



National Council on Substance Abuse

Matters Of Substance

Minister of Home Affairs, Information and Public Affairs Pleased With NCSA Efforts

The National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA) has been charged with reaching out to more community-based organizations to spread the message about Substance Abuse, and how it affects young people.

This from the Hon. Wilfred Abrahams, as he made his inaugural tour of the NCSA office at the Corner 1st Ave Belleville & Pine Road, St. Michael, where he met with staff for the first time in his capacity as Minister of Home Affairs, Information and Public Affairs.

Accompanied by Permanent Secretary Deborah Payne and Director of Public Affairs, Pat Parris, the Minister highlighted the need for the NCSA to continue to tell “their story”, and to get more young people to be advocates. He said he was pleased with the efforts of the Council, and its intervention on behalf of those who abuse legal and illegal substances, he also had high praise for the Counselling programme.

The Minister added that with more visibility locally, regionally and internationally the council may be able to attract the much needed funding for its projects and programmes going forward, reducing the strain of government injected funding.

Permanent Secretary Ms. Deborah Payne who pledged the commitment of the Ministry in ensuring that the work continues. The delegation got a firsthand view of the peripherals and equipment used by the council in their everyday work with the schools and the community. The Minister was also presented with a copy of the National Primary School Survey 2020 by Deputy Manager Troy Wickham.



The minister receiving a copy of the National Primary School Survey 2020 from Deputy Manager Troy Wickham

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By : Mrs. Laura Foster, NCSA Research Assistant

On July 15, 2020, the National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA) hosted a virtual meeting to disseminate the key findings from the 2017 and 2018 Barbados Drug Information Network (BARDIN) reports. The use of a virtual platform marked the start of a new era for research dissemination at the NCSA, propelled by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

This approach allowed the Council to broaden its audience, sharing the findings with both our local stakeholders as well as representatives from regional drug councils and various international bodies, including the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

The findings were presented by the Council's Research and Information Officer, Dr. Jonathan Yearwood, and Research Assistant, Mrs. Laura Foster. Other speakers included: the then Minister of Home Affairs, Mr. Edmund Hinkson, M.P.; Chairman of the Board, Mr. Hadford Howell; and Deputy Manager, Mr. Troy Wickham.

Key Findings

The 2017 and 2018 reports were the first to be compiled since the introduction of standardized data collection forms and Memoranda of Understanding between the NCSA and contributing agencies in 2019. They were also the first reports to include data from the Financial Intelligence Unit and NCSA's counselling programme.

Both reports show that the local drug situation continues

Key Findings From The 2017 & 2018 Barbados Drug Information Network Reports

to be primarily characterized by marijuana, cocaine (crack and powdered) and alcohol. However, this appears to be slowly diversifying as the data indicated that a small number of persons sought treatment for ecstasy while police seized both ecstasy and methamphetamine during the period under review. The latter is particularly noteworthy as the 2017 and 2018 reports are the first to show police seizures of methamphetamine.

Previous BARDIN reports have also suggested the slow diversification of the drug situation with sporadic cases of persons seeking treatment for substances such as opioids, amphetamines and crystal meth.

Males continue to dominate the drug scene, outnumbering females in terms of substance abuse treatment admissions as well as drug-related arrests and incarcerations during 2017 and 2018. With respect to age, the data shows that marijuana is more problematic among persons under the age of 40, while alcohol and crack cocaine are having a greater impact on older persons.

Marijuana continues to be the drug capturing the attention of local law enforcement officials accounting for the majority of arrests and incarcerations. 'Possession of Cannabis' was the most common drug-related offence recorded by the Royal Barbados Police Force during both years, a trend which has endured since the publication of the first BARDIN report. This corresponds with the fact that drug possession was the most common offence for which persons were imprisoned at HMP Dodds.

Overall, the findings from the 2017 and 2018 BARDIN reports generally coincide with those of the previous reports (2011-2016).

Next Steps

The NCSA is looking forward to the 2019 BARDIN report. Data collection for that report is currently underway and the Council is aiming to release its findings during the first quarter of 2020.

