



DRUG AWARENESS MONTH 2023

SPECIAL EDITION NEWSLETTER



'Our Workplace, Our Future: Our Future, Our Workplace'



The NCSA Drug Awareness Month 2023 began with a Church Service at the Church of The Nazarine Collymore Rock on Sunday January 8th.

Minister of Home Affairs and Information Wilfred Abrahams in delivering remarks said the theme chosen "Our Workplaces, Our Future: Our Future, Our Workplace" was fitting since the government is committed to ensuring that they disseminate factual, timely information to all persons, especially the workforce, to equip them with the knowledge needed to make positive healthy choices and increase productivity and economic prosperity.

"As a nation, we too are faced with the prioritization of several impactful social challenges. It is therefore important that we, as a collective, commit to being a positive part of the response- at an individual level, at the community level and the national level," he said.

He called on employers and employees to get to know the signs and symptoms of when a colleague may be using and abusing substances. He stressed on poor job performance inclusive of periods of inconsistent productivity and making poor judgements. Also the issue of increased absenteeism and Poor interpersonal relationships.

Mrs. Betty Hunte, Manager of the Council in her brief address called on everyone to put their hands to work as the drug problem among persons continue to emerge. The Church she says has an important role to play.

That institution can help she says by first trying to better understand the several misconceptions surrounding the disease and in doing so, help to educate members of its congregation as well as the community members on the reality of addiction.

"It may appear as if drug abuse and drug addiction affect younger people only. The elders of our community are falling victim to substance abuse as well. Based on information contained in the latest (soon to be released) report of the Barbados Drug Information Network 2021, when one looks at the age distribution of persons admitted to the Psychiatric Hospital for treatment, 19.9% or almost 20% or 1/5 were persons 51 years and older," she disclosed.

The church she emphasized must recognize the vulnerability of some of the older generation who are now in need of their support. "It is said that older persons tend to respond more readily to messengers of the faith - so Pastor Holder this may be an avenue that you may wish to pursue if you are not already doing so. And if you are, the Council is here to offer any educational and/or counselling support as needed."

The service was attended by a number of agencies and stakeholders along with the board of management and staff of the NCSA.



Drug Education Display Mounted At The Welfare Department



Something Is Happening In here!"

Those were the words of one of the clients at the Welfare Department, as she observed the changes being made to the waiting area. The 'new start' she was referring to was the Drug Awareness Month display, as the final touches were being made.

Mrs. Kim Bobb-Waithe, Deputy Chief Welfare Officer (Ag.), expressed a desire for the Welfare Department to participate in **Drug Awareness Month 2023**, and she invited the National Council on Substance Abuse to mount the display in their waiting area. While this was a first for NCSA and the Welfare Department, this exercise expands the list of agencies such as the General Post Office, the National Library Service, Co-operators General Insurance and the Barbados Defence Force, who have partnered with us over the years, with varying displays of drug information at their workplaces.

Displays of this nature, provide an opportunity to initiate drug awareness discussions with diverse audiences, who may or may not attend any of our formal sessions. On this occasion, Substance Abuse Prevention Officers Makeada Bourne and Wendy Greenidge, with the assistance of Lisa Layne, Secretary and Timothy Ifill, Information Technology Officer II, agreed to participate in this venture and in a matter of hours, transformed the areas assigned.

The displays are often not only for the clients of the agency, but also for the employees who are provided with an opportunity to learn more about drug related matters. In this circumstance, the Staff of the Department were keen to learn more about how to recognise signs of drug use and expressed particular interest in the NCSA's counselling service and how they could refer clients. As we conducted the initial tour, it was evident that there is a lot of

scope for strengthening of our interagency partnerships especially in the areas of training and information sharing.

Research shows that there is a connection between working in a stressful environment and an increased risk for substance misuse. The staff spoke of some of the challenges they have encountered in the workplace and eagerly spoke of the improvements to their workspace that are scheduled for implementation in the near future which should alleviate some of the stressors.

Thank You!

Mrs. Makeada Bourne and Mrs. Wendy Greenidge, Substance Abuse Prevention Officers. NCSA Secretary Ms. Lisa Layne, and Mr. Timothy Ifill, Information Technology Officer II.

