



**Quarterly Newsletter of The National Council
on Substance Abuse**



National Council on
Substance Abuse

MATTERS OF SUBSTANCE

September 2022 - December 2022

Season of Stress?



It's the season that Andy Williams calls, "...the most wonderful time of the year!" Although this may be true for many, there are some who see the yuletide season as the most stressful time of the year. But does it really have to be a season of stress?

End of year targets, end of quarter reports, impromptu meetings and last-minute requests coupled with the traditional "pull down" and "piece back together" of homes, long queues in shopping centres and even longer lines of traffic; definitely create the atmosphere for stress to thrive.

Stress as defined by the World Health Organization (2021) is any type of change that causes physical, emotional or psychological strain. A little stress is good for people to perform and protect themselves. Conversely, too much stress can overwhelm and lead to serious physical, emotional and behavioural symptoms.

Some physical symptoms of stress are migraines, sweating or fatigue. Emotionally, stress may present as worry, loss of motivation or anger while behavioural symptoms may include restlessness, disrupted sleep and substance use. Yes, stress that is not managed can lead to substance abuse. According to Heshmat (2017) the strong linkage between stress and addiction is the self-medication theory, which suggests that the person may use drugs to cope with tension associated with life stressors

Stress management techniques then, should be used consistently to build habitual acts to cope with stress. Here are four tips that may be helpful to you:

Prioritize your responsibilities. Take some time to list your tasks and then tackle the small tasks first. When you achieve wins with your small tasks, there is sense of accomplishment that motivates you to tackle larger task.

Sleep! Adequate rest is important in the management of stress. It allows the mind and body to relax, repair and become refreshed. Be sure to get your 8 hours of adequate rest as often as possible each week.

Spend some time with you! When family or work life gets busy, personal time is always moved to the bottom of the list. Maybe you've heard the quote, 'you can't pour from an empty cup'. It's true. Fill your 'cup' daily with time to relax and engage in healthy, fun activities without interruption.

Talk! The intent may not be to find a solution but the feeling of talking about your stressors can release tension and negative thoughts. Your friends, loved ones or a therapist can be your listening ears.

Which ones will you challenge yourself or a loved one to try this yuletide season?

Submitted by:

Mr. Mosiah Hoyte ~ NCSA Counsellor



Alcohol & The Brain

The National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA) continues to make its way across the highways and country lanes of Barbados, advocating to both young, middle-aged and elderly citizens on the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles with the aim “to prevent substance use by maintaining healthy nutrition and lifestyles throughout the life cycle”.

The second NCSA Showcase engaged one hundred and thirty-three (133) clients on November 10th, 2022 and one hundred and seventeen (117) clients respectively on November 11th, 2022 (Remembrance Day), whilst they accessed services onsite at the Eunice Gibson Polyclinic in Warrens.

Antenatal Clients (18 – 40 years)

Child Health Clients (3 – 35 years)

General Practice Clients (20 – 75+ years)

In an effort to provide an understanding of why you should adopt and maintain a healthy diet and lifestyle, today we will present some facts on the most commonly used chemical substance in Barbados – alcohol and how its use can change normal brain development and function. When consumed, alcohol activates the pleasure or reward centre in the human brain. Initially, it can make a person feel relaxed, excited or happy, but can also make a person have less control over his / her actions. However, alcohol also affects your ability to make informed

decisions and slows down your nervous system.

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS).

A baby’s brain grows and develops throughout pregnancy, and alcohol can interfere with the chemicals necessary for normal brain development. The developing brain of a baby is vulnerable to toxic chemicals and drinking alcohol at any time during pregnancy can impact the developing baby’s brain. Pregnant women should abstain from alcohol since it causes miscarriage, birth defects, still-birth, miscarriage and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum (FAS) disorder.

Alcohol use can affect each person differently based on but not limited to the following:

- ◆ Alcohol type
- ◆ Amount and speed of consumption
- ◆ Amount and type of food eaten
- ◆ Age
- ◆ Sex (male or female)
- ◆ Body type and size
- ◆ Drinking history or past experience
- ◆ Medication taken which may interact with alcohol



The human brain takes approximately twenty-five (25) years to fully develop.

Alcohol is more toxic to teenage brains than those of adults because teenagers’ brains are still developing. Teenagers who drink alcohol are more likely to have smaller brain size compared to those who don’t drink.

Drinking alcohol during the teenage years can change the chemical balance in the brain and may place teenagers to be more “at risk“ for poor decision-making and engaging in risky behaviours.

