

MATTERS OF SUBSTANCE

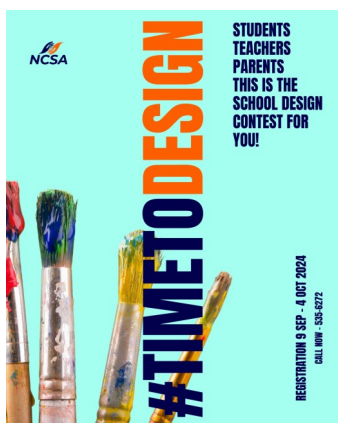
Quarterly Newsletter of the National Council on Substance Abuse

NCSA Launches "Speak, Design, Develop" Contests

Submitted By: Ms. Deanzer Roberts, PR Consultant



Click on the Images Below To Hear The Ads




To Register

Click

Registration is currently open for the National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA)'s "Speak, Design, Develop" Contest, an initiative aimed at engaging youth in discussions about substance abuse prevention and promoting healthy lifestyles.

The contest features two key components: the Voices of the Youth Speech Contest and the Learn Well, Play Well Contest. Both are designed to encourage creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration among students, teachers, and parents across Barbados.

The Voices of the Youth Speech Contest targets 4th and 5th form students, giving them a platform to express their views on substance abuse, its effects on young people, and possible solutions. Participants will deliver speeches aimed at influencing their peers and the wider community to embrace a drug-free lifestyle.

Open to both primary and secondary students, the Learn Well, Play Well Contest encourages schools and communities to participate. Students, teachers, and parents are invited to collaborate on creating powerful, positive messages about healthy living and substance abuse prevention. These messages can be shared in any creative format, from posters to performances, highlighting the community's commitment to fostering healthy habits.

Registration will close in mid-October to allow time for participant and teacher training. The NCSA encourages public involvement in this initiative to support our youth in making informed, healthy choices.



The Twelve Finalists in the "Voices of the Youth Contest" 2024. Click on the Image to Hear From The Winner

Navigating Back to School: Managing Behaviors, Aggression, and Marijuana Use

Submitted By: Ms. Katrina Lewis - Volunteer Counsellor NCSA



As the back-to-school season begins, it impacts everyone—whether you're a parent excited about new uniforms, a commuter facing increased traffic, an educator shaping young minds, or a family member managing daily routines. September often brings both excitement and challenges, including concerns about increased negative behaviors like aggression and marijuana use in children.

Aggression can be understood as hostile actions intended to harm others, while bullying involves threats, verbal attacks, or exclusion. It's crucial to evaluate whether our environments might be promoting such behaviors or if we're providing safe spaces for children to express their emotions.

When children exhibit drastic behavioral changes, it's important to approach these issues with open communication rather than immediate punishment. Acknowledge any significant shifts in their mood or behavior, and make time to talk openly about their feelings. Listening to their concerns—whether big or small—can be more effective than simply offering

advice.

Creating a support network is also essential. Encourage your children to rely on you for emotional support and be willing to seek additional help from family members if needed. As parents, managing your own emotions is equally important. Raising emotionally resilient children requires patience and understanding, which means ensuring you're emotionally prepared to handle challenges yourself.

Each child is unique, and parenting approaches should be adjusted accordingly. Some children may need more structured guidance, while others may benefit from a more empathetic approach. Remember, parenting doesn't come with a handbook, so it's crucial to adapt and find what works best for your family.

Substance use, like marijuana, often arises from underlying issues such as stress or external triggers. Identifying these triggers and addressing them proactively can help mitigate the risk of substance abuse and other negative behaviors.

References

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- Dodge, K. A., & Coie, J. D. (1987). Social-information-processing factors in reactive and proactive aggression in children's peer groups. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 53, 1146-1158.
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The Importance of Programming To The NCSA



The National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA) plays a vital role in shaping the future of our communities by providing impactful programs designed to prevent substance abuse and promote healthy lifestyles. These programs are not just initiatives; they are lifelines that reach into the heart of our society, touching individuals across various age groups and backgrounds.

One of the key areas the programs make a significant impact is in schools.

Through educational initiatives, the NCSA empowers young people with the knowledge and skills they need to make informed decisions. These programs often focus

on building resilience, teaching students about the dangers of substance abuse, and encouraging them to pursue healthy, positive activities. By engaging students early, the NCSA helps to lay a foundation for a drug-free future, reducing the likelihood of substance misuse and its associated consequences.

Beyond the school environment, the NCSA's community-based programs are crucial in fostering a sense of responsibility. They are designed to engage parents, guardians, and community leaders in the fight against substance abuse. Whether through workshops, support groups, or public awareness campaigns, the NCSA's outreach efforts help to build a community that is informed, vigilant, and supportive of those who may be vulnerable to substance use. This community-centric approach ensures that the impact of the NCSA's work extends beyond the individual to create a safer, healthier environment for all.

