

My name is Curtis Perea and I am a Christian, a husband, a father, and a podcast producer. Prior to my current focus as a podcast producer and content creator, I worked as a teaching pastor and music/worship director. In my journey of becoming a kinder and more loving human, prior hurts and traumas forgotten were unearthed. They had to come back up so I could begin to heal and learn from those experiences. Unfortunately, with complex post-traumatic stress disorder, thoughts and emotions do not easily submit to self-control. Prayer and meditation were impossible for me as I was unable to control my racing thoughts. I honestly believe that I am alive today because of the love of Jesus. He made a way for me to forgive the ones who hurt me and gave me eyes to see how He has redeemed even the ugliest parts of my life and experiences. I am alive because God sustains my life and because He created a plant that can help quiet the racing thoughts. Cannabis helps switch my perspective to a 10,000-foot view over my situation instead of feeling as though I am buried 10,000 feet deep.

The anxiety I experience runs deep. My son, Silas, is twelve years old. Being on the Autism spectrum and non-verbal, communication is difficult. I can see his frustrations grow as his wants and needs expand. Watching stress and anxiety build in your child who cannot tell you why or what they are experiencing is difficult as you imagine yourself in their shoes. He has mood swings, much as any twelve-year-old boy would, though his often come with great aggression, self-injurious behavior, and reckless abandon. We must protect him from throwing himself into walls and windows as well as keep him from hitting himself, and banging his head on the floor, table, chair, or his own knee. He will bring his knee up as hard as he can while swinging his head down without regard to the consequences. It is extremely hard to watch. These episodes can last from 5 minutes to off and on the whole day.

Silas started receiving ABA (applied behavioral analysis) therapy shortly after his diagnosis at two years of age. More recently he underwent an intensive behavioral intervention program at Cincinnati Children's Hospital to specifically address his self-injurious behaviors and create a plan to help reduce the occurrence and severity of these events. While these behavioral therapies are valuable and have helped provide us with tools and means to address the behaviors, they have not been effective in eliminating them, and we continue to look for new treatments that can help improve Silas' quality of life and reduce his anxiety and frustration.

I have found whole plant medicine, CBD, THC, together with the terpenes and other cannabinoids to be extremely helpful, even lifesaving in some of the darker times. I do not know what results cannabis would have for my son. Getting him to take any medicine has been extremely challenging, even his antibiotics have had to be administered via injection and we cannot disguise the taste of most medications well enough for him to ingest them. However, I would like permission to try this holistic approach. I do not want my child to be less active or energetic and I would never keep giving him something that dulled his smile or changed his character. I suspect that cannabis could be the thing that helps my son calm down when the aggressive episodes of frustrations and anxieties flare up. If a couple of drops of cannabis oil could give my son a better experience and quality of life, then it's something I must pursue. I would love to stay in Ohio for the opportunity. Thank you.