

Cannabis, Cardigans & Contemplating World Peace

Teaching Friends About the Endocannabinoid System

By Rosezett Land

“Hey ladies, how are you all doing? I’m here to answer your questions about using cannabis and CBD as alternative medicine. So, what are your questions?”

That’s how my morning started, seated at the kitchen table with my new friends, Ms. Jenkins and Ms. Lori. Names have been embellished to save any...nosiness from the “Church ladies.” Coffee cups steaming, cardigans buttoned just right, and curiosity quietly winning over decades of cannabis stigma.

Ms. Jenkins leaned forward first.

“Well...how can I use it for sleep? The minute my head hits the pillow, I’m contemplating world peace. Borders. Wars. Why people don’t use coasters.”

A familiar problem.

“If you had to choose,” I asked, “would you prefer smoking, a drink, or an edible?”

She paused.

“I like gummies, but I like drinks better. I used to have a glass of wine before bed, but now I get heartburn, and regret.”

Ms. Lori nodded.

“And wine makes me text people from high school.”

A Different Kind of Nightcap

Before recommending anything, we talked fear. Not fear of getting arrested; fear of losing control.

“No one’s trying to get you ‘high-high,’” I reassured them. “We’re talking about helping your body do what it already knows how to do.”

That’s when I introduced them to the unsung hero of cannabis wellness: the **endocannabinoid system**.

Your Body's Built-In Balance System

The endocannabinoid system (ECS) is a network of receptors found throughout the brain and body. Its job is maintaining balance; also known as *homeostasis*. It helps regulate sleep, mood, pain, appetite, memory, and inflammation.

Our bodies naturally produce cannabinoids, called *endocannabinoids*, that interact with two primary receptors: **CB1**, mostly in the brain and nervous system, and **CB2**, primarily in the immune system.

“When we use cannabis,” I explained, “plant-based cannabinoids like THC and CBD support this system, like reminding your body how to calm down.”

Ms. Jenkins blinked.

“So I’ve been doing cannabis this whole time?”

Not exactly, but close enough to make her smile.

THC vs. CBD (Senior Edition)

For older adults, cannabis education is less about chasing a high and more about precision.

- **CBD** is non-intoxicating and commonly used for anxiety, inflammation, and sleep support.
- **THC**, in low doses, can be effective for sleep and pain, especially when combined with CBD.

“For sleep,” I told Ms. Jenkins, “A low-dose cannabis beverage, around 2 to 5 milligrams of THC, balanced with CBD, can quiet racing thoughts without heartburn or hangovers.”

She smiled.

“So I can sleep *and* not rethink my entire life?”

Exactly.

Why Seniors Are Turning to Cannabis

More older adults are exploring cannabis as an alternative to alcohol and certain sleep medications. Compared to wine, cannabis may reduce inflammation, avoid gastrointestinal discomfort, and support deeper rest, when used responsibly.

That responsibility matters.

Before anyone headed to a dispensary, I shared the rules:

1. **Start low and go slow**
2. **Edibles take time**, wait at least an hour
3. **Avoid mixing with alcohol**
4. **Choose lab-tested products**
5. **Talk to your doctor**, especially if taking other medications

Ms. Jenkins raised her mug.

“Well, I’ll drink to that, just not wine.”

Education Is the Real High

By the end of our conversation, fear had been replaced with confidence. Cannabis wasn’t rebellion, it was information.

For women who grew up during “Just Say No,” learning how cannabis works can feel revolutionary. Not because it’s radical, but because it’s empowering.

As I gathered my things, Ms. Lori smiled.

“If this works, I’ll finally stop solving global crises at 2 a.m.”

I told her world peace could wait until after breakfast.

Sources

- National Institutes of Health – Endocannabinoid System
- Harvard Health Publishing – Cannabidiol (CBD)
- Project CBD – Cannabis & Sleep
- Mayo Clinic – Medical Cannabis