



Wishing you a
Happy New Year



Matters Of Substance

September 2023 - December 2023

Volume #9 Issue #4

The Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission Host Two Day Session



(l-r) Ms. Angela Crowdy Assistant Executive Secretary CICAD, Mr. Adam Namm, Executive Secretary of CICAD, Minister of Home Affairs and Information, Wilfred Abrahams and Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs and Information, Yvette Goddard

Minister of Home Affairs and Information, the Hon. Wilfred Abrahams, recently attended the 74th Regular Session of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission, in Washington, D.C.

The Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD), of the Organization of American States (OAS), is the Western Hemisphere's primary policy forum for dealing with the drug problem. It promotes dialogue between member states, as well as multilateral co-operation, and executes action programs to strengthen countries' ability to prevent and treat drug abuse.

This four-day Session addressed several issues impacting the region, including, the link between illicit arms trafficking and drug trafficking by organized crime, quality standards in gender-sensitive treatment and synthetic drugs and the chemical precursors used in their illicit manufacture.

There were also discussions on alternatives to incarceration with a gender perspective to address drug-related crimes, Drug prevention initiatives for youth in the Caribbean, the link between illicit crops and environmental damage, from an alternative development perspective and substitution plans and strategies and alternative uses.

The role of civil society in supporting the social integration of persons with substance use disorders in the justice system, tools for developing drug policies, Emerging synthetic drugs in the hemisphere, School dropout as a risk factor in addressing drug use were also discussed.

Minister also participated on a Panel addressing "The Development of Drug Policies with a Gender Perspective". Minister Abrahams also paid a courtesy call on Mr. Adam Namm, Executive Secretary of CICAD, and Ms. Angela Crowdy Assistant Executive Secretary CICAD.

During this Session, Minister Abrahams proposed Barbados' candidacy as Vice-Chair of the Expert Group on Demand Reduction and the country, will assume that position CICAD during the **2023-2024 period**.

Also attending the event were Ms. Yvette Goddard, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs and Information; Mrs. Betty Hunte, Manager of the National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA) and the current Barbados Commissioner to CICAD; and Mr. Troy Wickham, Deputy Manager, NCSA.



(l-r) Luis Almagro, Secretary General, OAS (right) and Minister of Home Affairs and Information, Wilfred Abrahams



Submitted by: Mr. Troy Wickham, Deputy Manager NCSA



At this special time of year, we at the Council give thanks for stakeholders like you who make our jobs enjoyable and our lives more fulfilling. Thank you for being you.

Every year Christmas is on December 25. It is believed that December 25 is the birth of Jesus Christ. The name of Christmas comes from the mass of Christ or Jesus.

Christmas is celebrated with joy, happiness and hope, especially by Christians. Locally, it is the time of the year when friends and family come together and celebrate it with joy and spread happiness with each other.

It is a time of the year where everyone remembers how grateful they are and also helps in doing voluntary work to help less fortunate people.

The significance of Christmas is well known, it symbolizes the significance of life.

Though many of those traits still exist in 2023, we as a people have made strides to eliminate some of those negative traits. The coming of Jesus Christ has taught everyone to love each other and the significance of peace to the world.

As we go about our popular traditions such as decorating Christmas trees with lights, exchanging gifts, attending church for prayers, and spending time with friends and family, please remember the Christmas tree is considered to be a symbol of Christ. Decorating a Christmas tree is considered to be an ancient custom that reminds everyone how valuable life is. Gifts are exchanged on Christmas to signify the birth of Jesus.

Before the birth of Jesus Christ, it was considered to be the time of sadness, cruelty ruled the land and everyone's heart was filled with vengeance and hatred towards each other. After the birth of Christ and as he grew old he spread as far as possible. Sharing a

gift and having a meal with each other helps everyone to realise how grateful they are to have a family that cares.

Christmas season remains the most enjoyable time of the year. It is time to be grateful for what one has. It is the best time to eat tasty food and spend time with your loved ones.

