



ADVOCACY NEWSLETTER AUG 2024

Dear Partners and fellow Advocates

This month, we are pleased to bring you highlights from the inaugural Campus Legends X NCADA Parents Seminar held on 3 Aug at *Scape.

In collaboration with Singapore Press Holdings Radio, CNB organised the "Say Something, Say No" roadshow, featuring DJs from Kiss92 FM to impart public speaking skills to students while raising awareness about the dangers of drugs.

In this first instalment of a two-part series, read about Canada's experience with cannabis consumption since the legalisation of recreational cannabis in 2018.

Lastly, in case you missed it, check out NCADA's Annual Report, highlighting the accomplished work initiatives in 2023.

Happy reading!

We value your feedback and inquiries on our programmes and activities. Please feel free to reach out to us at cnb_community_partnership@cnb.gov.sg.

Thank you for your unwavering support in our shared mission for a drug-free society.

ADVOCACY/CAMPUS LEGENDS X NCADA PARENTS SEMINAR

The National Council Against Drug Abuse (NCADA) collaborated with Singapore Cybersports & Online Gaming Association (SCOGA) to organise the inaugural Campus Legends Parents Seminar titled "Our children are more vulnerable to drug abuse today. What can we do as parents?" specially for parents on 3 Aug 2024 at *Scape. The seminar, graced by Associate Professor Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim, Minister of State, Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of National Development, emphasised the crucial role of parental guidance and support in addressing the increasing vulnerability of children to drug abuse. During the seminar, MOS Faishal highlighted concerning data from NCADA's national drug perception survey, revealing an increase in the number of young people in Singapore who personally knew someone who had taken drugs, rising from 10.6% in the 2019 survey to 18% in the 2023 survey. The seminar was moderated by NCADA Council Member Mr Firdaus Daud, and included panellists Ms Carol Loi from SGFamilies, Mr Isaac Goh who is a community leader with the eX-Offenders For Good movement, and NCADA Council Members Dr Jimmy Lee and Ms Elaine Loo, who shared their experiences and insights at the seminar.



"Early conversations about drug abuse create a safe space for children to engage. Research from NCADA's youth perception survey showed that kids who discuss drug harms with their parents are much less likely to misuse substances."

- Ms Elaine Loo, NCADA Council Member

For more details,
check out this article
from The Straits
Times:



"If it's about emotional or behavioural changes, find an opportunity when the child is less irritable and in private to have a chat. The goal of the conversation is to find out how the child is coping and how might you help. It might start with some observations you noticed and to express why you might be concerned."

- Dr Jimmy Lee, NCADA Council Member



Attendees of the Campus Legends Parents Seminar



(from left to right) MOS Faishal, Ms Elaine Loo, Mr Isaac Goh, Ms Carol Loi, Dr Jimmy Lee and Mr Firdaus Daud

ADVOCACY/NATIONAL DAY OBSERVANCE CEREMONY CUM DADAH ITU HARAM TALK

On the eve of National Day, Madrasah Wak Tanjong Al-Islamiah held their National Day Observance Ceremony, graced by Associate Professor Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim, Minister of State, Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of National Development. Madrasah is a co-ed Islamic school and has students at primary, secondary and pre-university levels. CNB officer Qurratu 'Ain Aminurrashid was invited to give a talk on how students could help in keeping Singapore safe from the harms of drugs by advocating for a drug-free Singapore under the Dadah Itu Haram campaign.



MOS Faishal, Chairman of Madrasah Wak Tanjong Al-Islamiah, Mr Abdul Hamid Bin Abdullah, and students donned red and/or white attire for the occasion

ADVOCACY/KISS92 FM'S "SAY SOMETHING, SAY NO" ROADSHOW

As part of an ongoing collaboration between CNB and Singapore Press Holdings (SPH) Radio, deejays from Kiss92 FM (Juliana, Nat, Shawnrick, Shawnia and Yumiko) visited New Town Secondary School, Kent Ridge Secondary School, Dunman High School and School of the Arts Singapore for the "Say Something, Say No" roadshow. The objective of the roadshow was to instil essential public speaking skills into students, and to educate and raise awareness on the dangers of drugs and drug abuse. At the end of each session, students were invited to participate in an anti-drug script-reading contest, with the best teams winning \$300 vouchers from Popular Bookstore and to have their scripts broadcasted on Kiss92 for a month. Congrats to the winning teams!