NCSA Getting Back To Tree Planting Programme



The National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA) is getting ready to restart its tree planting programme, which was suspended as a result of Covid19.

Schools in the parishes of St. Lucy and St. Peter have so far benefited from the 12-month tree planting programme, which is an initiative of NCSA, in collaboration with the National Conservation Commission (NCC) and the Kiwanis Club of Barbados South.

This programme is part of the NCSA's contribution to "One Million Trees for 2020", a project that Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley launched last year. NCSA has been hailed for "leaving its mark" at schools, as we donate and plant fruit trees across the island.

At All Saints Primary, Head Teacher Mr. Keith Headley said, "This initiative is really appreciated as the children will get a better appreciation of how not only to plant, but more so how to care for these trees and the benefit to the environment."

Similar sentiments were shared from the head of the St. Lucy Secondary School who said it was a historic occasion. Speaking to students after the planting of a mango tree, he said, As you go on through school we want you to pay attention to this tree, this is a landmark and we hope that you will remember it for a very long time, and in the next ten years, you can bring your children and say, I remember when the NCSA came and donated this tree and I was instrumental in watering and making sure it bears fruits," he said.

"He also took the opportunity to laud the Council on its fight against substance abuse in Barbados, and he warned the students to not be intimidated by their peers or by anyone wanting them to try any form of drugs that will rep havoc on their lives.



Fire, Stress & Drugs



By : Mrs. Wendy Greenidge
Drug Education Officer for Primary Schools

Firefighters are admired by the young and old around the globe. They are the everyday heroes who run in when others run out, putting their lives on the line to rescue and protect lives, communities and the environment. These brave souls, dedicate their lives to serving others.

They undergo continuous training to ensure their skills and responses are at their optimum. Most of us just stand on the perimeter and say “not me! I could never do that”. However, for a moment, put yourself in that position.

How would you cope with the stresses on the job? Would you be able to drop everything at an instant and run to a situation that could drastically change with a shift in wind direction? How would you cope

after facing the trauma of a multi-vehicle collision? What would you do if on your one off day, you received a call to return to work? How would you manage your household, family, friends and health? In times of stress, many of us resort to having a drink of alcohol to help us relax. If we are having trouble sleeping, we may take a pill to help us sleep and then some caffeine to help us stay awake.

The role of a firefighter as with other first responders, demands a clear mind, capable of responding in a systematic manner in order to effectively stand up to the rigours of the job and therefore should not be reliant upon intoxicating substances. On September 2nd & 3rd 2020, at the Barbados Fire Academy, Mrs. Natalia Corbin-Ifill and Mrs. Wendy Greenidge, representatives from the National Council on Substance Abuse, met with the current cohort of recruits for the Barbados Fire Service to conduct awareness training on drugs and stress management.

The drug awareness sessions provided an opportunity for open discussion about drugs and their effects, the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on the drug phenomena from a global perspective and the role that drug use may play in some of the incidents, to which they will be called to respond.

In addition, the legal and social impact of drug use on the workplace was also explored. training provided a perfect backdrop for the application of the stress management techniques as it coincided with a major fire and the recruits were able to demonstrate some of the practical stress relieving techniques that they had just learnt in a real life situation.

Overall, the sessions were beneficial to the Barbados Fire Service and the National Council on Substance Abuse and signals an opportunity for continued collaboration.



Substance Abuse & Stress Management Training Fire Recruits

Art and Writing Contest “A Success”



Winners pose with their prizes



By : Ms. Deanzer Roberts - PR



Nailah Browne 1st place poster category

Nailah Browne, Dionte Francois and Kenola Greenidge all walked away with brand new laptops during the closing ceremony of the Art and Writing “Bee Drug Free” Contest, which was held on Wednesday August 12th 2020 at Prince Cave Hall, District A.

The top three were elated and expressed their joy when they were given a chance to share with the audience their pieces. Browne who won in the poster category showcased her poster, Greenidge relayed her story and Francois his poem.



