

“I feel like I've hit the bottom and have no idea what to do.”: Supportive social networking on Reddit for individuals with a desire to quit cannabis use

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ABSTRACT

Background: Online communities can provide social support to those in need and can foster personal empowerment for individuals experiencing distress. This study examines the content of a Reddit community dedicated to the support of people trying to quit using cannabis, in order to develop an understanding of the type of social networking occurring on this subreddit (e.g. community). *Methods:* A total of 100 Reddit posts and their replies (i.e. comments) were collected from the subreddit on June 12, 2015. Posts were qualitatively coded for expression of DSM-5 symptoms of cannabis use disorder (CUD) as well as other prominently featured themes. Comments on posts where individuals were seeking support/advice were also coded. *Results:* 91 people posted the 100 Reddit posts, and of those 35 (38%) people described enough symptoms to be classified as mild disorder severity, 15 (16%) moderate and 11 (12%) severe, as outlined in the diagnostic criteria for CUD. Over half of posts ($n = 51$) were seeking advice and/or support from members of the community. There were 174 comments made by 108 unique people on the advice/support seeking posts. Most were supportive/encouraging in nature (140, 80%) and gave advice to the post author (126, 72%). *Conclusions:* This exploratory research highlights the potential of online communities as tools for individuals coping with addiction recovery, and future research should investigate if involvement in such communities would be a beneficial supplement to more traditional recovery practices.

Keywords: [Cannabis abuse](#), [social media](#), [cannabis smoking](#)

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