



## ADVOCACY NEWSLETTER FEB 2024

### Dear Partners and fellow Advocates

This month, we are pleased to bring you highlights from the Minister's Dialogue with DrugFreeSG Champions held on 22 February. The DrugFreeSG Champions comprise teachers, counsellors, youth leaders, social workers and others who interact with youths in their domain of work and are well-placed to engage youths to counter misinformation of drugs and spread the anti-drug message to them.

In continuing our drive to build ties with strategic partners in the fight against drug abuse and get the anti-drug message to youths through parents, the National Council Against Drug Abuse (NCADA) met with the Centre for Fathering to share the work that NCADA does.

Also, read about the concerning rise in drug abuse among young individuals and women in Singapore, and a personal account from a mother to her drug abuser son, as part of our ongoing collaboration with the Singapore Prison Service.

Stay tuned for the upcoming Anti-drug Ambassador Activity 2024 which offers a fun way for you to share the anti-drug message with your 9 to 12 year old children and contribute to the anti-drug cause. And, in case you missed it, check out the latest inserts in Little Red Dot and IN Magazine.

Finally, learn about the United Against Drugs Coalition, an initiative by the Central Narcotics Bureau and NCADA, which recognises organisations and businesses committed to spreading the anti-drug message within their networks and spheres of influence.

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](mailto:cnb_community_partnership@cnb.gov.sg).

Thank you for your continued support and dedication to the drug-free cause!

## ADVOCACY/MINISTER'S DIALOGUE WITH DRUGFREE SG CHAMPIONS

On 22 February, CNB organised the Minister for Home Affairs and Minister for Law Mr K Shanmugam's Dialogue with DrugFreeSG Champions which drew an audience of more than 1,000 participants from various ministries such as MOE, MSF, MCCY and MCI. Mr Shanmugam chairs the Inter-Ministry Committee for Drug Prevention for Youths (IMC) which was formed in August 2023 to better tackle the youth drug abuse situation in Singapore via a coordinated approach involving different government agencies, schools, parents, the community and other stakeholders. The DrugFreeSG Champions will be a vital channel to amplify preventive drug education messages amongst our youths as they interact with youths in their domain of work. Members of the IMC Associate Professor Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim, Minister of State, MHA and MND, Ms Gan Siow Huang, Minister of State, MOE and MOM, Mr Eric Chua, Senior Parliamentary Secretary, MSF and MCCY also participated in the dialogue. During the dialogue session, Mr Shanmugam reaffirmed the government's zero tolerance stance against drugs. He stressed the significance of effective communication in anti-drug education, emphasising the need to understand the reasons why young individuals are exposed to drugs to effectively influence them to stay away from drugs. The session also addressed the necessity for more impactful preventive drug education tailored to resonate with today's youths.



On 19 February, NCADA Vice-Chairman Dr Chew Tuan Chiong met with CEO of Centre for Fathering (CFF), Mr Xander Ong, to share on NCADA's work on fostering a supportive environment for parents and the community to engage in meaningful conversations on drugs.

