



MATTERS OF SUBSTANCE

National Council on
Substance Abuse

National Council on Substance Abuse Anniversary Newsletter - Our New Year Gift To You

Congratulations! Twenty-five Years of Service



On behalf of the current and past Directors, it is my great privilege and pleasure to convey congratulations to NCSA's Management and Staff on achieving 25 years of service to Barbados' schools, communities and individuals who have in anyway been affected by substance abuse.

Your dedication to preventing, supporting and healing persons so affected is to be commended, appreciated, and financially supported going forward.

Thank you, and best wishes to Team-NCSA members in your all your future endeavours.
Hadford S. Howell MBE JP, Chairman, NCSA (2018-2021)



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NCSA: Making Its Mark In The Community

The National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA) was established as a Statutory Board in May 1995 under the aegis of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Its mandate is based on drug demand reduction in schools and the wider community. The Organisation is managed by a Board of Directors and a team of trained and qualified staff who coordinate and implement specific programmes and projects for various target audiences in Barbados. We believe that substance abuse is a major menace to public health and we aim to be a beacon of hope, strength and empowerment as we encourage children, parents, youth, and older adults to maintain drug-free lifestyles.

The Council's overall programming is predicated on the following: ***A National Prevention System Must Be Grounded at the Community Level; Prevention Efforts Must Encompass the Range of Settings in Which Young People Grow Up; Criminal Justice Agencies and Prevention Organizations Must Collaborate to effectively address the issue of illegal drug use .***



Mrs. Betty Hunte
NCSA Manager

The NCSA has traversed many challenges but has been able to continue to effectively deliver on its mandate, disseminating information across all age groups.

Our primary school-age children benefit from drug refusal and life-skills education through several programmes which were developed in-house and tailored for this specific population. Children also benefit from The Life Education Centre (LEC) which is a highly specialised and interactive program, delivered from a mobile classroom.

Another stellar activity which has made its mark on sponsors, parents and participants alike is Project ***Safe-guarding Our Children Today (Project SOFT)***, which is a transitional programme designed for pupils who are

preparing to enter secondary schools. Since this initiative was launched in 2002, several other organisations have offered similar programmes. This however remains the only one which offers a residential component.

Programming done in secondary schools is holistic as we recognise the multi-faceted nature of the concerns which our adolescents face in trying to cope with the challenge of substance abuse. The Council, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the Erdiston Teachers' Training College, developed a secondary-school Drug Education curriculum which has been delivered at ten(10) schools to date.

In response to the concern raised regarding ensuring that parents are kept abreast with drug education, we have tailored '*Parent Education Workshops*', which combine a range of evidence based parenting components in an interactive family drug education program where parents and children can participate together in a range of drug education activities.

At the community level, our programmes allow officers to interface directly with the

We Continue To Service Barbadians

It is my great privilege, on behalf of current and past Directors of the National Council on Substance Abuse, to congratulate the Management, Staff and Volunteers on reaching twenty-five (25) years of the NCSA's dedicated service to Barbadians. It's Vision Statement *'is to be the authority in Barbados for Drug Abuse Reduction'*.



The NCSA's mandate is to deliver to all Barbadians. The ongoing effort in our schools and communities, aimed at preventing use of illegal drugs and/or the mis-use of over-the-counter substances, together with our research and counselling efforts, are key to having achieved this quarter century's objective. This effort may have gone under the radar, but remains highly commendable.

Drugs daily play a part in our lives in Barbados – from our use of caffeine, nicotine and alcohol, to prescription and over-the-counter drugs, or to more dangerous and illegal substances such as marijuana, cocaine, ecstasy and the new psychoactive substances out there. All drugs impact our bod. They change the way we think, act and feel. The NCSA's 2019 Annual Report stated: ***"It would be agreed that successfully tackling drug-related challenges in Barbados is multi-sectoral and heavily dependent on strong inter-agency collaboration. Fundamental to the success of this collaborative approach is timely access to up-to-date and accurate information from key stakeholders."***

The critical and important work done by the NCSA, through a small but dedicated 19-

member staff compliment, must be encouraged and financially supported, especially with the recent advent of COVID-19 coronavirus.

