

CASE STUDY

Collaborating to recognise and address depression in cannabis users

Kyle's story

Kyle is 19 years old and lives with his parents (Phillip and Elaine) in Muswellbrook, an outer regional town in New South Wales. He has two older sisters, Philippa (21) who studies law in Sydney and Megan (25) a nurse who works near their family home.

Both Phillip and Elaine work long hours on their farm and it has always been their expectation that Kyle will join them and eventually take over the business. Phillip has a fairly tough demeanour and Elaine is quite the opposite, quiet, gentle and very subservient to her husband. Elaine left school when she was 16, to work in the local supermarket and she is not a confident person.

At the end of a long day on the farm Phillip likes to sit and drink beer until he falls asleep in his recliner.

From the age of 12 Kyle was actively involved in local cricket and football and quite popular amongst his friends. At a party when he was 16 he first tried marijuana. At first he smoked on weekends with his mates but when he started year 11, feeling stressed by the demands of his schoolwork he started smoking pot after his study each night to help him sleep. He would generally smoke about a quarter (7 grams) a fortnight on his own.

During year 12 his smoking increased in the evenings and amounted to a quarter a week. He

was smoking and drinking pretty heavily on the weekends, often to the point where he would pass out at a friend's place.

Despite his heavy smoking and drinking, he completed and passed year 12, although he did not receive high marks like his sisters.

When he finished high school Kyle was very unsure of what he wanted to do. During year 11 and 12 he thought about a career in accounting or marketing but didn't receive high enough grades to study either at University. He was not keen to work on the farm, much to his father's disappointment.

All Kyle's close mates got into University and have moved to the city to start their courses. Still unsure of what he wants to do, he decided to have a gap year.

There is a caravan on the property that is a good distance from the main house. It has been "his space" since he was 15. And now that there are fewer parties he is spending a lot of time on his own out there – playing music and smoking. He still sleeps in the house during the week, but often on the weekends he only comes inside to eat.

Phillip has told Kyle that if he is not going to University he is expected to do some work on the farm, tagging sheep, bailing hay and other seasonal jobs. His father pays him \$20 an hour and generally Kyle manages to do enough to

cover his basic expenses. Lately Phillip has been insisting that he also attend the local Rural Fire Service meetings with him. Kyle isn't keen because his dad's best mate goes to the meetings and he's the local cop. Kyle is paranoid that he will work out he is smoking pot.

Phillip has to wake Kyle most mornings and he goes back to sleep when his father leaves the house. They then end up arguing when his father returns at lunch time and Kyle is either still in bed or hasn't done any work. *"What is wrong with you Kyle, you are just getting so lazy"*. Kyle's response is usually that he is still exhausted from his year 12 studies or he doesn't feel well. He also tells his father he is busy applying for work, although this isn't true.

Kyle's mood has become quite low recently and he is very grumpy towards his parents, especially his father. He is sick and tired of his father nagging him about finding work. They seem to be constantly arguing.

Exasperated at the end of a recent fight, Phillip delivered an ultimatum . . . *"school finished eight months ago, you can't possibly still be tired from studying. Your mother and I have had enough of you moping about. Get to the GP to sort yourself out or move out."*