

What you can do to reduce harm:

- Its best to not use any gunja.
- The more you use, the more harm you get.
- Have healthy food around so you don't eat junk food when stoned. If you have the munchies make sure you leave some food for your family.
- If you get very fearful, anxious, depressed or paranoid when you are stoned, it shows that gunja is causing you problems and your body doesn't like it.
- Never drive or operate machinery if you are stoned.
- You should not get stoned in dangerous places.
- You shouldn't use getting stoned as an excuse to break the law (Aboriginal law or non-Aboriginal Law).
- Always have safer sex and use a condom.
- Think about how your gunja use could be affecting your family and community.

What you can do to help someone else reduce harm:

- If someone you know is stoned, and becomes paranoid (suspicious or fearful) or sad, tell them these feelings will pass and try to keep them calm.
- Never leave someone alone who is stoned when they are feeling like this. If necessary get some help from a family member or health worker.
- If someone experiences any bad effects, make sure you call an ambulance straight away. Dial triple zero (000).



Reducing your use

Sometimes if you have been using for a long time or using a lot, you can get some uncomfortable feelings when you cut down or cut gunja out. This is because your body is used to the chemicals in gunja.

You may find you crave gunja, think about it a lot, feel angry, anxious or sad, or have very strange dreams. These feelings and effects will stop after a while as your body becomes gunja free.

Getting help and information

If you are thinking about changing your gunja use, perhaps you could use some help or information. Sometimes people don't get help because they feel shame talking about their drug use. Aboriginal Alcohol and Other Drug Workers, Aboriginal Health Workers or other health professionals are there to help you. They will not put you down. They can help you to stop or reduce your use and support you while you make changes. It may not be easy to reduce your use but your friends and family and other people in your community can also help you by supporting your decision.

Aboriginal Support System

Siblings (Brothers, Sisters, Cousins, Nephews and Nieces)

Parents (Includes Aunties and Uncles)

Elders (Includes Grandparents)

Partner (and Children)

Aboriginal health worker or support worker



For more information and help

Local Contact

Alcohol & Drug Support Line

The Alcohol and Drug Support Line can provide information about culturally secure alcohol and drug services in your area. They are a confidential, 24 hour, statewide telephone counselling, information and referral service for anyone concerned about their own or another person's alcohol or other drug use. Call backs are available.

Ph 9442 5000 or 1800 198 024 (country callers)

Em alcoholdrugsupport@mhc.wa.gov.au

Web alcoholdrugsupport.mhc.wa.gov.au

Parent & Family Drug Support Line

Confidential, 24 hour, statewide telephone counselling, information and referral service for anyone concerned about a loved one's alcohol or other drug use. Parent callers can speak to a Parent Peer Volunteer with a lived experience of their own son or daughter's alcohol or other drug use. Call backs are available.

Ph 9442 5050 or 1800 653 203 (country callers)

Em alcoholdrugsupport@mhc.wa.gov.au

Web alcoholdrugsupport.mhc.wa.gov.au

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Gunja

Aboriginal ways of reducing harm from alcohol and other drugs

Aboriginal Inner Spirit Model



Our Inner Spirit is the centre of our being and emotions.

When our spirit feels strong our mind feels strong.

When our spirit feels tangled our mind feels tangled.

Strong Inner Spirit is what keeps people healthy and keeps them connected together.

Strong Inner Spirit keeps our family strong, our community strong and our country alive.

Alcohol and other drugs can weaken your spirit and your connections with family, community and country

Our way of being healthy is to look after ourselves by making good choices, and to care for our family, community and country. Alcohol and other drugs can tangle and weaken our spirit and mind. This can affect our emotional, social, spiritual and physical well-being. This can weaken our connection to family, community and country.



People who don't use at all

- o Strong Spirit
- o Strong Family
- o Strong Community
- o Strong Country



People who use a lot

- o Weak Spirit
- o Angry & Worried Family
- o Worried Community
- o OK Country



People who use all the time

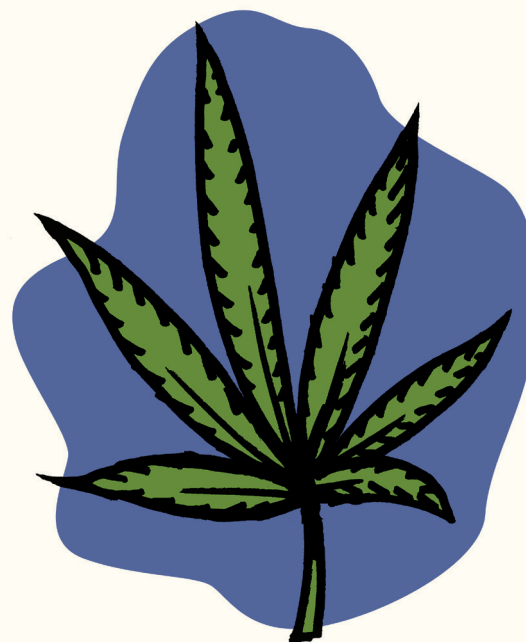
- o No Spirit
- o Sad Family
- o Sad Community
- o No Country

How is gunja affecting your inner spirit and your connections to family, community and country?

What is Gunja?

Other common names are, marijuana, cannabis, mull, yarndi, pot, cones, hydro, dope, weed.

Gunja is an illegal drug containing THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) which affects the way you think, feel and behave. It also affects your body. You usually feel the effects for a few hours but gunja can stay in your body for up to a month.



Short-term effects

- o Gunja can change your mood – make you feel very relaxed and sleepy or even make you laugh a lot.
- o You may get 'the munchies' and become very hungry.
- o It makes your heart go faster, eyes get red, mouth gets dry and breathing becomes harder.
- o It slows you down, you can't concentrate very well, and you start thinking differently.
- o Some people, when they smoke can get paranoid (fearful and suspicious), worried or restless.
- o When someone gets paranoid they may think people are after them. Some people may see or hear things that aren't there. This can last a few hours or more.
- o If you drive when you're 'stoned' you can have an accident because your reaction time is slowed down and you can't concentrate very well.
- o Some people have unsafe sex when they are stoned. This puts them at risk of
 - A sexually transmitted infection (STI)
 - Blood-borne viruses (BBV's), and
 - Unwanted pregnancy

Long-term effects

- o Gunja can make you feel very lazy.
- o You can stop looking after yourself.
- o You can become forgetful which can affect your work or school.
- o Gunja puts pressure on families. It can cost a lot of money.
- o Relationship problems, family and domestic violence.
- o Some people feel they have to be stoned all the time and can't live without it.
- o You're more likely to get in trouble with the law because gunja is illegal and sometimes you do silly things when you're stoned.
- o Engage in antisocial behaviour including stealing money and lying.
- o It can also cause respiratory problems like chest infections or other health problems like cancers.