NCSA Utilized The Mornin' Barbados Programme on CBC

Mrs. Troy Wickham and Ms. Jennifer Baptiste
Speaking With Host Mr. Pearson Bowen



The Team at The NCSA was featured during the month of January as we observed our Drug Awareness Month Activities. The first appearance on the show brought awareness to the activities that were forthcoming for the month. This was held via an online platform on Friday January 6th.

The guests were Deputy Manager – Mr. Troy Wickham, Substance Abuse Prevention Officer – Ms. Paulavette Atkinson and Counsellor – Mr. Mosiah Hoyte

Deputy Manager Mr. Troy Wickham and Ms. Jennifer Baptiste were the guests on the show on Friday January 13th. They shared information relating to the “Cannabis Panel Discussion.” A discussion that focused on the importance of knowing the difference between Medicinal and Recreational Marijuana.

Manager Betty Hunte carried the show on January 20th, speaking to the work of the NCSA and our Give Back Programme. She shed light on how we have been able to assist many families who are suffering with Substance Abuse issues.

Mrs. Laura Lee Foster brought down the curtain on the shows on January 26th shedding light on our upcoming Food Drive held the following Day.

Photo Above:

Mr. Troy Wickham, Ms. Paulavette Atkinson and Mr. Mosiah Hoyte Speaking With Host Mr. Pearson Bowen



Mrs. Betty Hunte Speaking With
Host Mr. Pearson Bowen



Mrs. Laura Foster Being Speaking
With Host Mr. Pearson Bowen



Thank You! TO TEAM CBC FOR HAVING US!

The issue of legalization and decriminalization of cannabis has generated much discussion internationally, regionally and locally, with validity in many of the claims both for and against.

With this in mind the NCSA engaged a number of organizations and the general public in a discussion when the Council held a Panel Discussion titled 'Cannabis: Medicinal and Recreational: What really is the difference' at the Horatio Cooke Auditorium at the National Union of Public Workers headquarters, on Wednesday January 18th 2023.

Brief remarks were delivered by Manager of NCSA Mrs. Betty Hunte who informed those present that the NCSA has been challenged to show how its message remains relevant given the emerging scientific evidence and growing acceptance of the use of cannabis.

The panelists were: Ms. Rachel Huggins, Deputy Director – Cannabis Legalization, Organized Crime Enforcement Bureau Ontario, Provincial Police (Canada). She spoke on The Canadian Experience: The transition to legalizing cannabis for recreational and medicinal purposes

Dr. Jean-Saville Cummings – Chief Technical Department, Medicinal Cannabis Authority, (SVG) give an insight into The St. Vincent & the Grenadines (SVG) Experience: The impact of the unregulated traditional cannabis growing industry in relation to the new regulatory framework.

The role of the Barbados Medicinal Cannabis Licensing Authority and its operations under the regulatory framework was delivered by Senator Shanika Roberts-Odle – Chief Executive Officer (Ag.), Barbados Medicinal Cannabis Licensing Authority.

Mr. Lindsay Bynoe – Drug Inspector, Barbados Drug Service explained, The role of the Barbados Drug Service and how medicinal cannabis is regulated in Barbados.

The biopsychosocial impact of medicinal cannabis within the workforce was delivered by Dr. Ronald Chase, Senior Registrar Psychiatrist, Psychiatric Hospital.

The discussion was moderated by Ms. Paulavette Atkinson, one of the Council's Substance Abuse Prevention Officer.



NCSA Turns Its Attention To Secondary Schools During Drug Awareness Month 2023



Auxiliary workers – non-teaching staff members – at secondary schools across the island have an important role to play if substance abuse is to be stamped out at these educational institutions.

This is according to Deputy Manager at the National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA), Mr. Troy Wickham, his remarks as he addressed the media following a Drug Education Seminar for Auxiliary Staff of Secondary Schools held at the National Union of Public Workers (NUPW) Horatio Cooke Auditorium on Wednesday January 25th 2023.

Mr. Wickham said it is important for the Council to engage these workers since they are key personnel in the school and the eyes and ears of the organization, in many cases.