It is the time of the year to realise helping the less fortunate is the noblest deed. It is a festival that spreads warmth in each individual. So this Christmas make sure to enjoy it to the fullest and be grateful for everything.

Six Doable New Year's Resolutions Every Substance Abuser Should Consider

Resolve to lean on loved ones for support. ...

Resolve to stay positive. ...

Resolve to take responsibility for your own actions and intentions. ...

Resolve to make a healthy change for your body. ...

Resolve to read an inspirational book.



Submitted by: Mr. Hadford Howell Chairman, NCSA (2021-2024)

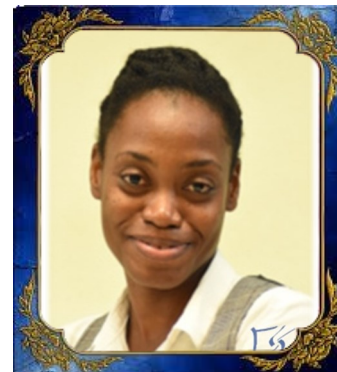
A happy, healthy, peaceful, prosperous and substance-abuse free New Year is wished to all of our National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA) clients, Directors, Management, Staff, Volunteers and stakeholders, whether they are in Barbados, the region or further afield operating in the public or private sectors. We also wish the same to all readers of NCSA's quarterly publication.

2023 had so much for us to reflect on, but we must leave any lasting negativity experiences from that year behind us and focus on the positive things we want to accomplish over the next 12 months, as 2024 presents all of us with a wonderful opportunity to think afresh, plan and optimistically set achievable goals individually or collectively related to our families, close friends and work colleagues. At NCSA's Christmas Dinner and Award Ceremony on 7th December, I referred to a popular Christmas song by Brian 'Bumba' Payne which has that wonderful line, repeated several times: Why can't this Christmas feeling go on...". I guess Brian meant for this feeling to extend well into the year ahead. I therefore encourage us to extend the kindness, love, understanding, generosity and support we annually offer to each other in the month of December for an extended period well into 2024. This is my sincere wish for us all.

The NCSA family is well placed to continue carrying out its legal mandate of "... advising the Minister on measures for the eradication or the control of substance abuse." NCSA remains the national drug authority in Barbados and so plays a critical role in safeguarding the future human potential of Barbadians by discouraging substance abuse and its mis-use. To this end, the NCSA remains committed to conducting programmes around school-based prevention, community-based prevention, treatment and rehabilitation and research and information. Our trained staff remain committed to the task of educating, informing and providing technical assistance and counselling to individuals of all ages and walks of life.

We have strengthened our research capacity and delivered more current and evidence-based reports to help influence Government's drug-policy and response to the ever-changing nature and availability of new drugs entering the Barbados market. NCSA made use of the recently introduced Early Warning System (EWS) mechanism which has already borne fruit by enabling our parent Ministry, twice in 2023, to alert Barbadians and stakeholders alike of new substances and trends that were identified from NCSA research. Two reports and a month-long activity in January will see the NCSA at the top of its game. September saw NCSA release a ground-breaking report on 'Barriers To Substance Abuse Treatment in Barbados: Factors Hindering Women's Use of Treatment Services'. This will be followed at end-January 2024 by NCSA's release of its 2022 Barbados Drug Information Network (a.k.a. BARDIN) report as we conclude NCSA's month-long Drug Awareness Month (DAM) of activities.

It is a busy time for the NCSA-family, but I again take great pleasure on our behalf in wishing you all a successful 2024. God bless you.



Getting Through The Season

Submitted by: Mrs. Natalia Corbin Ifill, NCSA Counsellor

Getting ready for the holidays, has been associated with stress. Activities such as organizing events, getting the right gift(s) for those special persons and trying to stay within budget can be overwhelming. Situations where persons spend too much and end up in debt can result in anxiety and in some cases, persons turn to alcohol and drugs to relieve the associated anxiety. For those recovering from addiction such stressors could lead to substance use.