Source: CNB



Source: Kiss92 (Instagram)

In this Part 1, read about the use of cannabis among youth and young adults in Canada post-legalisation. Look out for Part 2 in the next issue of our newsletter, where we highlight the impact of advertising on youth cannabis use intentions following recreational legalisation in Canada.

CANADA'S CANNABIS EXPERIENCE POST-LEGALISATION

1 Understanding Youth & Young Adult Cannabis Use in Canada Post-Legalisation: A Scoping Review on a Public Health Issue

Substance Abuse Treatment, Prevention, and Policy (June, 2024)



Since Canada's legalisation of recreational cannabis in 2018, about 50% of those aged 16-24 years have reported increased cannabis consumption. This scoping review examined youth cannabis use in Canada post-legalisation.



Key Takeaways of the Study

In 2022, an Expert Panel was formed to conduct a Legislative Review of the Cannabis Act. The report (published in Mar 2024) emphasised the need for increased efforts to reduce cannabis use among the youth and to increase public awareness about the health risks through prevention initiatives.

Like Uruguay and the US state of Oregon, the Panel's review of Canada's experience with cannabis and recommendations for prevention strategies post-legalisation further demonstrate the drawbacks of legalisation and harm reduction.

Key findings of the study have been grouped into the following 6 categories:

#1: Prevalence, Patterns, Trends and Characteristics

Majority of the studies examined found increased cannabis use since legalisation.

- Prevalence increased from 23% in 2017 to 27% in 2019 (Hammond et al., 2020);
- Use rates were 4 times higher in 2018-2019, than in 2016-2017 (Yang et al., 2022).

Scan for the full article:



#2: Cannabis-Related Injuries and Emergency Department (ED) Visits

Most studies showed an increase in cannabis-related ED visits post-legalisation, concerning among adolescents.

- 80% of the 581 hospitalisation cases for cannabis poisoning examined occurred post-legalisation (Myran et al., 2023);
- Increased proportion of cannabis poisoning cases in Ontario from 28% in 2018 to 40% in 2020 among those aged 16-18 years (Zhang et al., 2022).

This may be attributable to the increased availability and commercialisation of cannabis products like edibles, coupled with the lack of strict enforcement of age restrictions at cannabis retail stores.

- 76% of accidental exposures reported at a pediatric hospital post-legalisation were attributed to cannabis edibles (Coret & Rowan-Legg, 2022);
- 38% of those aged 16-19 years reported having purchased cannabis from a legal storefront (Canadian Cannabis Survey, 2022).

#3: Cannabis Use Rates and Patterns During COVID-19

Most studies found increased rates of use among youths during the pandemic.

- Odds of increased cannabis use were higher among those aged 18-29 years (Imitiaz et al., 2022) and those who used cannabis to cope with the pandemic (Leatherdale et al., 2021).



#4: Perceptions Related to Cannabis Use

Perceptions relating to cannabis use post-legalisation have been mixed.

- MacDougall & Maston (2021) found an overall normalisation of cannabis post-legalisation among undergraduates, with some describing cannabis as being healthier than prescription medicine for managing health problems;
- In other studies, youths also reported a lack of recognition of the addictiveness of cannabis (Turuba et al., 2022) and expressed the need for more evidence-informed cannabis education (Bishop et al., 2022).

Public awareness of the risks and harms of cannabis, however, remained low.

- 48% of Canadians reported not having noticed any educational campaigns/public health messages about cannabis, and 52% had not observed health warning messages on cannabis products (Canadian Cannabis Survey, 2022);
- 5 years after legalisation, the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction (CCSA) found persistent misinformation and low cannabis literacy among Canadians.