Kenola Greenidge 1st place story category

Remarks from Deputy Manager (ag) NCSA, Mrs. Makeada Bourne and Minister of Home Affairs, Information and Public Affairs Hon Wilfred Abrahams set the tone for the two-hour event which was also attended by Chairman of the Board of NCSA Mr. Hadford Howell and Manager (ag) NCSA Troy Wickham along with parents, guardians and sponsors.

In his address, Minister of Home Affairs, Information and Public Affairs, Wilfred Abrahams said the competition was conceptualized to “encourage students aged eight to 18 years to think about the prevalence and availability of drugs and alcohol, as well as the mental and physical effects that substance abuse can have on an individual’s life.”

He further said “it was designed to benefit the youth as the ongoing pandemic has restricted the traditional avenues for social engagement, thus underscoring the need for more diverse methods of keeping the brains of our young people gainfully employed.”

He commended all who submitted entries in each category, making the art competition an overwhelming success.

He urged participants going forward to avoid drug use and encouraged parents as well as teachers “to continue to support our youth by providing early education regarding the dangers of drug abuse and the harms of addiction.”



Dionte Francois 1st place poetry category

Head At The Edna Nicholls Centre Pleased With Partnership with NCSA

It seems not enough to call what the Edna Nicholls Centre, has with the National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA) just a partnership. In fact, Principal of the Edna Nicholls Centre, Debra Hewitt has declared that it has expanded to be more reciprocal in nature.

She said the partnership between them and NCSA is as old as the center itself—twenty years and counting.

Mrs. Hewitt who was at the time addressing a drug education training workshop for her staff which was facilitated by NCSA, stated that, “The NCSA provides training for ENC’s staff to make us aware of new and emerging trends, and keep our counsellors on the cutting edge of counseling as it relates to drug use.

The session addressed the difference between decriminal-



ization and legalization of marijuana and medical marijuana versus recreational marijuana.

Her concern is that students are also hearing these issues and as such counsellors they must be prepared to effectively engage them when questions arise.

According to Ms. Hewitt, statistics have indicated that one in every five students who register in the programme, in almost any given year, tested positive for marijuana with levels ranging from as low as 25 ng/ml (proof of use) to as high as 2996 ng/ml.

“On record are three positive results of cocaine,” she disclosed.

Organizer of the one-day training Mrs. Makeada Bourne, NCSA Community Programme Officer, said it is important

that the counsellors and all staff are equipped with information on how to identify new drugs and also the signs and symptoms of drug abuse. (PR)



**Staff at Edna Nicholls Centre
with their certificate of
participation.
Mrs. Hewitt is second from
left in back row**

Who's in the house right now?

Project SOFT is the house right now!



By: Mosiah Hoyte Camp Director

If you were not privileged to be a part of the jubilation, you missed out.

If you haven't repeated this chant or heard it reverberating throughout the Eastern Bible College Camp site from August 24th- 28th, 2020...then you definitely missed out.

No worries, Project Soft 2020 is not over, we've only just begun! Amidst the ongoing global pandemic the start of Project Safeguarding Our Future Today (SOFT) began with the Camp SOFT component. The camp's usual residential format was placed on hold for this year but not even COVID-19 could stop the impact through the day release replacement.

Our aim was in focus: to increase the protective factors of 11year old stu-

dents transitioning from primary school to secondary school in order to prevent or delay the onset of drug use or abuse. The CAMP SOFT team was ready. Ready to mold and empower forty-one eager participants under the theme "Better Knowledge for Better Care".

This year the team consisted of fourteen staff members: Coordinator, Director, House Mother, Camp Counsellors, Security officers, caterers and seven external facilitators.

Engagement with campers had to be intentional as every moment counted. How could all of the information shared in a one week residential camp be shared in half that time? The answer? With careful planning and intentionality.

With the mandate in mind, the camp staff intentionally empowered the young, developing and still impressionable minds with life skills and healthy alternatives to drug use.

Campers learnt about the changes their bodies go through. They found out how to deal with bullies they may encounter. Developing and maintaining a positive self esteem, good communication and even tips and tricks on how to manage anger were just some of the concepts covered over the weeklong camp.