Then there are the parties, the holiday dinners, the work functions, family get-togethers or social events. Imagine getting several invitations to such celebratory events which often involve alcohol consumptions and substance use/misuse. For some persons, having to experience the holidays without that special someone they lost is difficult. The holidays are usually seen as a time we spend with

loved ones and not having that special someone around can be difficult. For some, coping with the loss can be challenging and if they have no friends or family to connect with, sadness and loneliness could set in and give rise to depression increasing the risk for alcohol or drugs use.



To help persons get through these challenging situations during the holidays without the use of alcohol or drugs here are

a few techniques that might be useful.

Know your triggers. A key area in treatment for addiction is helping clients identify their triggers of use. Similarly, for this time of year you need to know the situations that are the tempters to use.

Set boundaries and know when to say no. During the holidays you may receive invitations to parties

or other get-togethers and

there may be triggers at some of these events. To reduce feeling overwhelmed and uncomfortable, it is okay to say, "No thanks" and turn down such invitations.

Connect with sober contacts. During the hustle and bustle of the holiday season it is critical to connect and stay connected with persons who are abstaining. When you reach out to someone for help you may not only be helping yourself get through this tough time, but you may also be helping someone else get through this time as well.

Volunteer. By volunteering you are engaging in an activity to busy yourself and occupy your time. Here you can focus on helping others instead of being bombarded by your triggers.

And finally, here is an interesting one.

Enjoy sweet treats. It is said that if you satisfy the part of the brain which triggers alcohol cravings with sweets you can help avert those triggers.

Source: Crest View Recovery Center, 2022; Hampton, 2022 and Destination ope Treatment Centre,

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Factors Hindering Women's Use of Treatment Centres

Submitted by: Mrs. Laura Foster, Information and Research Officer



The National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA) released the findings from its study “Barriers to Substance Abuse Treatment in Barbados: Factors Hindering Women's Use of Treatment Services” during a virtual event on October 16, 2023. The session was attended by a wide

duction and supply control sectors. Representatives from various regional drug councils and international agencies were also in attendance. To facilitate public access to the event, the session was also live-streamed via the Council's social media channels.

Speakers included: Ms. Chantelle Evelyn, Member of the NCSA Board of Directors,

Overview of the Study and Its Findings

The study investigated the internal and external barriers to substance abuse treatment for women on island through the conduct of individual interviews with treatment providers as well as a focus group with women in treatment. The findings suggested that external barriers are far more numerous and, in many cases, more impactful than internal ones.

Childcare and child welfare concerns, stigma, a lack of family support, the absence of workplace drug policies, unmet basic needs and having a drug using partner or one who sells drugs were among the main external barriers identified; while the internal barriers included: denial, fears, a lack of knowledge about available treatment options and co-occurring disorders. The report also offered a number of corresponding recommendations aimed at reducing the impact of the barriers and simultaneously increasing the uptake of treatment among women in Barbados.



Minister of Home Affairs and Information Wilfred Abrahams (right) congratulated Vickie Leo, a former client at Marina House, for making the bold step to seek treatment to get her life back on track.

cross-section of stakeholders, including representatives from the participating treatment centres, as well as government departments and non-governmental organizations within the wider demand re-

who delivered the Welcome, and the Hon. Wilfred Abrahams M.P., Minister of Home Affairs and Information, who offered Brief Remarks. The key findings were presented by Mrs. Laura Foster, Principal Investigator/NCSA Research and Information Officer; while a special presentation was made by a female in recovery who spoke about her experience as a person with a substance use disorder, her decision to enter treatment and her recovery process.



A Need for Integrative Approaches To Substance Abuse in Barbados

Submitted by: Dr. Jonathan Yearwood Research and Information Officer

Polydrug use, which refers to the practice of consuming multiple drugs, has become a concerning issue in Barbados with regards to substance abuse. This trend affects both incarcerated and non-offender populations, who often consume crack cocaine, marijuana, and alcohol either alone or in combination with each other. It can be more difficult to treat individuals who consume multiple drugs, and a range of treatment approaches may be required to address the potential risk of addiction to these substances.