#5: Prevention Tools for Youth and Young Adults

The few studies included in this category highlighted the effectiveness of prevention tools.

- An online psychoeducational programme on cannabis for Black youths aged 16-19 years showed an increased awareness of psychosis and the effects of cannabis (Jani et al., 2022).

#6: Cannabis-Related Offences

The only study included found a general decrease in cannabis-related crimes.

- The study was based on police-reported cannabis-related crime among youths aged 12-17 years.
- This decrease was attributable to the normalisation and decriminalisation of cannabis.



READ/EXCERPT FROM 'WAITING FOR YOU'

"Waiting For You", an initiative by the Singapore Prison Service features a compilation of stories written from the perspectives of the drug abusers' family members and loved ones. In this edition, we share with you "Please Let Our Together Be Forever", which describes the emotional journey of supporting a partner through addiction, relapse, and incarceration.

Please Let Our Together Be Forever



I knew my fiancé two years ago when he was still staying with his sister and brother-in-law. I knew he had been incarcerated about five times previously for drug offences. Yet, I chose to be with him despite knowing his history as an ex-addict. In fact, it became a personal goal and motivation for me to support him through his recovery journey. At that time, I did not realise the extent of challenges that I would be facing. I just thought that love was enough to change and move him, but I was sorely mistaken.

Zac relapsed on drugs when he was placed on home supervision after his three-month stint at the Selarang Halfway House. He was initially adjusting well in the community. I would make the effort to send and fetch him to and from the halfway house for his urine tests and our daily meetups. It was my way of showing support for him. However, things started to change after 3 months. Zac did not want me to accompany him to his Urine Test (UT) reporting center and refused to show me his UT card. Initially, I did not feel anything was amiss, but I started to become suspicious when Zac's attitude towards me changed. His behaviors were starkly different from how he used to be.

Zac started off in this relationship as a romantic, loving and caring partner who often checked on my well-being. He was also extremely attentive and affectionate towards my young son. Zac was aware that his tattoos frightened my child, and he would take special care to cover them up in the presence of my son. As his extensive tattoos attracted unwanted attention from strangers, Zac understood my discomfort when people stared at us in public and would make the effort to cover up when we went out on dates. Strangely, his considerate behaviours were short-lived. Gone was the Zac I knew. He morphed into a different character who became highly suspicious, irritable and impatient towards me. He would call to scold me for no reason and would at times send texts that made no sense. That was when I saw the red flags; Zac had relapsed. I felt a whirlwind of emotions ranging from sadness to disappointment but the thought of him lying to me about being drug-free broke me. I could not understand what triggered the relapse. Could it be peer influence or work stress?

Zac's relapse caused added pressure to me as I was overwhelmed with managing my own life as a single mother and providing for my son. I felt worse when our plans to settle down was delayed as Zac was incarcerated again. Zac's sister and brother-in-law refused to be involved this time. His sister stopped replying to his letters and told me not to update her about Zac. All that Zac had left was me and his mother. Zac's mother, although concerned about him, could not help much as she was elderly and partially immobile.

During a prison visit, Zac admitted to me that he had lied about his drug use. In fact, he was actively using drugs while we were together. Zac even took it secretly during our dinner date, which was a day before he was arrested. While I thought that temporarily losing Zac to incarceration was bad enough, I did not realise that there was more to come. Zac's drug peers started harassing me via our joint social media accounts and kept asking me when Zac would be released. Despite having to put up with their insistence and negative words, I was determined to protect Zac from them and eventually blocked them on social media. I also felt blessed that I did not cross paths with them in the streets thus far. I was mentally prepared to seek help from the authorities if they continued to harass me. I could not deny that I was facing immense stress during those periods. The stress was compounded by my worry for Zac and the fear of what the future would bring.

