

Cannabis-Related Disorders

Differential Diagnosis Assessment

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This assessment is designed to assist clinicians in differentiating cannabis-related disorders from other substance-related, psychiatric, medication-induced, sleep-related, and medical conditions. It is intended as a clinical decision-support worksheet and not as a substitute for a comprehensive diagnostic evaluation.

1. Cannabis Use Assessment

Cannabis Exposure

Identify current or recent cannabis products:

- ☐ Marijuana/flower
- ☐ Edibles
- ☐ Concentrates
- ☐ Vape products
- ☐ Tinctures/oils
- ☐ Synthetic or semi-synthetic cannabinoids
- ☐ Other: _____

Route of administration:

- ☐ Smoking
- ☐ Vaping
- ☐ Oral
- ☐ Sublingual
- ☐ Other: _____

Frequency:

- ☐ Less than weekly
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Several times per week
- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Multiple times daily
- ☐ Episodic/heavy use

Typical amount/potency: _____

Age at first use: _____

Date/time of last use: _____

Recent increase in use:

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Unknown

Recent reduction or cessation:

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Unknown

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2. Presenting Symptoms

Check all symptoms currently or recently present:

- ☐ Anxiety
- ☐ Panic
- ☐ Euphoria
- ☐ Dysphoria
- ☐ Paranoia
- ☐ Suspiciousness
- ☐ Altered perception
- ☐ Time distortion
- ☐ Impaired attention
- ☐ Memory impairment
- ☐ Impaired judgment
- ☐ Coordination problems
- ☐ Slowed reaction time
- ☐ Increased appetite
- ☐ Dry mouth
- ☐ Red eyes
- ☐ Tachycardia/palpitations
- ☐ Sleep disturbance
- ☐ Irritability
- ☐ Anger/agitation
- ☐ Restlessness
- ☐ Depressed mood
- ☐ Headache
- ☐ Nausea/vomiting
- ☐ Abdominal discomfort
- ☐ Sweating
- ☐ Tremor
- ☐ Other: _____

Onset: _____

Relationship to cannabis use or cessation: _____

Duration: _____

Severity:

- ☐ Mild
- ☐ Moderate
- ☐ Severe

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Functional impairment:

- ☐ None
- ☐ Occupational/academic
- ☐ Social/interpersonal
- ☐ Legal
- ☐ Financial
- ☐ Family
- ☐ Physical health
- ☐ Safety
- ☐ Other: _____

3. Cannabis Use Disorder

Cannabis Use Disorder should be considered when a problematic pattern of cannabis use leads to clinically significant impairment or distress.

Assessment of Problematic Use

During the relevant assessment period, determine whether any of the following have occurred:

- ☐ Cannabis is used in larger amounts or for longer than intended.
- ☐ There have been unsuccessful efforts to cut down or control cannabis use.
- ☐ A significant amount of time is spent obtaining, using, or recovering from cannabis.
- ☐ There is a strong desire, craving, or urge to use cannabis.
- ☐ Recurrent cannabis use results in failure to fulfill major responsibilities.
- ☐ Cannabis use continues despite recurrent social or interpersonal problems related to use.
- ☐ Important activities are reduced or abandoned because of cannabis use.
- ☐ Cannabis is used in physically hazardous situations.
- ☐ Cannabis use continues despite knowledge of a physical or psychological problem likely caused or worsened by cannabis.
- ☐ Tolerance is present.
- ☐ Withdrawal symptoms occur following reduction or cessation.

Number of endorsed criteria: _____

Functional Assessment

Has cannabis use contributed to:

- ☐ Work/school problems
- ☐ Relationship problems
- ☐ Parenting/family problems
- ☐ Financial difficulties
- ☐ Legal difficulties
- ☐ Health problems
- ☐ Driving or other safety risks
- ☐ Reduced participation in valued activities

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Differential Diagnosis for Cannabis Use Disorder

- ☐ **Non-problematic cannabis use**
Cannabis use alone does not establish a use disorder. Determine whether there is a persistent problematic pattern accompanied by clinically significant impairment or distress.
- ☐ **Cannabis intoxication**
Intoxication describes an acute state following cannabis use and does not, by itself, establish a cannabis use disorder.
- ☐ **Cannabis withdrawal**
Withdrawal may occur after cessation or reduction and can occur in people with different patterns of cannabis use. Assess the broader pattern of problematic use separately.
- ☐ **Other substance use disorders**
Determine whether alcohol, opioids, stimulants, sedatives, nicotine, or other substances better account for impairment or whether multiple substance use disorders are present.
- ☐ **Bipolar disorders**
Impulsivity, decreased sleep, increased activity, and mood changes may reflect a manic or hypomanic episode rather than cannabis use alone.
- ☐ **Depressive disorders**
Reduced motivation, social withdrawal, sleep changes, and depressed mood should be evaluated independently of cannabis use.
- ☐ **Psychotic disorders**
Paranoia or psychotic symptoms require assessment of their relationship to cannabis exposure and whether symptoms occur outside periods of intoxication or withdrawal.

Clinical Impression

- ☐ Cannabis Use Disorder appears likely
- ☐ Cannabis Use Disorder appears unlikely
- ☐ Further assessment needed

Clinical rationale:

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4. Cannabis Intoxication

Cannabis intoxication should be considered when clinically significant behavioral or psychological changes develop during or shortly after cannabis use.

