the state of Washington.*