



# Cannabis / Tarutaru

Adapted from [www.getselfhelp.co.uk](http://www.getselfhelp.co.uk) and [www.pothelp.org.nz](http://www.pothelp.org.nz)

This resource is for people wanting to understand and thinking about changing their cannabis/tarutaru use. It includes information on resources and support available.

While cannabis is currently illegal in New Zealand, it is occasionally or regularly used by many people. They might use it to be social and have fun or cope with problems. For whatever reason, cannabis use has some potential risks.

If you want to reduce or stop using cannabis, you don't have to do this alone. Seeking support from your whānau, friends, GP or health professional can help you get through. If you feel overwhelmed and want some support, call **0800 787 797**, text **8681**, or check out options at the end of this document.

## When cannabis can be a concern

When people experience three or more of the following signs over a 12-month period, it generally indicates cannabis use is an issue.

- › Unable to stop or cut down when they want to.
- › Need more or stronger cannabis to get the same effects (tolerance).
- › More cannabis used or more often than was intended.
- › Increased time spent getting, using, and recovering from cannabis use.
- › Cannabis chosen over important activities, like time with whānau, work/mahi or study.
- › After no use for a while, feeling restless/tou pīwakawaka, irritable/āritarita, anxious/manawāpa, and experiencing sleep disturbance, nightmares, loss of appetite, sweating, or an upset stomach.
- › Continued cannabis use despite knowing it is causing problems.

If you are worried about the effects of cannabis on you or your work, money, friends and whānau, check out <https://thelevel.org.nz/>

## Making a change

When thinking about making changes, consider the good things and not so good things about using, reducing, or stopping cannabis use.

- › Write down the reasons why you want to reduce or stop and keep this with you.
- › Set goals for what you want to achieve. Do you want to stop or reduce how much or how often you use cannabis?
- › Record how often and how much you use and spend on cannabis each week.
- › Let whānau and friends know your plans to change and why this is important to you.

## Safer cannabis use

Find suggestions for safer cannabis use at <https://thelevel.org.nz/>. These include knowing your limit, not mixing cannabis with other substances, including tobacco, and having regular days off.

## What you can do to cut down or stop using cannabis

### Identify triggers and situations where use is more likely

People are triggered when they experience an intense emotional or physical reaction to something that makes them want to use cannabis. Triggers are different for everyone and may include stress, being social, or certain places.

### What are your triggers?

- › Certain places, people, smells, or things? Hearing or seeing certain things, like songs or movies related to cannabis or getting stoned?
- › When you feel stressed/tāmitanga, anxious/manawāpa, angry/riri or sad/matapōuri?
- › When you are beating yourself up?
- › When you feel hungry/haikai, thirsty/haiu, tired/ngenge or lonely?
- › At parties or being social?

### Get to know your triggers

- › Identify triggers and high-risk situations where use is more likely.
- › Plan to avoid predictable triggers.
- › Keep a diary of the date and situation of any urges to use or unplanned use. What was happening? What were you thinking or feeling? Use this to understand your patterns of use to avoid further slips.

### Some ideas for social support

- › Seek help from others. Talk with someone you trust, like your whānau, friends, GP or health professional.
- › Connect with friends, whānau or a support person.
- › Avoid social situations where you may be tempted while trying to change.

### Suggestions

- › If you decide to stop, practice saying “No – I don’t use cannabis anymore” or “I am having a break.”
- › Get physically active. Congratulate yourself when you ignore urges or cravings. Set up a reward system and celebrate your success.
- › Talk to others and see what happens.

## Self-care ideas

- › Take up a new hobby or get back into one you previously enjoyed.
- › Attend support groups and spend time with whānau or friends who don't use cannabis or who use cannabis only occasionally.
- › Exercise – swim, dance, walk, jog, or cycle.
- › Use medication as prescribed.
- › Take a course of multivitamins.
- › Avoid using alcohol/waipiro or other substances to replace cannabis.
- › Eat healthy kai, including fresh fruit and vegetables, and drink plenty of water.
- › Put on music not associated with cannabis use.

## Thinking suggestions

- › Imagine yourself successfully stopping or reducing cannabis use.
- › Relax, meditate, use rongōā Māori, or karakia.
- › Take it one hour or day at a time. Do not plan too far ahead.
- › If you use cannabis when you did not plan to, figure out why it happened and learn from it. Do not dwell on it too much.

## Coping with cravings

Remind yourself that cravings only last a few minutes. When you notice thoughts about cannabis, do something else for 5 to 10 minutes to distract yourself.

## Safer cannabis use

Below are suggestions for safer cannabis use.

- › Limit your use, especially if you experience mental health challenges.
- › Only use once or twice a week. Try smaller amounts or cannabis that isn't so strong.
- › Take days or weeks off.
- › Vapourise or eat cannabis instead of smoking it.
- › Spend less time with friends or mates who use cannabis a lot.
- › Avoid mixing cannabis with other substances, especially tobacco and alcohol/waipiro.
- › Make sure you know what you are using. Start low, go slow.

# Further support and information

## Support

- › The Alcohol Drug Helpline provides free and confidential 24-hour phone counselling services.
- › **0800 787 797** or text **8681**
  - › Pasifika Line **0800 787 799**
  - › Māori Line **0800 787 798**
- › Family Drug Support provides support for whānau.
- › **0800 337 877** | [www.fds.org.nz](http://www.fds.org.nz)
- › If you speak Chinese, Korean or Japanese, this page provides information in your language. | <https://www.tepou.co.nz/initiatives/asian-language-resources>

## Information

- › The Level offers practical advice for safer substance use and making changes if wanted | <https://thelevel.org.nz/>
- › Health Navigator offers information, advice and self-help resources for people feeling like their cannabis use is out of control | <https://www.healthnavigator.org.nz/health-a-z/a/addiction/>
- › Te Pou has a booklet for people thinking about stopping or wanting to stop drinking or using substances <https://www.tepou.co.nz/resources/managing-your-own-withdrawal>
- › Addiction 101 by Blueprint is a one-day workshop for everyone designed to increase awareness and reduce the stigma associated with substance use. They offer both online and in person workshops | <https://www.blueprint.co.nz/workshops/9-addiction-101/>
- › Te Hikuwai – Resources for wellbeing provides information on a range of topics from anxiety, depression, cannabis, and alcohol to sleep, stress, relaxation, and wellbeing. | <https://www.tepou.co.nz/tehikuwai>

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***Iti nei, iti nei***

***Take smalls steps to achieve your goals***