In conclusion, remember these facts about alcohol:

- ◆ Alcohol impairs alertness, coordination, perception, reasoning, and interacts with “over-the-counter” (OTC) and prescription medication.
- ◆ Alcohol is an intoxicating chemical substance.
- ◆ Alcohol is a mind-altering chemical substance.
- ◆ Alcohol can change normal brain function – thinking and feelings.
- ◆ Alcohol can cause physical harm to the body.
- ◆ Alcohol can be addictive.
- ◆ There is no safe limit for alcohol use.



Submitted by:
Mrs. Paulavette Atkinson
Substance Abuse Prevention Officer

Alcohol Consumption During The Season

We are officially in the Christmas season or what some people refer to as the “silly season”. The holidays are a time of celebration and festivities evidenced by the increase of family gatherings, office get-togethers, and Christmas parties.

Alcoholic beverages are often served at these events, and it is the norm for persons to consume these beverages. However, while most people are usually in a celebratory mood, for many, Christmas could be a stressful and lonely time.

Whether to cope with feelings of despair or to celebrate and wind down, people often tend to do things in excess – plates are piled high with all the Bajan Christmas delicacies, and alcoholic beverages flow in abundance. The effects of alcohol vary from person to person and when consumed in large amounts alcohol affects the mood and cognitive abilities of the user.

As people consume more alcohol, their behaviour becomes less controlled which may result in poor judgement, slow reaction time, lack of co-ordination, loss of inhibition and drunk driving which may result in traffic accidents.

Not everyone decides to use alcoholic beverages, however if you choose to use alcohol, here are a few tips recommended by the health experts to reduce some of the harms associated with drinking alcohol:

- ◆ **Avoid having alcohol as the focus of the event by including some alcohol-free drink like water, juices, sodas. Alcohol-free drinks help counteract the dehydrating effects of alcohol. Also, the other fluids may slow the rate of alcohol absorption into the body and reduce the peak alcohol concentration in the blood.**
- ◆ **Avoid drinking alcohol on an empty stomach. Food can slow the absorption of alcohol and reduce the peak level of alcohol in the body and can also minimize stomach irritation and gastrointestinal distress the following day.**
- ◆ **Plan to get home safely before attending the event. Do not drive or allow yourself to be driven by someone under the influence of alcohol - use designated drivers and taxis.**
- ◆ **To avoid having your drinks spiked. Take beverages only from someone you trust and discard any beverages you have left unattended.**

We at the National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA) encourage you to enjoy the upcoming holiday season responsibly by reducing your alcohol intake and making arrangements ahead of time for a designated driver to get you home safely.

Merry
Christmas



Merry
Christmas

Submitted by:

Ms. Jennifer Baptiste

Substance Abuse Prevention Officer

Project S.O.F.T - 2022

Project Safeguarding Our Future Today (Project SOFT) returned to its residential format in 2022 after two years of it being virtual.

The goal of the camp which is into its 20th year is ***“to increase the protective factors of 11-year-old students transitioning from primary school to secondary school in order to prevent or delay the onset of drug use or abuse.***

The twenty-seven first formers who attended the camp from were exposed to Drug refusal skills, Drug Prevention information such as: Myth or Facts of: Tobacco, Marijuana and Alcohol, Anger Management, Adolescent Development, Being a Positive Influencer, Positive Decision Making, Effective Communication, and Nutrition Health & Wellness.

Constant cheers, chants and laughter filled the air at Eastern Caribbean Bible Camp as campers participated in dancing, drama, singing, art, sports, movie night, talent show and much more.

We want to take this time to say thanks to all our sponsors and supporters of this programme.

Submitted by:
Mrs. Makeada Bourne
Substance Abuse Prevention Officer

Minister Lauds Programme

Minister of Home Affairs and Information, Wilfred Abrahams, wants young people to make the right choices. His comments as he addressed the **Project S.O.F.T (Safeguarding Our Future Today) Camp 2022.**

He told them they must have respect for themselves and focus on their schoolwork, reminding them that life is about choices.



“It is not okay to take illegal drugs; you need to not be afraid to speak up and say ‘No’ to drugs,” he cautioned.

He encouraged them to not be drawn to peer pressure and do the things that they know are wrong.

“Start to make the right choices and start to think not only of now but of your future. You’re at a transitional period; that’s why you are at this camp. You are getting curious about things; you’re feeling yourselves out, and you’re starting to push the boundaries as you transition from preteens to teenagers to adolescents. This is a time when you need to take responsibility for yourself and your actions. You can’t control what anybody else does but what you can control is what you do and the choices you make,” Minister Abrahams advised.