This disease has brought to the fore additional challenges for our society to face and overcome. We now deal with social restrictions, loss of employment, resulting increased mental health issues, and the realisation that our return to enjoying the 'Barbadian way' of life, may not be possible for a while. So, our society is learning to do things differently, and some new things too. Luckily, NCSA's current Board of Directors have sought to do things differently before the advent of coronavirus. Principles of Commitment, Co-operation, Collaboration, Communication and Creativity have guided us. Setting goals, being task-driven and results-orientated are now standard at NCSA.

Improvements and innovations have been made to internal functions, with upgrades to our administrative and accounting systems being made. High-level training opportunities of staff overseas and locally were supported. Up-to-date research on local substance abuse trends is ongoing. Seven years of accounts (2012-2019) have been audited. Engagement with members of the public and our stakeholders – internationally, regionally and locally in the public and private sectors, and NGOs, occur consistently.

These efforts allow NCSA to grasp what is happening in the worldwide substance abuse arena, allowing NCSA to better help Barbadians affected by substance abuse. Our enhanced visibility in all forms of media (social media included) has enabled greater publicity of NCSA activities. Contributors to NCSA's efforts are welcome.

From Research To Policy To Practice

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ince 2007, The NCSA adopted the model “Research to Policy to Practice” to streamline our approach to program implementation. This model looks at how findings on drug use can be put to practical use in order to develop sound public policies that discourage drug use.

Our main objectives are to present and discuss the findings of recent drug use studies, sensitize those who work in drug prevention and treatment policy to the need to use research-based evidence for the development of sound demand reduction programs, and strengthen the capacity of drug demand reduction practitioners in the field to implement programs for special populations.

Research

Primary School Survey: The NCSA strives to keep apace with local developments in illegal drug use and in this vein, recently conducted a survey among our primary school students to determine the extent of, and factors associated with drug use among that population. The findings are summarized in the following article and the entire report can be accessed at www.ncsa.gov.bb

Barriers to Treatment for Women in Barbados: This piece of research is being finalized and will soon be available for review.

Barbados Drug Information Network (BARDIN) Report: An annual report on the drug situation in Barbados

Policy Development

Over its years of existence, the NCSA has played a critical role in the development of policy regarding drug demand reduction locally, regionally and internationally. The Council, as Barbados’ National Drug Council, actively participates in several meetings and conferences and has provided input on major policy documents, some of which are listed below:-

Locally:

The Barbados National Anti-Drug Plan, The Liquor Licence Act (Barbados), The Medicinal Cannabis Act (Barbados), A New National Re-

habilitation and Reintegration Strategy for the Barbados Prison Service & Draft Chemical Precursor Control Act.

Regionally:

CARICOM Schools’ Drug Policy, CARICOM Regional Drug Demand Reduction Strategy & The CARICOM Regional Commission on Marijuana.

Internationally:

OAS/ CICAD Hemispheric Drug Strategy and Plan of Action, The Multi-Lateral Evaluation Mechanism of the OAS/ CICAD and Cooperation Programme between Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union (COPOLAD) in several areas.

Practice

The NCSA’s programming has grown over the years to reach not only persons who are directly impacted by problematic substance use, but also to incorporate faith-based partners; NGO’s and CBO’s; workplaces. We also partner with various governmental and non-governmental Ministries and agencies in the areas of sponsorship, training, drug prevention and treatment education among others.

In this vein, the NCSA conducted a major piece of research in the primary schools last year. The findings are summarized in the following article and the research can be accessed at www.ncsa.gov.bb.

The National Primary School Survey 2020

The National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA) released the findings from its National Primary School Survey (NPSS) 2020 during a virtual meeting on October 5, 2020. The meeting was attended by a wide cross-section of stakeholders, including: representatives from the education, health and treatment sectors, other government departments, non-governmental organizations and representatives from various regional drug councils and international agencies.



Mrs. Laura Foster
NCSA Research Assistant

Overview of the Survey

The NPSS 2020 investigated drug use and related issues among Class 3 and Class 4 students enrolled at primary schools across Barbados. In addition to the levels of drug use, it examined age of first use, sources and locations of use as well as a number of risk and protective factors commonly associated with drug use.