The NCSA also recognizes that different populations have different needs. As such, our programming is often tailored to address the unique challenges faced by specific groups, such as at-risk youth, recovering addicts, and families affected by substance abuse. By offering support, the NCSA ensures that its programs are not just effective but also inclusive, providing help where it is most needed.

The success of the NCSA's programs is evident in the positive outcomes reported by participants and communities. Reduced rates of substance abuse, improved mental health, and stronger community ties are just a few of the benefits that can be directly linked to the sustained, relevant programme intervention efforts. These programs not only save lives but also enhance the overall quality of life for individuals and families across the nation.

The NCSA's programming is a cornerstone of its mission to create a drug-free society. By addressing the issue of substance abuse through education, community engagement, and targeted interventions, the NCSA's programs are making a lasting difference in the lives of countless individuals. As we continue to support and expand these initiatives, we move closer to a future where every person has the opportunity to live a healthy, substance-free life.



Picture Above: Front L-R: Research and Information Officer Mrs. Laura Foster, Deputy Manager Mr. Troy Wickham, Substance Abuse Prevention Officer Mrs. Paulavette Atkinson, Senior Counsellor Mrs. Natalia Corbin Ifill.

Back: L-R: Research and Information Officer Dr. Jonathan Yearwood, Substance Abuse Prevention Officer Ms. Jennifer Baptiste, Counsellor Mr. Mosiah Hoyte, Information and Technology Officer Mr. Timothy Ifill, Substance Abuse Prevention Officer Mrs. Wendy Greenidge and Substance Abuse Prevention Officer Mrs. Makeada Bourne.

Study On Synthetic Drugs In Four Caribbean Countries

Submitted By: Mrs. Laura Foster, Research and Information Officer NCSA



The National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA) recently concluded the local data collection process for an ongoing rapid assessment study on synthetic drugs in four Caribbean countries. The multi-country study, spearheaded by the Organization of American States (OAS) through its Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD), was designed to explore the issue of synthetic drugs with a specific focus on the trafficking, sale, distribution and use of such substances.

The intention is to provide participating countries with the evidence needed to better understand and respond to their changing drug landscapes. Initially, three countries were slated to participate: Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. However, the study was later expanded to include Guyana.

During the period May through August 2024, the NCSA together with CICAD Data Collection Consultant, Ms. Chantelle Evelyn, oversaw the conduct of interviews and focus groups with a wide cross-section of stakeholders. These included representatives from agencies within the demand reduction and supply control sectors, first responders, social agencies, party promoters and bartenders, current drug users, persons in recovery, adolescents with behavioural problems and adolescents who have been in contact with the law.

Principal Investigator and CICAD Consultant, Dr. Ken-Garfield Douglas will use the information obtained from these interviews, together with the interview data from the other countries and secondary data gathered from existing sources (e.g. research reports, forensic data, traditional and social media articles and posts, etc.) to prepare a multi-country report on the study's

findings. In addition, each participating country, will be required to prepare compendium country reports which will offer a greater focus on their national situation.

To assist countries in this process, CICAD recently hosted a working meeting for the project in Miami, Florida. Over the course of two days, August 20-21, 2024, the group discussed the initial findings, identified possible data gaps and sources of additional data, and agree on plans for the publication and dissemination of the reports. Also discussed, were the countries' experiences in implementing the methodology, their recommendations for future iterations of the study in other jurisdictions, and possible initiatives to address the synthetic drug situation based on the data.

Barbados was represented at the working meeting by Mrs. Laura Foster, NCSA Research and Information Officer, and Ms. Chantelle Evelyn, CICAD Data Collection Consultant.



Attendees of the recent working meeting in
Miami, Florida, August 20-21, 2024



A Fact about Synthetic Drugs

Many synthetic drugs pose serious health risks. For instance, synthetic opioids can cause dangerously low blood pressure and respiratory depression, leading to overdoses. Synthetic cannabinoids have been linked to severe anxiety, confusion, and hallucinations **Source: National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA).**

PARENTS – Essential Stakeholders In Substance Use Prevention

Submitted by: Mrs. Paulavette Atkinson Substance Abuse Prevention Officer



During the summer holidays, parents and guardians were often seen crowding community and church centers, seeking to register their children in various summer camps. As the new school year drew closer, they filled shops, eagerly purchasing school supplies, inspecting uniforms, and ensuring their children

were fully prepared for the term ahead.

This same level of commitment must be applied to substance abuse prevention. With the rise of challenges such as alcohol, vaping, synthetic cannabis, and other harmful substances, parents need to play a pivotal role in safeguarding their children's well-being. The threats posed by these substances are real and present in schools and communities across Barbados, with potential consequences for children's physical, psychological, and social development.