While engaging the children and responding to their questions, he also encouraged them to always be prepared to seize an opportunity when it comes to them.

He encouraged the NCSA to continue with their programmes that will benefit the young people, while pledging his commitment and support to these programmes. (PR/DR)

Rubis Injects Funds Into Project S.O.F.T



(L-R): Mrs. Makeada Bourne Substance Abuse Prevention Officer (NCSA), Ms. Amina Green, Retail Accounts Executive Rubis and Mr. Mosiah Hoyte Counsellor at NCSA.

Safeguarding young children from the dangers of drug and substance abuse is the main objective of a partnership between RUBIS and the National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA), which recently received a contribution of \$4 000 towards its Project SOFT Youth Camp.

Amina Green, Retail Accounts Executive, said the company’s support for Project SOFT Camp, spearheaded by the NCSA, was a key focus of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) mandate in the area of youth and community development.

“Our commitment of safeguarding children, who we see as the future of communities, is a key aspect of RUBIS’ CSR program and Project SOFT fits well within this objective. We always say that our children are the future and so safeguarding the future must begin with protecting these little ones who are among our most vulnerable,” Green said. Makeada Bourne, Substance Abuse Prevention Officer (NCSA), expressed her gratitude to RUBIS noting: “Research conducted by the NCSA revealed that both males and females are using alcohol and other drugs. It is well known that early exposure to drug use is associated with poor outcomes including poor school performance, involvement in crime, and future drug dependence. As such, the NCSA is grateful for our partnership with RUBIS which helped to make Project SOFT 2022 a reality. On behalf of the Board of Directors, Management and staff, I extend a heartfelt thank you.” **PR**



Substance Abuse Affects Families

Drug abuse and drug addiction are usually seen as phenomena that affect the individual

using the drug. This is true, however; not only the individual using the substance will be affected but also the family and by extension the community.

Physically the effects vary by the type of drug and these effects are numerous. Stimulants for example increase activity in the central nervous system which result in increased heart rate, increased breathing, and excited euphoria. Stimulants include substances like cocaine, amphetamine, methamphetamine, caffeine, and nicotine.

Depressants on the other hand decrease the activity of the central nervous system. That is, they decrease heart rate and breathing. Depressants include substances like alcohol, barbiturates, benzodiazepines, and Gamma-Hydroxybutyrate (GHB) and they are sought out for the relaxing effect they produce along with their ability to decrease anxiety, to decrease inhibitions, and to bring on a sense of wellbeing and mild euphoria.

Cannabis is sought out for some of the following desirable effects: relaxation, sedation, exaggerated mood, heightened empathy, changes in sensory and time perception, heightened sensory perception (e.g., brighter colors), laughter, and increased appetite.

However, continuous use of cannabis can lead to decreased cognitive/intellectual functioning; delayed emotional development; problems with short-term memory and learning that can last for days or weeks after last use; suppressed immune function that can lead to increased susceptibility to viral and bacterial infections. Long-term use may also lead to reduced energy and ability to concentrate, reduced desire to work, reduced interest in social or other ac-

tivities. Other long term consequences include respiratory problems such as chronic cough and bronchitis,

Substance abuse affects a family on every level:



damaged lung tissue, increased phlegm production and reduced ability to clear it and frequent respiratory illnesses. At high doses marijuana may make depression worse among others.

In addition to medical problems, addiction can lead to economic consequences. This is particularly seen in the spending habit to acquire the drug.

At this stage of drug use, that is addiction, acquiring the drug is the most important thing in the person's life and he or she may do whatever it takes to get the substance including spending all their money to do such. Sometimes this may result in stealing if they no longer have the funds to do so or to fulfill their responsibilities of life and if caught a legal consequence will occur when charged for stealing. If caught with an illegal substance the person experiences another legal charge. As mentioned earlier substance use lowers inhibitions and decision making skills which makes getting into fights a greater probability. Fighting and injuries can also lead to problems with the law.

Socially, the person with an addiction can lose friends and family members because addiction can lead to strained relationships. Friends or family members who had enough of the person's habit may sever ties with the person. Socially the person with the addiction could be dismissed from recreational/social clubs or even their jobs because of the inability to carry out the expected duties. The experiences of substance abuse affect the family in several

ways.

