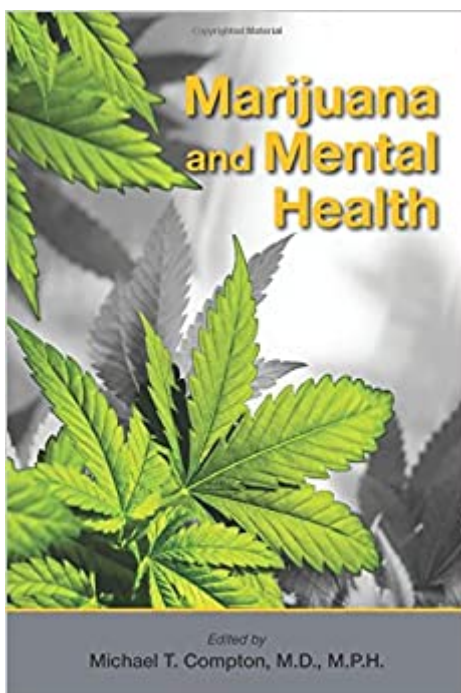


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Marijuana And Mental Health



Synopsis

With relatable clinical vignettes that illustrate the applicability of each chapters content, as well as key chapter points that summarize major themes, Marijuana and Mental Health is the definitive, single source of comprehensive information on marijuana and mental health in modern American society. Balanced, focused, and highly readable, chapters address topics such as the effects of marijuana on the brain and mind, marijuana-related policy and legislation, the complex link between marijuana use and psychotic disorders, synthetic cannabinoids, and the treatment and prevention of marijuana misuse. Beyond offering clinical and research psychiatrists, psychiatric residents and fellows, clinical psychologists, and psychiatric nurses a comprehensive but concise compilation of research in this area, this reference informs clinical mental health practice as well as policy decisions by articulating the connection between marijuana and mental health, particularly in the United States.

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I found my way to this book through an odd combination of events. I'm a child psychologist in New Mexico (where cannabis is legal under certain conditions and circumstances). The majority of the kids I see are in foster care---or ended up in adoptive homes---often because of the substance use of one or both parents. For the most part, I have not been in favor of the legalization of marijuana, even though I recognize I'm on the losing end of this debate. A few weeks ago, I found out that a medical marijuana dispensary was setting up shop next to my office. I was (and remain) displeased, as it doesn't seem to be the kind of business to have next door to a child psychology practice. On that same day, I received an email alert from APA, notifying me that this book was published. Figuring that I should bring myself up to speed on the topic, I ordered the book. This is a small volume; 243 pages. There are 15 contributors to the chapters. Each chapter opens with a clinical vignette, from which to address the subject matter. The book is divided into nine chapters, to include: * An Introduction to Marijuana and Mental Health * Marijuana's Effects on the Mind * Medical and Recreational Marijuana Policy * Medical Marijuana * Marijuana Use and Comorbidity * Marijuana Use and Psychosis * Synthetic Cannabinoids * Treatment of Marijuana Addiction * Prevention of Marijuana Misuse. In addition to chronicling the time-line of marijuana-related laws in the US, the book includes marijuana laws by state, as it currently stands. It also includes indications for marijuana use for each state, which typically includes a diagnosis of HIV/AIDS, glaucoma, seizures, severe pain, and in a few states, mental health conditions such as PTSD. For the most part, the authors do not take a stance---one way or the other---on the use of marijuana for mental health conditions. The controversies within our field and broader society are acknowledged, but as a group, the authors stay focused on their subject area. Throughout the book, it is noted that research in this area is thin. To that end, the authors do suggest a loosening of restrictions to permit broader studies on this area, which certainly makes sense. Of the chapters, the one titled 'Marijuana Use and

Psychosis" is the one most grounded in research. In the other chapters, correlations are surmised based on the clinical experience of the authors. But for the most part, we don't have a lot of solid research in this area. Thus, the reader doesn't walk away with a good understanding of when/why to recommend cannabis use; how to monitor its effects; or when to opt for other approaches to physical or psychological distress. That isn't a fault of the book; it's just the reality of what we do and do not know. Included within the book are well-researched strategies for addressing substance addiction, as well as a review of programs that aim to prevent marijuana use by minors. All in all, I recommend the book if this is a subject area that affects your clinical work. There aren't a lot of answers provided, but again, that's not the fault of the authors. This is a very new area, but one that is rapidly encroaching on clinical practice. Having read the book, I still remain ambivalent about cannabis use---medical or otherwise---and I'm not happy about a dispensary going in next door to my office. But I'm willing to pay attention to the research as it develops.

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