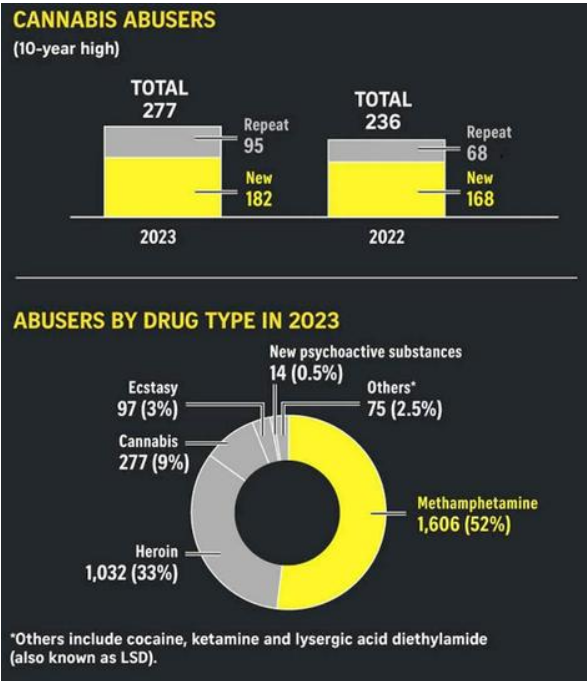
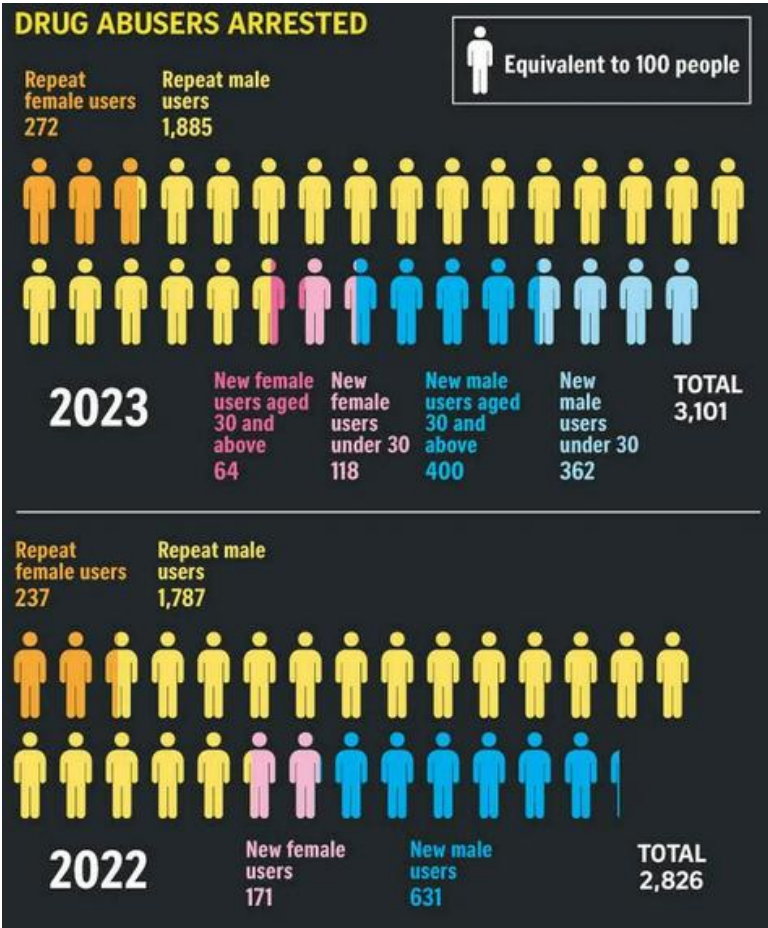


*NCADA Vice-Chairman Dr Chew Tuan Chiong with Mr Xander Ong, CEO of CFF, and his team at their office.*



The Straits Times reported on the recently released annual drug statistics report from CNB. While Singapore's drug situation remains under control, there are worrying trends. The number of new abusers arrested in 2023 increased by 18% from 2022, and more than half were below the age of 30. The number of female abusers arrested increased by 11%, from 408 in 2022 to 454 in 2023, and now form 15% of all arrested drug abusers. The number of cannabis users arrested was also the highest in a decade, and there has been a shift in public attitudes towards drugs, particularly cannabis, influenced by global trends. The article also discusses the impact of drug abuse, the types of drugs commonly abused, and the efforts by authorities to address the situation through preventive drug education and tough enforcement measures. Additionally, it emphasises the importance of meaningful conversations with young people and the need for parental support in addressing the issue. Scan the QR code below to read the full article!

AT A GLANCE...



Scan the QR code to read the full article:



<https://go.gov.sg/worryingincrease2023cnb>

Sparking Anti-Drug Conversations

1. How can parental support be leveraged to address the rising trend of drug abuse, especially among the youth?
2. What factors may be contributing to the shift in public attitudes towards drugs, particularly cannabis?
3. In what ways can Singapore address the concerning increase in drug abuse among young individuals and women?

"Waiting For You", an initiative by the Singapore Prison Service features a compilation of stories written from the perspectives of the drug abusers' families. In this edition, we share with you "Help Me Help You" – a heartfelt letter from a mother to her son reflecting the pain and anguish caused by her son's involvement in drugs and repeated incarceration.

## Help Me Help You

My dear son, you were such a good kid in school, and you always helped with household chores. Till today, I still wonder what happened after secondary school that led you down this path. I have seen you go into prison multiple times but the one that hurts the most was when we were having breakfast at home, and the police barged in to arrest you. You hugged me and said, "Mummy, I'm sorry". Seeing them arrest you really broke me.