Family members interacting and looking on at the individual abusing the substance may experience frustration, anger, disappointment, feelings of shame, humiliation, sadness, depression, suicide, other mental health conditions, insomnia and other sleep issues, stress and stress related physical conditions, fear, concern, and feelings of blame. In situations where family members are abusing or are even addicted to substances, and other family members are not in agreement with this behaviour, conflict in the family can occur and family relationships can become disrupted and strained with a breakdown in communication occurring. When persons steal from family members, trust issues occur, and this too impacts the family financially especially if the person who is engaged in substance use is not working. In such cases some family members maybe faced with paying for their habits and other regular expenses.



**Submitted by:
Mrs. Natalia Ifill
Counsellor**

From Our Food Bank To Your Homes

Some say there is no better time for giving than during Christmas, not only to friends and family, but to those in need.

The National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA), know this too well and so we give throughout the year to families that we have met and continue to meet who are experiencing challenges meeting their basic needs.

We give because it gives us a Deep Sense of Satisfaction - When we see the smiles on the faces of those we give to and hear the stories of how they never anticipated anyone to reach out, it gives a sense of satisfaction.

Also the Impact On The Lives Of Those who receive. Being able to provide food items makes good for them on the receiving end to at least have a meal and be able then to not have to work because they have nothing.

There is also that community impact, where we support those local retail places and in doing so give back and assist them as well.

The NCSA will continue with this programme to ensure that we do our part to those individual and families who are in need.

QUOTES ABOUT GIVING

1. "I have found that among its other benefits, giving liberates the soul of the giver". **Maya Angelou**
2. "Always give without remembering and always receive without forgetting". **Brian Tracy**
3. "Giving does not only precede receiving; it is the reason for it. It is in giving that we receive". **Israelmore Ayivor**
4. "It's easier to take than to give. It's nobler to give than to take. The thrill of taking lasts a day. The thrill of giving lasts a lifetime". **Joan Marques**
5. "No one has ever become poor from giving". **Anne Frank**
6. "Happiness doesn't result from what we get, but from what we give". **Ben Carson**



"Giving is a much more important element of happiness than receiving. Being able to give makes us at the NCSA feel like we're making a big impact on someone's life, encouraging us to do more good and uncover a different perspective of happiness."

Staff Assisting With The Packing Of Food Hampers For Distribution!

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Can You Spot The Words?

Good Luck From Santa!

Christmas

Find words that are forward, up and down. No diagonal or backwards words.

1. LIGHTS
 2. SNOWMAN
 3. BELLS
 4. JOYFUL
 5. FRUITCAKE
 6. JESUS
 7. MANGER
 8. PRESENTS
 9. GIVING
 10. FAMILY

11. FRIENDSHIP
 12. BETHLEHEM
 13. CHURCH
 14. SINGING
 15. JINGLEBELLS
 16. THANKFUL
 17. NATIVITY
 18. SANTA
 19. RUDOLPH
 20. CHIMNEY

J G H C
 M M G E
 G G G Z T S
 J D I A J Q
 K S Z V P E U K
 E M U I A B W E
 C H I M N E Y N W S
 G A F T G Q I D S S
 B E T H L E H E M X I J
 W F A M I L Y G R M N Q
 G Z H K E M R I I X R G N Q
 M A N G E R B Z T N C I T M
 C V U I H E J V J V J P N X X N
 U G G D E C F V I W T L G M G F
 U H O Z D H C M K N I H L S F G R F
 Q W P G T T V M A G M A Y N Q C U I
 H N Q R G H L L I F L G N K O D H I H N
 V A J E U R Q M L R E N K P W Y U T I R
 B P T J S J T H M O I B I F V M S R C H K G
 M C I G E H R M U V E E Z U F A Z C A Y O P
 T K M V A N E Y A Z Y N L D L Y N V H K Z I D I
 I R F I A T T C E L E D L U F F I A E E J S Q E
 W T U H T P S A A V I X S S A N T A K J Q H Z E Y B
 E Z D I Y D Q A B Z G Q H S Z Q I W H E F H A K L Z
 Q T T O N S W Y J E D H F I K Q B Y S U S U F E J C G K
 R W X L R U P C O L G T G P G S S Y I D U J T Y Y Z Y M
 P D G S P R S L O E L E S C Z W M F T D F S K W K Y M D F K
 I W J U H O P V I C S V J O Y F U L A G R G S G O Q O L L R M



Merry — Christmas & Happy New Year

May your christmas be
blessed with a lots of
love, fun, peace, joy &
happiness.



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“Armaira Building” Corner 1st Avenue Belleville & Pine Road, St. Michael

Telephone: (246) 535-6272 Email: info@ncsa.org.bb Website: www.ncsa.gov.bb

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