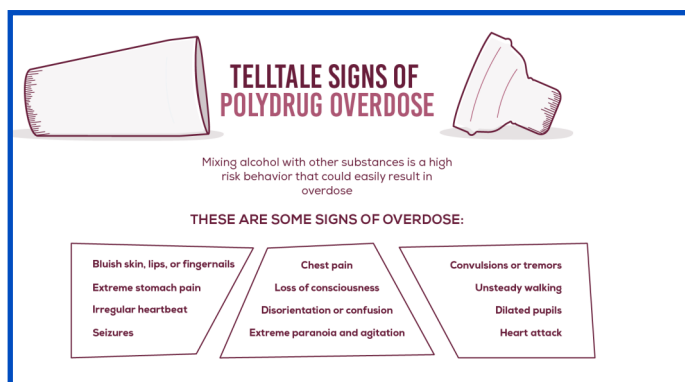
Polydrug use can lead to co-occurring disorders, where a person experiences both substance abuse disorder and other major conditions like depression or schizophrenia. This diagnosis often results in higher relapse rates compared to those without comorbid diagnoses. In 2018, 21% of admissions to the Psychiatric Hospital in Barbados were for comorbid diagnoses, which included substance abuse disorder. The number rose to 33% in 2019. Males under 45 years old are more likely to have co-occurring diagnoses that involve substance use disorders than females. The Psychiatric Hospital in Barbados is the main government agency that provides treatment for comorbid diagnoses and substance use. Other organisations may not have the necessary expertise to treat individuals with such conditions.

Over the past four decades, the government of Barbados has implemented various laws to mitigate the negative consequences of drug use and co-occurring disorders. One such law is the Mental Health Act of 1985, which is included in Chapter 45 of the Barbados laws. Another law is the Liquor Licensing Act of 2021, which prohibits licensees or anyone else from selling alcohol to individuals under the age of 18 in public.

Additionally, the Drug Abuse (Prevention and Control) (Amendment) Bill of 2021 has established a fine of \$200 for individuals found in possession of 14 grams or less of cannabis by the police. The purpose of imposing a fine rather than a criminal conviction is to recognise the adverse social impact that a criminal record can have on an individual's future.

The Bill also provides for counseling services from the National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA) for those who breach this Act. Despite the innovative approaches to drug addiction prevention and treatment, there is a lack of collaboration among the different stakeholders who are responsible for preventing, treating, and rehabilitating individuals with drug-related issues.

To effectively support individuals who are dealing with drug use and comorbidity, it is important to provide suitable training for service providers. However, in addition to training, a legislative framework is also necessary to drive policies and actionable initiatives related to drug-related illnesses. This framework should be supportive of both institutional treatment and address the needs of problem users leaving treatment. Lastly, an effective treatment approach for polydrug use and comorbidity must be flexible enough to adapt to the ever-changing drug consumption patterns in the country.





NCSA Continues Its Intervention With At-Risk Population

Submitted by: Mrs. Makeada Bourne, Substance Abuse Prevention Officer

For over twenty-eight years (28), the National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA) has created, developed, and implemented programmes to 'promote sustained action for positive change in the fight against substance abuse and the facilitation of drug education, prevention, and drug-free lifestyles'.

Before the increase of tolerance for alcohol and other drugs can occur, the NCSA strives to increase the protective factors of children and youth through programming for individuals, the family, the community, schools, the workplace, and special groups. These special groups include **Edna Nicholls Centre, New Horizon Academy, and Government Industrial Schools**. At the sessions, participants are given the information, tools, skills, and support to make healthy decisions.

Drug Prevention Education at Edna Nicholls Centre

The Edna Nicholls Centre has been in partnership with the NCSA for over twenty years. The Edna Nicholls Centre is a day-release programme for children who are suspended from Secondary School. The NCSA provides drug education sessions every Tuesday morning. Topics covered during the sessions are Myth or Facts about Marijuana, Marijuana and the Law, Tobacco, Vape, and Alcohol. PowerPoint, videos, and various activities are used to get the message across.