In the past, you would always get into trouble because of your friends. Haven't you noticed that they were taking advantage of you because you are easy-going? What have your friends done for you that I have not? What do you think your friends can do for you that I cannot? When you are in prison, they are not there for you. Friends come and go. But your family is always here waiting and looking forward to your release. Do you think it is fair that you always prioritize your friends before us?

I just want to say that I appreciate all the times you have looked out for me when you were out. You accompanied me on my medical checkups and grocery shopping. It may not sound like a big deal to others but for me, it is precious time spent with my son. Sadly, you went back to prison, and I feel all alone once again. I never imagined that I would have no one to depend on at this age.

Please help me understand what makes it so hard to quit drugs. Is there something I need to know about your drug addiction to be able to help you better? As a mother, I will never give up on you. But my dear son, I am weary of living this way, are you not? I have nothing left to give, as much as I would like to. You seem to have taken for granted that I am always here to clean up after your mess. How would you feel if you woke up in prison one day and were told that I have left this world? I watched a documentary and cried when an inmate shared that he learnt of his mother's death when he saw her picture in the obituary. Is that when you will finally wake up and realize it is too late?

You have always had the freedom to choose what you wanted to do with your life. Instead of choosing to live purposefully, you chose this path. I was pleasantly surprised to hear that this time you have chosen to take up courses to improve your work skills. I hope you understand how making this choice was yours and how you can make good decisions. I am also excited by the prospect of us working together, as you sounded enthusiastic about my online business. When you are out, there will be many people willing to support you. The question is: Are you ready to give up your old habits and let people help you get better? Are you willing to forge a better future for yourself? Can you trust the learning process and not be easily discouraged? Although people may see incarceration as a negative experience, I see it as an opportunity for you to learn from your mistakes and make changes.

Our family will always pray for you and support you. I do not care what anyone says about you. You are my son, and I know you can live a better life. We cannot change the past, but we can work on the future. I believe you can be responsible for others and yourself. I hope one day you would be responsible enough to have your own family. I hope to see some changes in your actions rather than just hearing your empty promises. I just want you to change for yourself. That way I will die happy knowing you did something for yourself. You will always be Mama's baby, and I miss you so much.

## [Coming soon!] Anti-drug Ambassador Activity 2024



Calling all primary schools! A brand new Anti-drug Ambassador Activity 2024 is coming your way with BRAND NEW storylines and exciting activities. Schools who participate in the activity from April to November 2024 stand a chance to win a \$500 cash prize for the highest participation rate. Schools can also take part in the Best Anti-Drug Montage competition and stand to win \$500.

Stay tuned for more updates, and we look forward to your participation!



Anti-Drug Advocacy Starts From Young

ADVERTORIAL

# JOIN CAPTAIN DRUG BUSTER ON HIS ADVENTURES!

YOUR ROLE AS AN ADA IS VERY IMPORTANT.

ANTI-DRUG ADVOCATES (ADAs)\*, ASSEMBLE!  
WELCOME TO YOUR FIRST DAY.

YOUR MISSION IS TO HELP YOUR PEERS STAY AWAY FROM DRUGS.

HERE ARE SOME MEANINGFUL THINGS YOU'LL BE DOING.

YOU'LL BE THERE FOR YOUR FRIENDS WHEN THEY FACE DIFFICULTIES.

YOU'LL SPREAD THE DRUG-FREE MESSAGE

Drugs are not the solution to your problem. If you need help, I'm here for you.

SAY NO TO DRUGS

YOU'LL PLAY TOGETHER

AND EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ON THE HARMFUL EFFECTS OF DRUGS.

Being an ADA is rewarding. Make the right choice to stay healthy and drug-free!

\*The ADA is a volunteer and empowers young people who are passionate about the anti-drug cause with opportunities to advocate for a drug-free Singapore.

Scan to watch this video to learn how you can help your friends around you stay drug-free!

BRINGING YOU BY CNB

ADVERTORIAL

## Find your character in the drug-free future

Anti-Drug Advocate Anna Megan Kong shares how she discovered her passion for volunteering

Curiosity led this 20-year-old business student with a love for crime fiction to volunteering. Learning about the severity of drug abuse from these books, it sparked her interest to sign up as an Anti-Drug Advocate (ADA), where she's had opportunities to actively share the anti-drug message with her peers as a student. Read on to learn what Megan does as an ADA!

Whenever my friends get stressed, I always make sure to be there for them and lend a listening ear. As an ADA, I share advice on the right path and guide them towards making the right choices.

It's important to stay motivated, so I'm working on a website to educate children on the harms of drugs.