Assessment Questions

Did symptoms occur during or shortly after cannabis use?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unclear

Was the product unusually potent or the amount greater than usual?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unknown

Are there observable or reported changes in cognition, perception, coordination, judgment, or behavior?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Are symptoms causing clinically significant impairment or safety concerns?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Potential Features

- ☐ Euphoria or altered mood
- ☐ Anxiety or panic
- ☐ Suspiciousness/paranoia
- ☐ Time distortion
- ☐ Impaired short-term memory
- ☐ Impaired attention
- ☐ Impaired coordination
- ☐ Slowed responses
- ☐ Increased appetite
- ☐ Sedation
- ☐ Perceptual changes
- ☐ Other: _____

CLINICAL NOTES SUPPORTING ABOVE

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- ## Clinical Impression

- Clinical rationale:

[illegible]

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5. Cannabis Withdrawal

Cannabis withdrawal should be considered when characteristic symptoms develop following cessation or significant reduction of cannabis use after a period of regular use.

Assessment Questions

Has the person been using cannabis regularly?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unclear

Was cannabis recently reduced or stopped?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unclear

Did symptoms emerge after the reduction or cessation?

•

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unclear

Potential Withdrawal Symptoms

- ☐ Irritability
- ☐ Anger/aggression
- ☐ Nervousness/anxiety
- ☐ Restlessness
- ☐ Depressed mood
- ☐ Difficulty sleeping
- ☐ Vivid or disturbing dreams
- ☐ Reduced appetite
- ☐ Weight loss
- ☐ Headache
- ☐ Sweating
- ☐ Chills
- ☐ Shakiness/tremor
- ☐ Abdominal pain
- ☐ Other: _____

CLINICAL NOTES SUPPORTING ABOVE

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Differential Diagnosis for Cannabis Withdrawal

- ## Clinical Impression

- Clinical rationale:

[illegible]

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6. Other Cannabis-Induced Disorders

Consider an other cannabis-induced disorder when cannabis appears to be directly responsible for a clinically significant psychiatric syndrome that does not fit the presentation of cannabis intoxication or withdrawal.

Assessment

Clear temporal relationship between cannabis exposure and symptoms:

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unclear

Symptoms represent a clinically significant syndrome:

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unclear

Symptoms cause clinically significant distress or impairment:

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Symptoms occur independently of cannabis exposure:

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unclear

Another psychiatric disorder better explains the symptoms:

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unclear

Another substance or medication better explains the symptoms:

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unclear

A medical condition better explains the symptoms:

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unclear

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Predominant Cannabis-Induced Presentation

- ☐ Anxiety-related
- ☐ Depressive/mood-related
- ☐ Psychotic
- ☐ Sleep-related
- ☐ Cognitive/perceptual
- ☐ Other: _____

Clinical rationale:

7. Unspecified Cannabis-Related Disorder

An unspecified cannabis-related disorder may be considered when clinically significant cannabis-related symptoms are present but there is insufficient information to establish a more specific cannabis-related diagnosis, or when the clinician chooses not to specify why the presentation does not meet criteria for a more specific diagnosis.

Assessment

- ☐ Cannabis is clinically relevant to the presenting problem.
- ☐ Symptoms cause clinically significant distress or impairment.
- ☐ Available information is insufficient for a more specific diagnosis.
- ☐ Additional information is needed.
- ☐ Another diagnosis may ultimately better explain the presentation.

Reason for using an unspecified category:

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8. Differential Diagnosis Summary

Condition	Key Question	Findings
Cannabis Use Disorder	Is there a problematic pattern of cannabis use causing impairment or distress?	_____
Cannabis Intoxication	Did clinically significant symptoms occur during or shortly after cannabis use?	_____
Cannabis Withdrawal	Did characteristic symptoms develop after reducing or stopping regular cannabis use?	_____
Other Cannabis-Induced Disorder	Is cannabis causing a clinically significant syndrome that does not fit intoxication or withdrawal?	_____
Unspecified Cannabis-Related Disorder	Is a cannabis-related condition evident but insufficiently characterized for a specific diagnosis?	_____
Anxiety Disorder	Do anxiety symptoms occur independently of cannabis exposure?	_____
Depressive Disorder	Does a persistent mood syndrome exist independently of cannabis use or withdrawal?	_____
Bipolar Disorder	Are mood elevation, decreased need for sleep, or increased goal-directed activity independent of cannabis?	_____
Psychotic Disorder	Do psychotic symptoms persist beyond intoxication or withdrawal?	_____
Other Substance-Related Disorder	Could another substance better explain the presentation?	_____
Medication-Induced Condition	Could a medication or supplement account for the symptoms?	_____
Sleep-Wake Disorder	Could an independent sleep disorder explain the symptoms?	_____
Medical/Neurological Condition	Could a medical or neurological condition better explain the presentation?	_____

9. Clinical Decision-Making

Most Likely Diagnosis

- ☐ No cannabis-related disorder
- ☐ Cannabis Use Disorder
- ☐ Cannabis Intoxication
- ☐ Cannabis Withdrawal
- ☐ Other Cannabis-Induced Disorder
- ☐ Unspecified Cannabis-Related Disorder
- ☐ Other diagnosis: _____

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Important Differential Diagnoses

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Evidence Supporting Primary Diagnosis

Evidence Against Alternative Diagnoses

Additional Information Needed

Clinical Disclaimer

This assessment is intended for educational and clinical decision-support purposes. It is not a substitute for a comprehensive diagnostic evaluation or professional clinical judgment. Diagnostic decisions should be based on the current applicable diagnostic criteria, clinical interview, substance-use history, medication review, medical assessment, functional impairment, and relevant cultural and contextual factors. Cannabis-related symptoms may overlap substantially with psychiatric and medical conditions, and acute or severe symptoms may require medical evaluation.