

Reducing harm

- It's best not to use gunja.
- The more you use the more harm you get.
- Have healthy food around so you don't eat rubbish when stoned. If you have got the munchies make sure you leave some food for your family.
- If your friend becomes very paranoid (suspicious and fearful) or sad when stoned, tell them these feelings will pass and try to keep them calm. **Never leave them alone when they are feeling like this.** If necessary get some help from a family member or health worker.
- If you get very fearful, anxious, depressed or paranoid when you are stoned it shows you that gunja is not a good drug for you and your body doesn't like it.
- Never drive or operate machinery while stoned.
- You shouldn't get stoned in dangerous places.
- You shouldn't use getting stoned as an excuse to break the law (Aboriginal Law or Whiteman's law).
- Getting stoned is no excuse for having unsafe sex – always use a condom.
- Think about how your gunja use could be affecting your family and community.

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 has got 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 some 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 Drug Workers, Aboriginal Health Workers and 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



For more information and help

Local Contact



The Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS)

ADIS can provide information about culturally secure alcohol and drug services in your area. They can also provide other information, counselling and advice for people concerned about their own or another's drug use. This is a 24-hour, statewide, confidential telephone service.

ADIS: 9442 5000 Toll free: 1800 198 024
E-mail: adis@health.wa.gov.au
Website: www.dao.health.wa.gov.au

The Parent Drug Information Service (PDIS)

Confidential telephone support, counselling, information and referral service for parents.
Telephone: 9442 5050
Toll free: 1800 653 203

Produced by the Aboriginal Alcohol and Other Drug Programs

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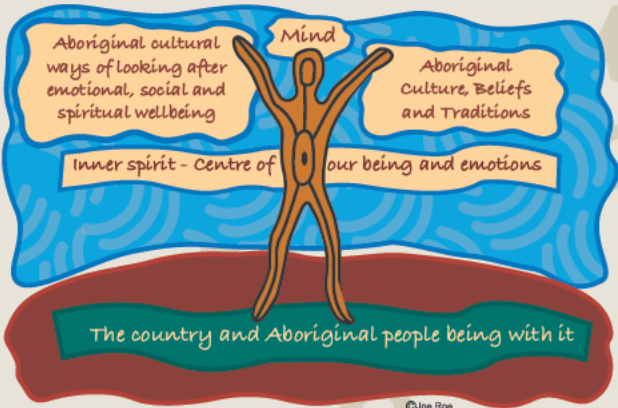


Strong Spirit Strong Mind

Aboriginal Ways of Reducing Harm
From Alcohol and Other Drugs

Gunja

ABORIGINAL INNER SPIRIT MODEL



Alcohol and other drugs can tangle your spirit and 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 culture. 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, culture and country.



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.

Gunja, marijuana, cannabis, mull, pot, cones, hydro



What it is.

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



Short-term effects

- Gunja can change your mood and sometimes makes you laugh.
- You may see things differently and get 'the munchies'.
- It makes your heart go faster, eyes get red, mouth gets dry and breathing deeper.
- It slows you down, you can't concentrate very well, and you start thinking differently.
- Some people, when they smoke can get paranoid (fearful and suspicious), worried or restless. 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.
- 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.
- Some people have unsafe sex when they are stoned. This puts them at risk of a sexually transmitted infection or unwanted pregnancy.



Long-term effects

- Gunja can make you very lazy. You can stop looking after yourself.
- You forget things.
- Gunja puts pressure on families. It can cost a lot of money.
- Some people feel they have to be stoned all the time and can't live without it.
- 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.
- It can also cause respiratory problems like chest infections or other health problems like cancers.