“We thought it was important for us to engage this population to engage them in relation to the identification of substances, the signs and symptoms of substances, as well as the laws around the schools as they relate to drugs,” Wickham noted.

Dr. Johnathan Yearwood Research and Information Officer at NCSA said lacking in Barbados is the investigative research that needs to support policy, action, programmes. “Without having that research, we would just be throwing things out there.

We’re hitting or missing; we’re making speeches without the type of evidence that is needed to support the kinds of programmes that can be helpful to reduce not only deviant behaviour but also drug use,” he added.

In addressing some concern from the audience he disclosed that NCSA’s research has shown that while male and female students at secondary schools were equally using alcohol, males were the main users of marijuana. He said this was more prevalent among older secondary school students.

The session was interactive with many in attendance demanding that the NCSA reach out to more schools and bring greater awareness to the roles of not just the workers, but how important the roles are to the schools they serve.



Food Drive It Was - Thank You For Your Donations!



As the government agency responsible for drug demand reduction in Barbados, The National Council on Substance Abuse conducts drug prevention programming within schools, communities and workplaces and offers counseling free-of- cost to individuals affected by drug addiction.

In our line of work, we often encounter families who experience challenges meeting their basic needs including the provision of food and personal hygiene products. We know that people cannot focus on or succeed in treatment if they are hungry. For this reason, the NCSA established a food bank to help clients in need.

We started by helping three clients in 2021 and this number grew throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. As of December 2022, we were able to provide hampers to more than 40 families during the yuletide season. During the month of January 2023 as part of our month of activities we held a Food Drive the 28th at Massy Stores Warrens, Holetown and Worthing in Christchurch.

The NCSA takes this opportunity to thank you for your donations no matter how big or small, they will go a long way in helping persons on the road to recovery.

2021 Barbados Drug Information Network (BARDIN) report released!



Research and Information Officer at the National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA), Laura Foster, on Tuesday January 31st 2023, released the findings from the 2021 Barbados Drug Information Network (BARDIN) report. The 2021 report is the 11th in the BARDIN series.

Minister of Home Affairs and Information Wilfred Abrahams in delivering his remarks noted underscored the importance of research initiatives such as BARDIN.

“They help us to focus our efforts and our resources. And in keeping with the findings which I just shared, I challenge the NCSA and key stakeholders in the demand reduction and supply control sectors to make our young people a priority so as to safeguard our workforce and the future of our society. I am assured by the Council, that additional areas of concern will be explored to address trends arising from the findings.” he said

He commended the Council and the Barbados Drug Information Network members for their continued commitment to BARDIN noting that these annual reports are an invaluable resource.

Some Key Points From The Presentation

- There was a marked decrease in the number of persons seeking treatment for substance use and disorders since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In terms of cannabis possession cases adjudicated in the Magistrates’ Courts in 2019 versus 2021, statistics show that there was a sharp decline of 71 per cent in the number of cases in the court system related to possession of the drug.
- There is an increase in the number of persons being charged with more serious offences, such as trafficking and supplying the drug.
- The NCSA has not observed an increase in counselling for clients even though the Drug Abuse Act makes provision for persons to be sent to the council for assessment and counselling.
- Persons in the 40 and under age category continue to dominate the local drug situation (treatment admissions and arrests).
- A Certification Board should be established and should be responsible for identifying and enforcing certification require-



A DRUG AWARENESS TIP AIRED ON CBC 8 DURING DAM 2023

Although an employer can and should consistently enforce its employment policies and procedures, employers must be cautious not to discriminate against individuals with a history of drug or alcohol addiction or take adverse action based on a perception of such a problem. If an employer suspects that an employee is abusing a drug, that employee can be referred to the National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA) for an assessment, referral or counselling.

This tip is brought to you in association with the National Council on Substance Abuse. Call us at 535-6277.

CURTAINS CAME DOWN WITH A FUN DAY— STAKEHOLDERS AND NCSA FAMILY



‘Drug Awareness Month 2023, January 1st – 31st.

Theme: “Our Workplace, Our Future: Our Future, Our Workplace”