This survey was the third of its kind to be conducted in Barbados, and its scope was expanded in this round to include new variables, such as: bullying, social media use and videogaming. With regards, to drug use, the survey examined: tobacco cigarettes, alcohol, fanta (wild tobacco), marijuana, inhalants, e-cigarettes, energy drinks and lean (mixture of codeine cough syrup, Sprite and Jolly Rancher candy).

Data was collected between the months of January and February, 2020. During this period, a representative sample of 1958 students, drawn from 50 schools (46 public; 4 private), completed the specially designed self-administered questionnaire. Questionnaire administration took place in a group setting within the classrooms of participating schools. The instrument was read aloud to the students, who were asked to mark their selected responses on the questionnaires provided.

Survey Findings

Overall, drug use at the primary school level is minimal and mainly experimental. Alcohol, energy drinks and inhalants were the substances most commonly used by students; while the use of tobacco cigarettes, fanta, e-cigarettes and lean was markedly lower. Also notable was the students' use of alcohol and energy drink mixtures, whereby approximately 1 in very 10 students had used such a mixture at least once in their lifetime. For all substances, the age of first use was between 7 and 8 years. Family and friends were the most common sources – friends for tobacco cigarettes and fanta; family for alcohol, marijuana and energy drinks. The home was the most common source for inhalants followed closely by the family. Similarly, the home was also the most commonly cited location of use across all substances.

With regards to risk and protective factors, the findings revealed that there is an association between drug use and: student gender and grade level; videogaming; social media use; bullying; curiosity about drug use; ease of access and perception of harm.

View the full report and a copy of the dissemination presentation on www.ncsa.gov.bb

The Barbados Drug Information Network (BARDIN)

 The National Council on Substance Abuse

Key Findings from the Barbados Drug Information Network: 2017 & 2018

Gender Disparity



Males continue to outnumber females in terms of drug-related arrests & admissions to substance abuse treatment centres.

Emerging Drug Trends

While marijuana, alcohol & cocaine (crack & powdered) continue to be the dominant drugs in Barbados, the local drug scene is slowly diversifying to include non-traditional drugs such as ecstasy & methamphetamine.

Marijuana

Marijuana accounts for the majority of drug-related arrests & drug seizures recorded by the Royal Barbados Police Force. Possession of Cannabis is the most common drug-related offense.



#NCSA #BARDIN #LocalDrugSituation #Research

The Barbados Drug Information Network (BARDIN) is one of the mechanisms through which Barbados collects and disseminates information on the local drug situation, including activities in both the drug demand and supply reduction sectors.

The National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA) has been responsible for BARDIN since its inception; and at present, it is coordinated and managed by the Council's Research Department.

The objectives of BARDIN are:

- ⇒ To strengthen the capacity of Barbados to respond to changing drug use trends
- ⇒ To provide current epidemiological and other information on substance abuse
- ⇒ To regularly update this information
- ⇒ To identify trends in drug consumption and offenses related to illicit drugs

⇒ To provide relevant information for the planning, evaluation and management of drug control programmes.

BARDIN reports are prepared and published on an annual basis, covering the period January 1 to December 31 each year.

Reports present data on drug prevention programming as well treatment and interdiction efforts across the island.

View the full report and a copy of the dissemination presentation on www.ncsa.gov.bb

WE GIVE YOU THE FACTS, YOU MAKE THE CHOICE

“The use of synthetic marijuana, such as Spice, Kronic and K2, can cause serious mental health problems, increased heart-rate, vomiting, violent behavior and suicidal thoughts”

The Barbados National Anti-Drug Plan (BNADP)

The Barbados National Anti-Drug Plan (BNADP) 2020 - 2025 is an initiative of the Government of Barbados, implemented through the National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA) with the support of various government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), within the framework of the Inter American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) of the Organization of American States (OAS).

This 5-year strategy underscores the commitment of the Government of Barbados to protect its citizens from the scourge of illegal drugs which negatively impacts the quality of life for society as a whole: communities, families and individuals.

