



ADVOCACY NEWSLETTER MAY 2024

Dear Partners and fellow Advocates

This month, we are pleased to share with you the key highlights from the Parliament Reception on 8th May in conjunction with Ministerial Statement on Singapore's National Drug Control Policy and the inaugural annual Drug Victims Remembrance Day on the third Friday of May which falls on 17th May this year. Many of our partners and advocates were part of these memorable events.

Continuing our collaboration with the Singapore Prison Service, we present 'A Mother's Unanswered Questions', a personal account reflecting a mother's enduring struggle and heartache as she grapples with her son's drug addiction.

In the final three-part cannabis series based on the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) report 2022, we examine the impacts of cannabis legalisation.

To enable you to spread the anti-drug message easily, we share bite-sized information from our Preventive Drug Education package.

Also, check out the various anti-drug events and competitions that you can participate in. These events provide valuable learning opportunities, enabling us to work together towards a drug-free society.

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 supporting in our mission for a drug-free society!

ADVOCACY/MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON SINGAPORE'S NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL POLICY

On 8 May, Minister for Home Affairs and Minister for Law, Mr K Shanmugam, delivered a Ministerial Statement on Singapore's National Drug Control Policy. He highlighted the challenging drug situation, both abroad and locally, and the need for a robust response.



A reception, hosted by Minister of State, Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of National Development Associate Professor Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim, was held in conjunction with the delivery of the Ministerial Statement, where approximately 120 former drug abusers and their loved ones were invited to watch the proceedings in the Parliament. Prime Minister Mr Lee Hsien Loong, Deputy Prime Minister Mr Lawrence Wong, Senior Minister Mr Teo Chee Hean and members of the Inter-Ministry Committee on Drug Prevention for Youths including Mr Tan Kiat How, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of National Development and Ministry of Communications and Information, Mr Heng Chee How, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Defence, Ms Gan Siow Huang, Minister of State, Ministry of Education & Ministry of Manpower, Mr Alvin Tan, Minister of State, Ministry of Trade and Industry & Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth and Ms Rahayu Mahzam, Senior Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Health & Ministry of Law, were also at the reception to show their support for the former drug abusers and their loved ones.



The journey to recover is not easy – it is challenging and requires many helping hands. Those who offer their support and guidance play a crucial role in facilitating the reintegration of ex-abusers into society. To all who have dedicated themselves, whether as counsellors, mentors, volunteers, or advocates, your commitment is deeply appreciated!



Starting from 2024, the Drug Victims Remembrance Day will be observed on the third Friday of May each year. The significance of this day is to remember the victims of drugs by creating awareness of how family and society, apart from the abusers, are harmed by drugs.

The inaugural Drug Victims Observance Day took place on 17 May 2024 at Ngee Ann City Civic Plaza. We are honored to have Minister for Home Affairs and Minister for Law, Mr K Shanmugam, grace the observance event, along with more than 250 guests, including DrugFreeSG Champions and students from all our junior colleges, Centralised Institute and institutes of higher learning.



If you missed the exhibition at Ngee Ann City Civic Plaza, fret not! Part of the exhibition is making its way Singapore from now to 21 July 2024. There will be immersive and interactive installations that will allow you to learn about the repercussions of drugs on the family and society. We hope to see you there!

Venue	Dates
Paya Lebar Quarter L1 Outdoor Plaza 10 Paya Lebar Rd Singapore 409057	31 May – 2 Jun
Suntec City L1 Atrium (Near Esplanade MRT) 3 Temasek Blvd, Singapore 038983	14 Jun – 16 Jun
Compass One L2, Event Square 1 Sengkang Square, Singapore 545078	21 Jun – 23 Jun
JEM B1 Jem Market 50 Jurong Gateway Rd, Singapore 608549	28 Jun – 30 Jun
Northpoint City L1 South Atrium B & C (Near Uniqlo) 930 Yishun Ave 2, Singapore 769098	5 Jul – 7 Jul
Jurong Point L1 Central Stage (CS) 2 & 3 (Near McDonald's) 1 Jurong West Central 2, Singapore 648886	12 Jul – 14 Jul
Heartbeat @ Bedok Atrium 3 11 Bedok North Street 1, Singapore 469662	19 Jul – 21 Jul

For more information, visit go.gov.sg/rday2024microsite and make a promise to your loved ones to stay drug-free!

Scan the QR code for
the microsite:



<https://go.gov.sg/rday2024microsite>

Stay tuned to CNB’s social media pages (@CNB.DrugFreeSG) as we share information and updates about Drug Victims Remembrance Day! We seek your support to spread awareness and rally support to protect our community from the harms of drugs that extend beyond the abuser.