Are you passionate about the anti-drug cause like Megan? Keen to meet other like-minded individuals? Scan here to find out more about how you can be an ADA too.

For always loved reading. Some of the stories I've read highlighted the harm that drug abuse can cause on a person and the people around them. This inspired me to do something on my own part, as I signed up to be an ADA.

Meeting new people is my favourite part! It's a fulfilling experience getting to share with others on the importance of leading a drug-free life.

Anti-Drug Advocate Anna Megan Kong

BRINGING YOU BY CNB

ICYMI: In January’s edition of Little Red Dot and IN Magazine, we dive into what life is like as an Anti-Drug Advocate (ADA) and what we can do to stay drug-free! All schools that subscribe to the publication should have received a copy by now. If not, scan below to read the articles.



<https://go.gov.sg/lrd-jan2024>



<https://go.gov.sg/in-jan2024>

## #DidYouKnow

### **United Against Drugs Coalition (UADC): Pledging a commitment to DrugFreeSG**

Launched on 25 April 2017, the United Against Drugs Coalition (UADC) is an initiative by the Central Narcotics Bureau and the National Council Against Drug Abuse (NCADA). It serves to recognise organisations and businesses\* that have pledged their commitment to the anti-drug cause to spread the anti-drug message within their networks and spheres of influence. For example, some of the organisations show their support by lighting up their building façade/website in the shade of green/white (colours of the anti-drug ribbon) during the annual DrugFreeSG Light-up on 26 June. Join us in the light-up to show our support for a drug-free Singapore!

*\*The listing of organisations and businesses in the UADC does not represent any official endorsement from CNB and NCADA of their products or services.*

### **Differentiated rehabilitation pathways for drug abusers**

To help drug abusers successfully reintegrate into society and help reduce recidivism, differentiated pathways of rehabilitation and treatment have been introduced in Singapore. Those assessed to have a low risk of relapse may be placed on community-based supervision programmes, while those assessed to have a higher risk of relapse will undergo treatment and rehabilitation in the Drug Rehabilitation Centre before being placed on a basic structured supervision regime to help them with their rehabilitation process. The support of families, loved ones, friends and other emotional and mental support providers would greatly complement CNB's supervision regime and increase the drug abusers chances of recovery.

CNB is not involved in paid counselling services to the public, nor has CNB authorised any company to conduct such activities on its behalf. For those who know of anyone currently in-risk, they are advised to persuade such persons to surrender themselves to the CNB or seek help from the National Addictions Management Services/Institute of Mental Health to address their drug abuse problem and minimise the harm that they are causing to themselves and to those around them through early intervention.

Abusers caught purely for drug consumption offences are usually sent for treatment and rehabilitation and will not hold a criminal record for their drug abuse offence. Those suspected to have committed criminal offences or drug-related offences of a different nature, such as trafficking, will be charged in court for the drug consumption offence under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1973.

Members of the public can read more about the rehabilitation pathways available to drug abusers on the CNB website, or scan the QR codes below:



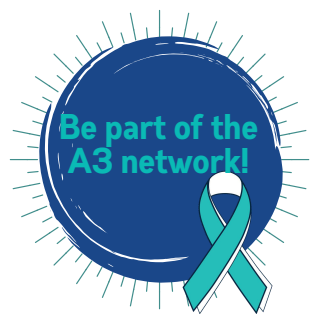
<https://go.gov.sg/adultdrugabusers>



<https://go.gov.sg/youthdrugabusers>



# 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.

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 different schemes, or drop us an email at [cnb\\_community\\_partnership@cnb.gov.sg](mailto:cnb_community_partnership@cnb.gov.sg)



Scan here to find out about the A3 Network and different advocates schemes



Anti-Drug Advocate Programme for youths aged 17 - 25 years old

Scan below to find out about the **Virtual Heritage Gallery** that you can access at your convenience. Access PDE resources from our **PDE Handbook online**:



Scan here for the virtual heritage gallery



Scan here for the PDE Handbook

Drop us an email at [CNB\\_Community\\_Partnership@cnb.gov.sg](mailto:CNB_Community_Partnership@cnb.gov.sg) if you would like to unsubscribe or add your colleagues into our mailing list!

If you come across drugs, or what you suspect to be drugs, you should call CNB hotline at **1800-325-6666**

For more information, please visit the CNB website at [www.cnb.gov.sg](http://www.cnb.gov.sg)

Connect with us:



@cnb.drugfreesg