The strong emphasis on drug educa-

tion and drug refusal skills was facilitated by Counsellor, Mrs. Natalia Corbin and Community Programme Officer, Mrs. Makeada Bourne. Campers were also given practical examples of healthy alternatives to drug use such as sports and the creative arts namely, drama, dance and visual arts.

Thanks to the Council, our valued sponsors, the Camp SOFT team, parents and campers. There is consensus that this year's camp was a success.

At the final debrief of the camp staff, there is no denying that the residential component continues to be favoured. It is firmly believed that having campers within the same space for one week allows for us to be able to build greater rapport, share more knowledge and empower campers with even more skills.

Project SOFT continues throughout the year with the Prevention First clubs where both campers and parents participate in a yearlong supportive, follow-up network. This allows reinforcement of skills and concepts introduced during Camp SOFT for children while keeping parents up-to-date with trends and strategies to support their young adolescents.

Stay tuned!

Project Safeguarding Our Future Today (SOFT) 2020 Graduation

A morning of grand style is how we can describe the closing ceremony of the 18th Project SOFT graduation, which was held in the Prince Cave Hall, District A Police Station,

Minister of Home Affairs, Information and Public Affairs Hon Wilfred Abrahams M.P, Chairman and members of the Board of the NCSA, Manager, staff and volunteers of the NCSA, parents and guardians along with sponsors all descended on the Hall in their numbers for the 10:30am ceremony.

Compelling welcome remarks were delivered by Dr. Jonathan Yearwood, Deputy Manager, Ag. while the Honourable Wilfred Abrahams, M.P. delivered the feature address and an inspirational and passionate talk to the graduates.

Past Project SOFT campers, Kodi Best, Nerys Thorpe and Aliya Trotman skillfully played the national anthem while Tyreed Greenidge and Aliya Trotman rendered a wonderful instrumental presentation of Hercules; 'Go the Distance'.

The programme also included testimonies from Emari Browne a past camper and Ms. Susan Browne, past camp parent. The ceremony climaxed with the presentation of certificates and prizes.

Yellow Champions led by Ms. Rashida Maynard emerged the overall winners with 4,930 points while Purple Scorpions led by Constable Rasheed Drakes followed with 4,610. Third position was Green Warriors with 3,810 led by Mr. Myles Smith and in fourth position, Blue Tigers with 3,010 led by Mrs. Sherry-Anne Inniss-Clarke.

The most improved campers were Elijah Wickham and Rebecca Binks while Jamar Bradshaw captured the prize for the most helpful camper and Ki-Anna Pilgrim-Small was awarded for team spirit.



Emerging from their peers as Top Boy and Top Girl were Quinlan Parris and Marissa Lowe respectively. Runner up **Top Boy was captured by Elijah Shepherd** while **Ki-Anna Pilgrim-Small** was the Runner Top Girl.

The programme has not concluded with this graduation, but the parents, guardians and graduates will participate in the follow-up Programme Prevention First Club. This will allow for information and skills taught at the camp to be reinforced and further developed.



By: Mrs. Makeada Bourne
Community Programme Officer

Thank you!

The National Council on Substance Abuse wishes to thank the following sponsors for partnering with our PROJECT S.O.F.T. 2020



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- ◇ West India Biscuit Company Ltd. (WIBISCO)

Covid, Health & Substance Abuse



Diabetes and Covid 19
By: Ms. Trudy N. Griffith
President, Diabetes Association of Barbados



When the news first broke of the novel coronavirus infecting persons and causing serious illness, it was an unprecedented time in our world's history. As we were glued to our televisions and radios, the news emerged that there were particular persons who had increased susceptibility for the more serious forms of the illness and would more likely experience adverse outcomes. It includes persons with cardiovascular disease, hypertension, elderly persons and persons with uncontrolled diabetes.

COVID-19 brought to the fore a new appreciation for the frailty of life and the risks attendant to having an uncontrolled non-communicable disease. There has never been a more compelling reason to take your health seriously. These current times require all of us to follow and implement recommended precautions to reduce the risk of contracting the virus.