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

Event Name	Date/Time	Venue
National Family Festival (NFF)	1 June & 2 June	Singapore Expo Hall 2
Emergency Preparedness Day by Admiralty C2E & Admiralty Zone 4 RN	22 June, 5pm to 9pm	Blk 582 Woodlands Drive 16, Void Deck
Heroes Unite: Fam Fun Fest by HomeTeamNS	23 June, 1pm to 3pm	31 Ah Hood Road Singapore 329979

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!



#DIDYOUKNOW/PREVENTIVE DRUG EDUCATION (PDE) INFORMATION PACKAGE

Among the many resources that you can find on CNB's website is a handy Preventive Drug Education Information Package. Comprising a handbook, a deck of powerpoint slides and a list of commonly asked questions and answers, the package is to help members of the public understand the global and local drug situation and Singapore's approach to tackle the drug problem. Check out this month's content that you can share with your family, friends, colleagues and others, when speaking on the anti-drug cause.

Are you ready to R.I.S.E up to help someone in need to lead a positive, drug-free life?

There are ways to look out for the people around you and guide them onto leading a healthy, drug-free lifestyle. R.I.S.E up and make a difference by playing a positive role in someone else's life!

Teach Refusal skills:

- Avoid situations where you might be influenced or pressured to try drugs
- Be bold and firm – say “no” when you are offered drugs
- Use humour to lighten the tension or change the subject
- If all else fails, walking away is the best way to protect yourself



Look out for Indicators such as:

- Sudden drop in performance grades
- Exhibits extreme mood swings
- Displays poor body coordination
- Has bloodshot/sunken eyes
- Skips school/work regularly
- Hangs around with a different group of friends

Start a conversation and use teachable moments to highlight the harms of drugs:

- Use well-known celebrities/news cases
- Share personal encounters
- Ask about healthy coping styles

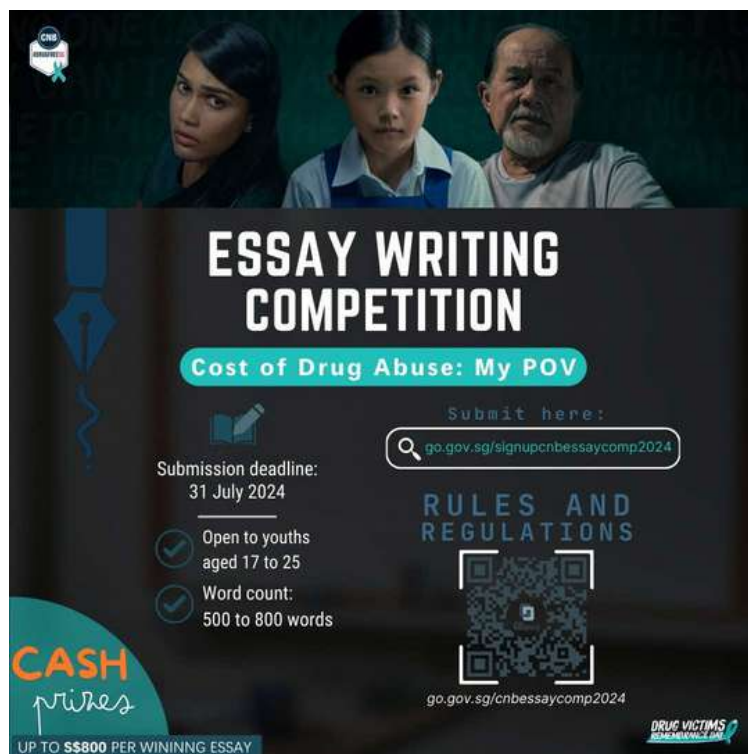


Engage people meaningfully:

- Listen to them when they feel stressed and teach them coping skills. Suggest healthy group activities to widen their social circle.
- Involve them in work that requires higher responsibility so that they are gainfully occupied and feel valued.
- Equip them with the skills to refuse drug offers. This may include decision-making skills to assess the consequences of the different opinions they will face, as well as creative thinking and problem-solving skills.
- Develop their self-awareness so that they can recognise their own strengths and weaknesses. Give praise where it is due.
- Find teachable moments to emphasise that substance abuse is not the right way to fit in.

Scan the QR code for
the full content:





Are you passionate about topics relating to drugs and drug abuse? Do you have a unique perspective to share? If so, read on!