Although I kept telling Zac that I would leave him if he went back to drugs after his release, deep inside, I knew I would never give up on him. At times, I wonder if my never-say-die attitude is the reason for Zac's relapse. Zac probably guessed that my words were just empty threats because I have never left despite his numerous relapses and imprisonments. I wish he would not take my presence for granted. Nevertheless, I love Zac and I know he can change with my help and support. I also want to help Zac realise that he must give up his negative peers if he desires positive change. I kept reminding Zac about his elderly mother and the possibility of her passing on when he is not around. I even told Zac that life is so fragile and even I could pass on in his absence. Zac would respond to my reminders with silent sobs and promises that he would change. I look forward to Zac's success in his recovery and pray that his past becomes a distant memory for us. I cannot wait for us to settle down, build a family and let this together last forever.

Note: Names and locales have been changed to protect the identities of family members.

Learn more about the harms of drugs and drug prevention at the upcoming community roadshow.

Event Name	Date/Time	Venue
Riders Aid Singapore's National Day and Racial Harmony Charity Ride 2024	1 Sep 2024, 3.30 to 6.00pm	Loyang Tua Pek Kong, 20 Loyang Way, Singapore 508774

CALL for VOLUNTEERS

Interested in sharing the drug prevention message? Email us at **CNB_Community_Partnership@cnb.gov.sg** if you are keen to help out at any of our roadshows and events!





Supporting Advocacy: The DrugFreeSG Grant

DFSG Grant

The DrugFreeSG Grant supports ground-up initiatives that focus on raising awareness of preventive drug education, enhancing individual and community resilience, and fostering a drug-free environment. Administered by NCADA on behalf of the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Fund accepts grant applications throughout the year.

DFSG Recipient: Nanyang Technological University, Cultural Activities Club, Dragon & Lion Dance



The NTU Institutional Lion Dance Competition, organised by the NTU CAC DLD, has been an annual tradition since 2000. Leveraging the platform provided by NTU CAC DLD, the competition served as a means to engage the Chinese community of youths, parents, supporters, friends, and individuals interested in Chinese arts, culture, and heritage. The event, which took place on 26 March 2023 at West Coast Community Centre, aimed to raise awareness about the perils of drug abuse, featuring a special Lion Dance performance with a tailored anti-drug message created specifically for the occasion. Vice Chairman of NCADA, Dr Chew Tuen-Ching, also extended his support for the event by attending and highlighting the importance of promoting a drug-free lifestyle within the community. The event encompassed a Preventive Drug Education (PDE) Exhibition Panel, two distinctive PDE performances, and the inclusion of PDE messages within the Guest of Honor's speech, delivered by Second Minister of Education, Dr Malik Osman. These features collectively contributed to the event's success in promoting the message of drug abuse prevention within the community.

In case you missed it, NCADA has published their Annual Report 2023. To find out more on NCADA's work initiatives, you may visit their website at www.ncada.org.sg.

HELP US SPREAD THE ANTI-DRUG MESSAGE



The **Anti-Drug Abuse Advocacy Network (A3 Network)** is a volunteer scheme jointly administered by the NCADA and CNB. The A3 Network, which is under the umbrella of the Home Team Volunteer Network comprises various groups of people who identify with, support and promote the anti-drug cause*.

**Volunteers under the Network do not represent CNB and NCADA, nor are they spokespersons of CNB and NCADA during or outside the term of deployment.*

Help us grow the A3 Network by telling your friends about us and the volunteering opportunities with CNB. Scan the QR codes for more information about the two different schemes (Adult Advocates and Youth Anti-Drug Advocates), or drop us an email at cnb_community_partnership@cnb.gov.sg.



Drop us an email at CNB_Community_Partnership@cnb.gov.sg if you would like to add your colleagues and friends into our mailing list or if you wish to unsubscribe.

If you come across drugs, or what you suspect to be drugs, you should call CNB hotline at **1800-325-6666**. Kindly note that airtime charges apply for mobile calls to 1800 service lines and calls are free of charge only if made from regular land lines.

For more information, please visit the CNB website at www.cnb.gov.sg

Connect with us:



@cnb.drugfreesg

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