The following recommendations are intended to serve as a guide as we forge new paths to reduce our personal and collective risk:

Set yourself up for success with diabetes management

Take care with your diet and eat healthy foods in recommended portions. Find time to exercise and take care of your body. Measure your blood sugars and take appropriate action as needed. Take medications in accordance with the instructions provided by your physician. Make contact with your health care team if any problems arise. Seek medical attention when necessary. Seek help from family members, loved ones or health professionals if you feel overwhelmed.

Establish and maintain strict personal hygiene

Sanitise hands with soap and water or with alcohol based hand rub as per current guidelines. Avoid touching your face if your hands are unclean. Cough or sneeze into your elbow or use a disposable tissue which must be disposed of immediately after use.

Minimise physical interaction with others

Minimise contact with individuals outside your household. Purchase sufficient food, supplies, and medication to minimise the number of times you have to leave home; get them delivered if you can.

Minimise risk when out in public

Maintain a distance of at least 2 metres / 6 feet from others. Wear a mask or face covering to cover both your nose and mouth. Adjust schedule to avoid busy times in public places. Take advantage of dedicated shopping times for vulnerable individuals if available.

Make work as safe as possible

Work from home if you can or if your employer allows. In work settings, maintain the recommended distance from work colleagues and customers. We have seen the impact of following such guidelines as Barbados has been heralded as having successfully contained the novel coronavirus on our shores.



Your Pharmacist - Vital Yet Overlooked

By: Mrs. Marina Thompson

President of The Barbados Pharmacy Council

The pharmacist is the one member of the healthcare team that is often overlooked, yet we play a vital role in the delivery of healthcare to any population. I wonder if it is because we do our job seemingly without much fuss, quietly, yet confidently.

In the midst of Barbados' response to the current Covid 19 pandemic, pharmacy and by extension the pharmacist was there, up front and center. Pharmacists stepped up to the plate, due to ease of access, they were sometimes the only member of the team that the public could reach.

The pharmacy is known as the place to go for advice, and Covid 19 only highlighted the ability of the pharmacist in giving sound, knowledgeable advice. We were able to educate, calm fears, recommend where necessary, reach out to customers physicians to secure their medications, ensure that our stock levels remain adequate, while continuing our normal prescription duties. You may say that is what we do everyday, I say yes, but imagine all of that multiplied several times over.

To say that Covid 19 placed a strain on pharmacists is putting it mildly. As we in Barbados prepared for the inevitable, there was a wild rush of Barbadians to secure supplies deemed necessary for their survival. A trip to the pharmacy was seen as vital, as customers sought to get prescribed medicine, OTC drugs, vitamins etc.

Once the country was placed under lockdown, the pharmacy was one of the few places open for service and we faced long lines on a daily basis. Ensuring that we sanitized, maintained social distance and try to keep safe was integrated into our daily lives.

How we did it, only God knows, as the nature of our existence is to advise, serve sick people, and be a well-informed source for our customers. In the face of the unknown, some of these very customers were likely to be carriers of the dreaded Covid 19.

Yet we could not close up shop, whether we were hospital, polyclinic or community pharmacists, we daily turned up for service while trying to ensure the safety of the pharmacy staff and patrons. What a mammoth task that was.

At the end of each day, it was a tired pharmacist, who made their way home to rest and replenish their energy, only to have a repeat the next day.

Where is your pharmacist, still at work giving of ourselves, our knowledge and our expertise. Quietly going about our day with the confidence you expect of us. Still educating our public of the need to wear masks, sanitize and social distant.

Still providing and sourcing medications our customers, still advising on OTC medications, still giving sound medical advice while acknowledging our limitations. In essence Covid 19 did not derail the pharmacist from their normal duties. It has only served to highlight the importance of the service we provide and it has caused us to implement new methods of accessibility.

The QEH hospital now delivers medication repeats to their customers, many community pharmacies are available to their customers via social media platforms and many have added a delivery system.

We understand the need to remain current, and rise to the occasion. The driving force behind why we do what we do is you, our customer.

The new implementations during Covid 19 was all about ensuring safety while providing service without decreasing the level of accessibility. Let's face it, people need their medicine.