At the same time the anti-drug plan is a tangible demonstration of Barbados' hemispheric obligation to the OAS and its Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM). Its preparation was coordinated by government's lead agency in this area, NCSA, also recognized as

Barbados' National Anti-Drug Commission by the OAS/CICAD. Several key agencies contributed to the Plan.

The changing dynamics in the world drug situation, demands that Barbados utilize a strategic plan which provides an effective, balanced, integrated and evidence-based approach to the drug phenomenon. The Barbados National Anti-Drug Plan (BNADP) proposes a mechanism to coordinate the collaboration of all stakeholders engaged in drug control efforts, and will enable:

- ⇒ The generation of measurable outcomes in both drug prevention and supply reduction efforts
- ⇒ The constructing of evidenced-based interventions
- ⇒ Provision of a factual basis for comparative resource allocation across sectors

The BNADP details the current and potential threats and vulnerabilities which Barbados faces as a result of the illicit importation, use and misuse of drugs (legal and illegal) and provides the overarching

framework for all drug control efforts in the country. The plan is established on the premise that it is only through the strategic cooperation of all agencies in Barbados that these challenges can be effectively confronted.

This five-year strategy encompasses both "Demand Reduction" and "Supply Reduction" through the priority areas of Institutional Strengthening, Demand Reduction, Supply Reduction, Control Measures and International Cooperation. Additionally, owing to the critical importance of research across thematic areas, Monitoring & Evaluation is added as a separate component

Once implemented, the expected impacts are:

- ⇒ Decrease incidence of drug use by 20 percent over next five years.
- ⇒ Increase rehabilitation success rates by 30 percent over next five years.
- ⇒ Establish a comprehensive and integrated research and diagnosis information system (M&E) by 2025.
- ⇒ Fully updated legislation with a system for ongoing review in all areas.

WE GIVE YOU THE FACTS, YOU MAKE THE CHOICE

"There is no safe amount of alcohol when you are driving. Impairment starts with the first sip; so if you are planning to drink, be sure to have a designated driver."

NCSA & Programming Technology Driven

The NCSA is aiming to deliver all Drug Education programmes through the use of technology.

This will help us to diversify the delivery of our mandate through the incorporation and utilisation of technology for drug prevention education and fundraising.

Drug prevention education in Barbados has traditionally been facilitated in classrooms and communities across the island.

The introduction of the Life Education Centre in 2007 provided drug prevention education in a non-traditional setting with access to various media that are not consistently utilised in classroom settings. This mobile classroom allowed us to deliver drug prevention education through a range of age appropriate life-skills activities.

The COVID 19 pandemic has resulted in the closure of schools and restrictions in the number of people permitted to assemble has forced the NCSA to adjust to digital approaches to disseminating its drug prevention messaging in order to ensure maximum effectiveness and efficiencies.

In an era of reduced budgets and limited opportunities for face-to-face delivery methods, if the delivery of the drug prevention message is to be continued, it is essential that the NCSA adapt to the changing environment at a rapid pace. In addition, it is recognised that for small organisations, fundraising is difficult.

This Drug Education Through Technology project therefore aims to transform programme delivery for children and adults, by maximising the outlets available in the modern learning environment. It is also intended that the utilisation of these modes will increase the capacity of the Council towards self-sustaining of its programming function.



The NCSA Officers have benefitted from training in diverse areas of drug prevention education and this will add value as the Council seeks to maximise on this new approach to programme delivery. Just recently we were the recipients of new computers from The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), which will help us to make this project more efficient.

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Let's defeat
breast cancer
together



We Love To Give

C OVID-19 is not the first and is unlikely to be the last pandemic, and while it is rightfully capturing global attention, we should not for a moment drop guard and neglect the other pandemics which are still vibrant within our Nation.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic has impacted and affected the lives of many since the 1980's. Like COVID-19, HIV/AIDS brought with it fear, uncertainty and desperate searches for a cure. Likewise, as is the unfortunate situation for persons living with HIV/AIDS, we can already see the signs that COVID-19 is also attracting stigma and discrimination for those infected and affected by this virus.