The National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA) is actively addressing these issues by providing evidence-

informed prevention programs designed to educate and empower parents. Through initiatives like the Prevention First Club, STRONG Programme, and Parent/Teacher Association Education, parents receive critical knowledge about drug laws, the effects of both legal and illegal drugs, and intervention strategies. These programs are age-appropriate, culturally relevant, and tailored to Barbados' unique drug prevention needs.

By participating in these programs, parents can better support their children in navigating the pressures of adolescence, making informed decisions, and increasing protective factors at home, school, and in their communities. They also learn where to seek help if their children face substance use issues.

Parents must understand that the values, information, and behaviors shared in the home are the building blocks for shaping their children's attitudes toward substance use. This influence extends beyond academics and plays a crucial role in prevention efforts.

Throughout the rest of the year, the NCSA will continue its mission to strengthen prevention across Barbados. We will engage with a wide array of parents and guardians—from biological and foster parents to legal guardians and caregivers—within both urban and rural communities, reinforcing the essential role they play in substance abuse prevention.

You Can Lean On The NCSA



NATIONAL COUNCIL ON SUBSTANCE ABUSE

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- » Community Outreach
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Get Involved and join us in our mission to create a healthier, substance-free society. Whether you're a student, parent, community leader, or business owner, there's a place for you in our programs. Contact us today to learn more!

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The National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA) is committed to building a healthier, substance-free society.

Our programs target a range of groups, offering support and guidance to individuals, families, and communities. Whether through school-based initiatives, workplace programs, or community outreach, we are here to help.

For more information, feel free to contact us or follow us on social media to stay updated on our latest activities. Remember You Can Lean On The NCSA!

CLICK ON THE IMAGE TO HEAR OUR JINGLE

The Importance of Drug Treatment

Submitted By: Dr. Jonathan, Research and Information Officer NCSA



Research and Information Officer Dr. Jonathan Yearwood attended the Technical Meeting on Drug Treatment Data in Washington DC from August 6-8, 2024.

The workshop's main objective was to understand the scope of drug treatment, especially in Barbados, where individuals, families, communities, and drug treatment facilities are struggling to cope with substance use disorders.

Substance Abuse Disorder (SUD) is defined by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Health Disorders, 5th Edition DSM-5 (APA, 2013) as a complex condition in which there is uncontrolled use of a substance despite harmful consequences. People with SUD have an intense focus on using a certain substance(s) such as alcohol, tobacco, or illicit drugs, leading to impaired day-to-day functioning, and they continue using the substance even when they are aware these substances cause problems. The most severe SUDs are sometimes called addictions.

In 2019, 296 persons sought treatment for substance abuse disorders in Barbados. However, the number of persons seeking treatment for substance abuse decreased in 2020 to 220 and continued to fall to 196 in 2021. Of particular concern is that most persons seeking treatment were males under 40 years of age. Substance abuse has devastating effects, disrupting the futures of many young people and all too often, ending lives prematurely and tragically.

Responding to drug addiction is even more concerning given the stereotyping of a "drug user". In Barbados, notions of the drug user characteristically bring up certain adjectives – homeless, isolated, deviant, violent, mentally unstable, undereducated, etc. As the conversation about drug addiction moves to the spotlight, we are seeing that today's typical drug user is anything but a stereotype.

A pilot study in Barbados in 2023 among 8 public sector departments showed that half of the respondents agreed they would be scared or anxious to lose their jobs if they disclosed a substance abuse problem. This may indicate that drug abuse may exist within our workforce, but the fear of disclosure may mask the characteristics of the drug user.

In conclusion, many people don't understand why or how other people become addicted to drugs. They may mistakenly think that those who use drugs lack moral principles or willpower and that they could stop their drug use simply by choosing to.

Drug addiction is a complex disease, and quitting usually takes more than good intentions or a strong will. Drugs change the brain in ways that make quitting hard, even for those who want to. Fortunately, researchers know more about how drugs affect the brain and have found treatments that can help people recover from drug addiction and lead productive lives.

Treatment Options for Drug Addiction



Breaking Down Workplace Stigma - Mental Health Awareness

Submitted By: Mr. Ryan Lewis - Registered Nurse At The Psychiatric Hospital



Mental health awareness is a critical topic, and stigma in the workplace remains a significant barrier. Stigma refers to negative attitudes, beliefs, or stereotypes about mental health, leading to fear, discrimination, and judgment. This creates an environment where employees feel ashamed or fearful of disclosing their mental health conditions, which can result in reduced productivity, increased absenteeism, higher turnover rates, and a toxic work culture.

Why Stigma Persists: Stigma persists due to a lack of awareness and education, fear of judgment, concerns about confidentiality, and cultural norms that discourage showing vulnerability. Many still associate mental illness with weakness or unreliability, perpetuating these harmful misconceptions.