So the next time you visit your pharmacist, think about who we are to you, what we do for you and what would your life be like without us.

Show some appreciation for your pharmacist- a vital but often overlooked part of the healthcare team.

What Is The Barbados Alcohol Industry Association (B.A.I.A) Submitted By BAIA

The recently formed BAIA includes all the major producers and importers of alcoholic beverages in Barbados.

Its stated aims are to promote the responsible consumption of alcohol through advocacy and education; and to collaborate with governmental agencies and civil society to develop programs to reduce the harmful use of alcohol.

As part of its formal establishment, it has adopted a best practice marketing code that promotes the responsible advertising and marketing of alcohol whether in print or digital media.

It covers all activity including sponsorship, sampling packaging and products. It contains comprehensive guidance on the use of social media, and how to protect the underage from exposure to alcohol marketing.

According to the Code, marketing must never:

- 1.Target underage persons, pregnant women or other vulnerable groups
- 2.Promote or glorify drinking or drunkenness
- 3.Associate drinking with driving prowess or violent/aggressive behaviour
- 4.Link alcohol with mental or physical prowess, infer health benefits or cure illness
- 5.Make links to social/athletic/professional success or to sexual activity or success
- 6.Use graphic or gratuitous nudity, overt sexual activity, or sexually lewd or indecent images
- 7.Sponsor activities or materials which primarily appeal to underage persons



Through the pandemic the local industry has increased its messaging surrounding responsible consumption. As a group we have been very clear that: **Drinking alcohol does not protect against Coronavirus.**

We do not recommend that anyone drink alcohol for its potential health benefits and encourage those who choose to drink to do so moderately.

For some people, the better choice may be not to drink at all during this difficult time.

BAIA Members are Armstrong Agencies; Banks Holdings Ltd; Bryden Stokes Ltd; Cockspur rum Inc.; Hanschell Innis Ltd; Massy Distribution Ltd; Mount Gay Distilleries Ltd; R L Seale Ltd; Stansfield Scott Inc.; St. Nicholas Abbey; Trident Wines Inc.; and West Indies Rum Distillery Ltd

We oppose any consumption of alcohol by minors and call on parents and other adults to support us by being good role models and not buying or sharing alcohol with minors. We would advise those working from home to adhere to usual workplace rules regarding drinking alcohol. (B.A.I.A)





Relaxation Without Alcohol

By Mrs. Natalia Ifill Corbin

NCSA Counsellor

As is frequently heard in very recent times, “This isn’t life as usual” or “we are in a new normal” and one such new normal that we were faced with was life without alcoholic beverages.

That for many was a difficult time for some since a beer, a shot of rum, a glass of wine on evenings was a means to unwind and relax. But without do you know you can still relax and unwind?

Here are a few tips to help you do that:

- Engage in a form of exercise you enjoy. This can be indoors, in your backyards, the space in front of the house, or probably a few meters in the lane, block or avenue where you reside. If you have no clue about what kind of exercise to participate in, you can go to Youtube.com and google exercises there. You can also google exercise routines that do not require equipment. Exercise has been proven to release endorphins into our brain creating natural happy feelings within a person.
- Meditation is another approach that you can take to relax and you can also find some of these routines on YouTube.
- If that isn’t for you then reading a good book is another option. If you don’t like to actually read a book you can also check into listening to an audio book.
- Take long baths, by this I am referring to soaking your body in a tub filled with water. You can have a candle light bath using bath oils or bathing salts in while reading a book, listening to music or you can simply soak in the water.
- Then there is listening to music. You listen to your old CDs, cassette tapes, your iPod or you can listen to music on your flash drive or on your mobile phones. There is also free music online or you can create your own music.
- And finally be creative with the arts and craft. Here you can get involved in building things out of wood or other materials. Try painting, writing, dancing. Just enjoy the process rather than trying to be perfect at it.

I hope these few ideas have been useful, as we at the NCSA work with you in helping you through this process.

Alcohol, tobacco, and pharmaceutical drugs are legal, but they can hurt a lot of people.
(Ziggy Marley)

TREATMENT

YouTube: NCSA Barbados