The 2020 World AIDS Day theme, "Global solidarity, shared responsibility" speaks not only to policymakers, but also to each of us as individuals.

NCSA has been a long-term participant in the national HIV/AIDS care and prevention effort and throughout the month of November the Board and Staff of the National Council on Substance Abuse in partnership with a local business, united in solidarity to share the responsibility of supporting the efforts of the National HIV/AIDS Food Bank.

The presentation was made to Ms. Stacia Whittaker on December 7th 2020, who graciously received the donation on behalf of the clients.



From left - right : Ms. Stacia Whittaker, HIV Food Bank Manager receiving a food hamper from NCSA's Drug Education Officer Mrs. Wendy Greenidge.



Through the Years



Through the Years





**NCSA Receptionist
emerged winner of The
NCSA's 2020
In- house Independence
Quiz.**

**Congrats to you Cindy
Bennett**

WHERE ARE WE NOW?



We are located at:

**“The Armaira Building”,
Corner of 1st Avenue
and Pine Road,
Belleville,
St. Michael,
Barbados**

**Opening Hours:
8:00am - 4:30pm
(Mon - Fri)
Telephone:
(246) 535-6272**

The NCSA has pursued its goal of capacity building and institutional strengthening over the years through the addition of staff to 18 persons in established posts; and through continuous professional development of its staff.

Several staff members have also successfully completed independent additional academic courses of study.

- ⇒ Staff have represented the national drug prevention effort at high levels at regional and international fora:-
- ⇒ Mrs. Laura Foster, National Coordinating Entity (NCE) for the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism of the OAS/ CICAD;
- ⇒ Mrs. Betty Hunte, Governmental Expert Group (GEG) for the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism of the OAS/ CICAD; Mrs. Wendy Greenidge, Alternate to the GEG;
- ⇒ Mrs. Betty Hunte, Designated Delegate, the Inter-Governmental Working (IWG) of the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM)
- ⇒ Dr. Jonathan Yearwood, Technical Advisory Group, CARICOM
- ⇒ Mrs. Wendy Greenidge, Point person on the International Society for Substance Use Pro-

fessionals (ISSUP) Prevention Education and Certification;

- ⇒ Mrs. Natalia Corbin-Ifill, Master Trainer on the International Society for Substance Use Professionals (ISSUP) Treatment and Rehabilitation and Certification;

More recently, the Council attended the following overseas meetings:

- ⇒ 4TH Annual Conference and Permanent Council of COPOLAD held in Paramaribo, Suriname from June 17th to 19th, 2019.
- ⇒ 20th Meeting of The Demand Reduction Expert Group of the Organisation of American States Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (OAS/ CICAD), August 26th – 29th, 2019 in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia.
- ⇒ 3rd Bi-regional Meeting for the exchange of best practices in Drug Demand Reduction: Accreditation and Quality Assurance, Panama City, 27-28 November, 2019.
- ⇒ 66th Regular Session of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD), Miami, Florida, November 19-21, 2019.
- ⇒ Institutional Co-ordination Meeting “Contribution of COPOLAD to the work of the EU-CELAC Coordination and Cooperation Mechanism on Drugs”, Brussels, Belgium, 19-21 February 2020.



STAY HOME

PROTECT YOUR FAMILY



AS WE GO ON THIS NATIONAL PAUSE, WE WILL CONTINUE TO BE OF SERVICE TO YOU THROUGH THE FOLLOWING NUMBERS:

FOR COUNSELLING SUPPORT, PLEASE CALL [239-0584](tel:239-0584) OR [230-1250](tel:230-1250).

FOR ACCOUNTING QUERIES, PLEASE CALL [234-7115](tel:234-7115).

**AND FOR ADMINISTRATION OR GENERAL ASSISTANCE,
PLEASE CALL [239-0608](tel:239-0608) OR [233-0561](tel:233-0561)**

NCSA REMINDS YOU TO OBSERVE ALL COVID PROTOCOLS AND REMAIN SAFE AS WE ALL DO OUR PART TO GET THROUGH THIS PANDEMIC.