Steps to Break the Stigma:

1. **Promote Education and Awareness:** Implement training programs and awareness campaigns to educate employees about mental health and encourage open discussions.
2. **Encourage Open Communication:** Create a safe environment where employees can discuss their mental health without fear of judgment.
3. **Provide Access to Resources:** Ensure employees have access to mental health resources like counseling services and support groups.
4. **Establish Clear Policies:** Develop policies that protect against discrimination based on mental health and ensure confidentiality.
5. **Foster a Supportive Environment:** Train managers to show empathy and provide support to employees dealing with mental health issues.
6. **Leadership's Role:** Leaders should set an example by openly discussing mental health, showing empathy, and creating a stigma-free workplace culture.

Breaking the stigma associated with mental health in the workplace is essential for creating a supportive and productive environment. The "Check My Bias" campaign encourages everyone to reflect on their own attitudes and promotes a culture of acceptance and understanding. By taking action now, we can make our workplaces inclusive and supportive for all employees.

It's time to prioritize mental health in the workplace. Let's work together to break down barriers and support mental well-being.



Summer Camp Vibes

Submitted By Ms. Jennifer Baptiste - Substance Abuse Prevention Officer NCSA



Schools were closed and teachers and students were on their well-deserved summer break. While some families opted to spend their vacation overseas, others stayed in Barbados to enjoy all the summer activities. For some parents summer vacations normally present a challenge to keep their children occupied during the long break from school. As such, many parents choose to send their child/ward to a summer camp where he/she can be supervised in a safe environment. Summer camps offer many benefits including mental and physical stimulation, exploring nature, participating in field trips, learning new skills, making friends and unplugging from technology.

Over the years, Camp Co-ordinators would invite the National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA) to facilitate drug prevention education sessions as part of their summer camp programme and this year was no exception. NCSA Substance Abuse Prevention Officers, Counsellors as well as Social Work Intern Ms. Tashawna Emilien Drug facilitated drug prevention education sessions at the following camps:

- ◆ Indian Ground Seventh Day Adventist Vacation Bible School
- ◆ Black Rock Wesleyan Vacation Bible School
- ◆ Global Campus Camp
- ◆ YMCA Camp
- ◆ Maranatha Eagles
- ◆ Pathfinders Camp
- ◆ Juvenile Court Liaison Court Scheme Camp
- ◆ Corner Stone Wesleyan Holiness Church
- ◆ Christ Church Parish Church
- ◆ Kings Park Sports Club Camp



Christ Church Parish Campers smiles



Global Campus Campers

Feedback from participants indicated that the sessions were interactive, relevant, informative and most of all fun!! As the summer vacation comes to an end, we want to wish all the camp participants every success as they continue on their academic journey, and we trust that the knowledge that was acquired during the sessions will be applied during the school year and beyond.

Graduates Told to Embrace Life's Challenges Graduation

Submitted By: Ms. Deanzer Roberts, Public Relations Consultant NCSA



NCSA Chairman Mr. Hadford Howell

On Saturday September 7th 2024, the National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA) hosted the graduation ceremony for 44 students who successfully completed the 2024 edition of Project S.O.F.T. (Safeguarding Our Future Today), a week-long sleep-in camp aimed at preparing children for the transition from primary to secondary school.

The chairman of the NCSA, in his address to the graduates, expressed his admiration for the commitment shown by both the camp staff and participants. "This is a serious, worthwhile and ongoing commitment by the NCSA to reach out to boys and girls in our country who are at a pivotal stage in their lives," he noted.

In a creative and inspiring speech, the chairman used the metaphor of a pearl to convey the value and potential of each child. He broke down the word "PEARL" into an acronym to offer advice, encouraging students to resist Peer pressure, draw on family Experiences, set Ambitions, embrace their

Responsibilities, and Listen, learn, lead, and love in their future endeavors.

He also urged the graduates to remain connected with their families, communities, and the NCSA, reminding them that, "at the National Council on Substance Abuse, we see you all as PEARLS – gems, valuable, special, and treasures."

The Project S.O.F.T. camp has been a cornerstone of the NCSA's outreach efforts since 2002, with more than 700 graduates to date.

Participants in this year's programme took part in drug education sessions, team-building exercises, and life skills development, all designed to help them successfully navigate the challenges of secondary school.



**Camp Director Mr. Mosiah Hoyte
Delivering The Vote of Thanks**



**NCSA Board Member Mrs. Alison
Gotip presenting Chelsey Yarde with
her Certificate.**

Thank You For Making Project S.O.F.T. (Safeguarding Our Future Today) Camp A Success

The Board of Directors, Management, and Staff of the National Council on Substance Abuse, thank the following organisations and persons for sponsoring Project Safeguarding Our Future Today (S.O.F.T.) 2024:

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Registration Requirements

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Session Dates:
October 1, 2, 8 & 9 2024
9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

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