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Legalization and regulation of cannabis/marijuana

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Acute clinical Psychiatry and public mental health have collided as Canada has been struggling with the legalization and regulation of Cannabis/Marijuana. This presentation will focus on defining the concerns involved in this process of decriminalization and minimizing harm of use of Cannabis/Marijuana and the question of legalization with or without regulation. The impact of increasing the availability of this substance on addictions and addictive behavior will be

explored using the lens of Toxic Stress, the ACE study, neuro-development and the social determinants of health. We will also examine the risks of Cannabis/Marijuana use for youth, pregnant women and those with serious mental health disorders. Emphasis will be made of the relative risks of driving accidents with Cannabis, alcohol and psycho-tropic medication and the importance of evidenced-informed public education programs. Especially in the context of the correlation of perceived risk and use by students and the public.

Learning objectives:

- 1) A public health approach with strict regulation of use and access to Cannabis/Marijuana is critical in minimizing harm of use.
- 2) Cannabis/Marijuana Addictions should be seen through the lens of complex traumatic spectrum disorders linked to the social determinants of health.
- 3) Children and Youth, Pregnant Women and patients with serious mental health disorders are at particular high risk of Cannabis/Marijuana use.