SEVENTIETH REGULAR CICAD SESSION
November 16th-19th, 2021
Virtual Session

DR. NOVIA T. CARTER-LOOKIE
SESSION 2, PANEL 2
CHALLENGES FOR EVIDENCE–BASED PREVENTION IN PANDEMIC TIMES
DEMAND REDUCTION PANEL - CICAD 70

CHALLENGES FOR EVIDENCE –BASED PREVENTION IN PANDEMIC TIMES

DR. NOVIA T. CARTER-LOOKIE
DIRECTOR, BAHAMAS NATIONAL DRUG COUNCIL
“Substance mis-use” prevention aims to stop or delay people from beginning to use psychoactive substances. It can also help those who have started to use to avoid the development of substance use disorders and associated health and social problems. Prevention also has a broader intent: to encourage the healthy and safe development of children and young people, so they can realise their talents and potential (European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, 2019).
SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION

•“Effective drug prevention contributes significantly to the positive engagement of children, young people and adults with their families, schools, workplace and community”. - UNODC
The COVID-19 pandemic has brought major challenges to the substance misuse field, as it requires novel prevention strategies to adapt for the impact of the pandemic.

“Effective prevention interventions will be based on a good understanding of the nature and extent of substance use in a community”. 
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Danger  Opportunity
CHALLENGES THAT IMPACT PREVENTION INTERVENTIONS DURING COVID-19

Family Programs

GOAL: The development and implementation of family-based prevention programs to enhance family bonding and relationships through the implementation of programs: to enhance parenting skills; to assist in the development family rules concerning drug use and training in drug education.

Challenges

• Low attendance rates and stress
• Isolation within family clusters
• Parental monitoring and supervision
• Need for additional training on rule-setting; discipline, communication

Solution: Training conducted with National Parenting Program (court mandated) and Department of Social Services Hotline Training
CHALLENGES THAT IMPACT PREVENTION INTERVENTIONS DURING COVID-19

School Programs

Goal: Virtual Prevention programs designed to address risk factors for drug abuse, such as aggressive behavior, poor social skills, and academic difficulties.

Challenges

• Adapting to the virtual environment:

• Access

• Training for staff

• Resources

• Solution: Multi-disciplinary teams and Partnerships – Gang Unit Royal Bahamas Police Force, Ministry of Agriculture (School Gardens and Chicken Farm Project) Guidance Counsellors, School Health Nurses, Adolescent Health Clinic, Youth Empowerment Program, Churches, Pop-up Festivals (Take it to Them)

• On going issue: 30% of students not on the virtual platform
Community Programs

Challenges: Stand alone community based program were not effective

Solution: Community prevention programs that combine family-based and school-based programs
LESSONS LEARNT

• Comprehensive Need assessments must be done – never assume
• Community (physical and human) Resources are critical
• Prevention can not be done in isolation – community Stakeholders
• Slow down and develop a theory of change: Evidence – Base principals
• Community Partnership is key – collaboration
• Continuous Quality Improvement
• Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
• Media Prevention Programs - youth led
• Marriage between: Virtual Environment and Face to face
“Effective prevention interventions will be based on a good understanding of the nature and extent of substance use in a community”.
THANK YOU