Theme: Cost of Drug Abuse: My POV

In conjunction with the Drug Victims Remembrance Day, CNB is organising an essay writing competition to encourage conversations and reflections on the multifaceted impact of drug abuse, extending beyond the individual abuser to encompass its **effects on families, communities, and the society at large**.

Be Inspired!

To help you get started, watch the following montage video – a compilation of news articles, statistics and video clips from local and overseas cases, reflecting on the extent of harms of drugs beyond the abuser.

Scan the QR code
for the montage
video:



Scan here for the
rules and
regulations:



For enquiries, please contact:

- Hazel at hazel_chua@cnb.gov.sg
- Jue Hui at goh_jue_hui@cnb.gov.sg
- WhatsApp: <https://wa.link/ghrfmu>

Thank you to those who have joined us at our Videography Workshop on 20 April 2024 once again! For those who missed it, check out the live recordings on our microsite where our CNB officer shared insights on anti-drug efforts and anecdotes, and guest speakers Josiah and Kyle gave tips on creating a good video!

Scan the QR code for
the live recording:



<https://go.gov.sg/drugfreevideocompetition2024>

It is still not too late to gather your team of up to 5 members to take part in the competition and stand a chance to win attractive cash prizes! Here's your chance to showcase your craft and create awareness of the harms of drug abuse through the power of storytelling!

Stay tuned to CNB's social media pages (@CNB.DrugFreeSG) as we share information and tips that may help you in creating your short film!



Deadline is on **30 Aug 2024**. Find out more at **drugfree.sg** or email **contact@drugfree.sg** if you have any enquiries.

We seek schools' and organisations' support to promote this competition and encourage youths who are interested in video production to submit their entries.

This marks the final instalment of the three-part series based on the INCB Report 2022, examining the impacts of cannabis legalisation. Part 1 in March’s newsletter examined the key challenges of cannabis legalisation and Part 2 in April’s newsletter delved into the policy and legislative models of cannabis control adopted by various countries.

In this third part, we see clear evidence that cannabis legalisation has not achieved its intended outcome of eliminating the illicit drug market. In fact, it has shown to be detrimental to the public safety and health of jurisdictions that have embraced legalisation. In light of increasingly liberal attitudes towards cannabis across the globe, it is of utmost importance to strengthen local preventive drug education efforts to keep the public and youths informed on cannabis harms.

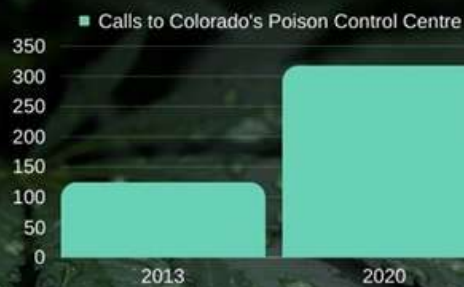


#2 Detriments to Public Health

The increased individual frequency and amount of cannabis consumption may have led to various adverse medical consequences, raising the no. of emergency visits and treatment admissions.



Following the legalisation of recreational cannabis in Colorado in 2013, the annual number of calls to the state's Poison Control Centre increased exponentially (125 vs 318).



The emergency room visits and admissions related to cannabis use also increased by 56% from 2016 to 2019, after the opening of retail sales market in California.



In 2017 and 2018 (4 and 5 years post-legalisation), 1 in 10 people seeking help at Uruguay's rehabilitation facilities sought help for cannabis problems. The demand for addiction assistance among people who use cannabis has since grown even more exponentially.



Unfortunately, these negative public health impacts are coupled with a lowered risk perception of cannabis use in countries such as Uruguay and the U.S. This is due to the normalisation and trivialisation of cannabis use, reinforced by widespread legalisation.

#3 Cannabis-Related Traffic Accidents

While the impacts of cannabis legalisation on traffic accidents have yielded some diverging findings, there are notable adverse outcomes.



After the opening of cannabis dispensaries, studies found evidence of statistically significant, large increases in:

- Fatal car crash rates in Washington and Colorado
- Hospitalisations for motor vehicle accidents and injuries related to cannabis abuse in Colorado
- Auto insurance collision claim frequencies in Colorado, Washington and Oregon between 2012 to 2016

In Canada, a review of the evidence confirms that acute cannabis consumption produces a small to moderate increase in crash risks.

#4 Illicit Markets and Organised Crime Remain

Ultimately, legalisation has not successfully addressed the key problems it promised to eliminate, i.e. the growth of illicit markets and related organised crime. Albeit to varying extents, illicit markets have continued to exist alongside legal cannabis industries. They contribute to:



of Uruguay's total cannabis supply



of Canada's total cannabis supply



of California's total cannabis supply



- The U.S Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) estimates that a well-established drug trafficking organisation in Colorado can generate millions of dollars through illicit activities related to cannabis.
- The expanding cannabis industry also aims to make profit by increasing sales without regard for public health. As the retail sale of cannabis is taxed on the basis of weight, retailers are incentivised to increase the THC content per gram of product in order to reduce cost and maximise profits.