Drug Prevention Education at New Horizon Academy

New Horizon Academy is a school established to work with children who are under 16 years old and were expelled from mainstream Primary and Secondary Schools. The NCSA partnered with the Academy school year 2022/2023 and is now included in their programme. NCSA is scheduled to facilitate its programme every Wednesday morning. Mrs. Makeada Bourne Facilitated the sessions using in-person, Nearpod self-paced, and a hybrid approach. Here, drug education is married with life-skill topics to increase students' drug refusal skills and their ability to make healthy choices.



Government Industrial Schools (GIS)

The National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA) partnered with Government Industrial Schools (GIS) over the years to facilitate drug education sessions with its residents. 2022 saw a renewal of this partnership. The NCSA hosts drug prevention education sessions every Friday morning with both the female and male residents. Nearpod, drug goggle simulations, PowerPoint presentations and a variety of other activities are utilized to increase participants' knowledge about drugs, and the dangers associated with drug use and to build their drug-refusal skills. 'The aims of the Government Industrial School/Secure Residential Facility (GIS/SRF) are to accommodate children, ordered to be resident therein, in a safe secure, and caring environment, to address the children's rehabilitative needs, support the children's families to address the needs of their child and work to reintegrate children into the community.' (<https://www.gov.bb/Departments/industrial-school>).



Adopting Healthy Alternatives To Substance Use

Submitted by: Mrs. Paulavette Atkinson Substance Abuse Prevention Officer

Over the past year the National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA) engaged over 1000 participants in its Polyclinic Programme which has been delivered thus far in five (5) local polyclinics across the island. Antenatal Clients (18 – 40 years), Child Health Clients (3 – 35 years), General Practice Clients (20 – 75+ years).

Young, middle-aged and elderly clients attending the most recently convened NCSA Showcase at the Edgar Cochrane Polyclinic on November 23rd, 2023 benefitted from demonstrations, discussions and interactive activities which highlighted how substance use harms our minds and bodies and why we need “to prevent substance use by maintaining healthy nutrition and lifestyles throughout the life cycle”.



In her Remarks, Acting Senior Health Sister, Mrs. Veronica Kirton outlined some of the latest health trends: “we eat too much souse, macaroni pie and french fries... we live in a fast-food age... the sugar tax on sweetened beverages has not kept our teenagers and adolescents from using them... add to that the alcohol consumption and cigarette use and vaping – and it is easy to see why we are so unhealthy”.

Sister Kirton also highlighted the increased incidence of non- communicable diseases in Barbados. NCDs are diseases that are not spread by direct contact from one person to another. Some examples of these include hypertension or high blood pressure, diabetes or “sugar” and high cholesterol levels.

The 2021 Barbados Census revealed that we have an adult population of approximately 208,300 persons and according to data collected by the Barbados International Diabetes Federation:

40% of persons over the age of 25 years are hypertensive, 20% of persons over 25 years are diabetic, Adult diabetes cases total approximately 38,800 and Prevalence of diabetes in adults is 18.7% .

Given that NCDs can negatively alter the quality of a person’s health and life expectancy – it is imperative that Barbadians of all ages adopt healthy lifestyles based on the consumption of healthy food together with the regular exercise. Health research indicates that what we eat and how live now can impact our health up to twenty years in the future.



NCSA Substance Abuse Prevention Officer, Ms. Paulavette Atkinson used this timely opportunity to reinforce the benefits to inculcating healthy alternatives to drinking alcohol and smoking cannabis as well as harms associated with new substances such as methamphetamines.

Senior Counselor, Mrs. Natalia Corbin-Ifill presented information on the NCSA Counseling Service in addition to practical information on how an individual or a family member or a friend can access counselling and support for a substance use problem or drug addiction.

NCSA Deputy Chairman, Bishop Selwyn Brathwaite outlined how the drug prevention education and nutrition and health information shared can benefit expectant mothers and their spouses; parents of young children; adolescents; care givers; extended family members; and elderly men and women from local communities. He also acknowledged the input of practitioners and personnel from other partner agencies: Ministry of Health and Wellness (MOHW), National Nutrition Centre (NNC), National Botanical Gardens (NBG), National Conservation Commission (NCC) and National Sports Council (NSC).

Drug use and abuse does not discriminate, it affects everyone.



Zonal Athlete Workshops

The National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA) resumed its drug prevention interventions with sportspersons during the month of November 2023.

To date, over one hundred and fifty (150) sportspersons participated in the first two (2) Zonal Athlete Workshops. This included senior students pursuing the **Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) and Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) Physical Education Programme** as well as athlete support personnel (PE Teachers, Physical Education Coordinators and Coaches).

Northern Zonal Workshop

Participants included students and personnel from the Alexandra School, Alleyne Secondary School, Coleridge & Parry School, Daryll Jordan Secondary and Grantley Adams Memorial School respectively.

Southern Zonal Workshop

Participants included students and personnel from the Christ Church Foundation, Deighton Griffith Secondary School, The Lodge School and Princess Margaret Secondary School respectively.

tional anti-doping effort)

Participants benefitted from video presentations and direct involvement in interactive drug use simulation exercises which enabled them to experience how chemical substances such as alcohol can negatively impact sport performance by altering mood, emotions, response time, spatial awareness and coordination.

Students gained an understanding of the difference between the terms *in competition* and *out of competition* and the four (4) main chemical substances which are banned / prohibited in and out of competition. In addition, participants were educated on the main reasons why *International Standards* are set-out by world sport authorities such as World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) and International Olympic Committee (IOC).



These Zonal Workshops are scheduled to continue throughout the first quarter of 2024 and are intended to engage student athletes ahead of their participation in the **Barbados Secondary Schools' Athletic Championships** (BSSAC) as well as the National Primary Schools' Athletic Championship (NAPSAC).



The participants got an overview of NCSA's role in national anti-doping efforts and an interactive universal drug prevention education

on three topics: **Substances of Abuse (in and out of competition), Drugs & Sport performance and NCSA's (role in na-**

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The Year In Pics - Looking Back At A Few Fond Memories



L-R - Chairman of NCSA Mr. Hadford Howell, Manager Mrs. Betty Hunte, Mrs. Allison Gotip, Director of Clinical Services Marina House , Vickie Leo, a former client at Marina House and Minister of Home Affairs and Information Wilfred Abrahams having a chat following the **'Barriers to Substance Abuse Treatment in Barbados: Factors Hindering Women's Use of Treatment'** release.



Minister of Home Affairs and Information Hon. Wilfred Abrahams presenting a token of appreciation to NCSA longstanding driver Mr. James Robert Ifill during the NCSA Staff Dinner and Awards Ceremony.



PIC 1



PIC 2

Pic 1

Members of the Deaf Community attended 'Think before you use...Facts about Alcohol & Medication' Seminar under the STOP! THINK! CHOOSE! Programme!

Pic 2

Cub Scouts attending a Substance Abuse one day workshop.



Staff at the NCSA packing goods for distribution to our clients.



Its Drug Awareness Month - January 2024



DRUG AWARENESS MONTH
Jan 1st - 31st, 2024

'NCSA: Strengthening Prevention'

ACTIVITIES

January 3rd, 9th, 16th and 23rd:	Mornin Barbados
January 4th and 5th:	Substance Abuse Badge Online
January 12th:	Community Drive Through
January 14th:	NCSA Church Service
January 18th and 23rd:	Online Webinars
January 25th:	School Speech Contest Qualifiers
January 27th:	Food Drive at Massy Stores.
January 31st:	(BARDIN) Release of Findings

Feb 2nd: Inter- Agency 'Fun Fitness Friday'

Check Our Social Media Pages For Updates

  **NCSABARBADOS**

Call: 1-246-535-6272



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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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