In Conclusion

The impact of cannabis legalisation is varied and complex. Regardless, it is clear that **legalisation has not fully achieved the intended goals in terms of addressing drug-related issues.**

Scan the QR code for
the full report:



"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 "A Mother's Unanswered Questions" – a personal account of a mother's emotional journey as she copes with her son's drug addiction, grappling with unanswered questions and seeking understanding amidst the pain and heartache.

A Mother's Unanswered Questions

I am 84 years old and I have been living with uncertainties since 1991 when Fazi was in his 20s. My heart has ached for 29 years as I carry around a bag of unanswered questions concerning Fazi's chronic drug problems. To this day, I cannot comprehend why Fazi had to "eat" drugs over and over again. What problems did he face that repeatedly drove him down this path? I reminisced the period before Fazi became addicted to drugs. He was a good son. Although a little quiet, he had a pleasant and polite demeanour about him. He was an independent child who even helped take care of his sisters when I was at work. He rarely asked me for money; and would never help himself to anything that did not belong to him. I have never had to discipline or punish him as he was extremely well-behaved.

So why did he change? Was it peer influence? Even so, how could I blame his friends? He has a thinking brain with an ability to make choices and decisions. No one force-fed him with drugs. And if he was indeed influenced, what made him listen to his friends and disregard his mother's advice? Do people who use drugs not really know who has their best interests at heart? Or do they not care?

My most dreadful and painful memory was of Fazi's fourth incarceration. I felt as though someone had ripped my heart out and shredded it into pieces. It was during the period when all my other children started leaving my home to build their own families. Fazi was hauled back to prison. Although I did not show it, I was lonely, afraid and crumbling inside. I wondered why Fazi did not think of how much his mother needed him. Was I not important at all? Did he not consider my feelings, even for a little bit? I cannot begin to count the number of times I have cried oceans of tears when I learnt of Fazi's relapse. Fazi said he did not like to see me cry, so why did he continuously act in ways that brought tears and sorrows to me?

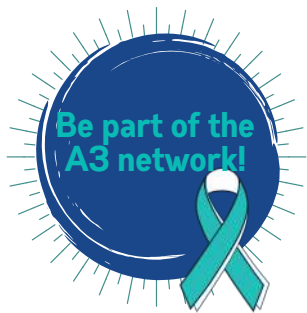
I called the police to arrest him on one occasion. It was not because I wanted to see him back in prison. Rather, I knew he would lose control of his drug use if he remained out there. It was unsafe for him. As a mother, I only know of two choices. Either I watch my son spiral further into his drug use and die from it, or I get him arrested so that he would at least be safe from drugs.

The second option felt right. Yet, when he was arrested, I was burdened with more questions swirling in my head. "Why? Why did he do it again?" "What was so delicious about drugs?" I was desperately seeking answers so I asked the Central Narcotics Bureau (CNB) officer if he could let me try some drugs. All the officer said was, "Don't be crazy, Aunty!"

I went around seeking clarity on my son's drug problems. The religious leader at the Halfway House told me to support Fazi and pray for him. That was exactly what I have been doing every single day for the last three decades. I have prayed all the way to the Holy City of Mecca. I have stood by him, encouraged and supported him in every way possible. What more am I supposed to do? This is my only son. I am not willing to see his downfall. Will I give up on him? Definitely not. But why does it feel like he has given up on me? I tried to find comfort by talking to my friends who reminded me to be patient. It has been so long. Have I not exercised enough patience? Another question crossed my mind. Was Fazi facing marital issues that led him to his relapse? Why did he let his wife go? She was such a good woman. Was there another secret he was keeping from me? I do not know.

I have asked Fazi these questions hoping that his answers would help me understand him and his situation better. Every time I asked, he either laughed it off or kept silent. Occasionally, I would feel a flicker of hope when he promised to change. Other than that, I am still in the dark. I do not think he would answer my questions. Perhaps he is looking for answers himself. All I know is that this is a test from the Almighty and I place my faith in His plans. I pray not just for Fazi but for all prisoners and their families. I hope all prisoners realise the struggles their families go through in their absence. And I pray we will find the answers to all our questions; the kind of questions I have asked and am still asking.

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 different schemes, or drop us an email at 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 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:

