

Renew

COMMUNIQUE

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Message from the Editor & Chief Executive Officer



Marietta Carrington
CEO

Welcome to Renew Communique! After a two-year hiatus primarily caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2023, we return to providing our audiences and stakeholders with practical, current, and insightful information that has been the hallmark of our Renew Magazines over several years. Our goal continues to be to inform and educate.

What's New?

First - Renew Magazine is now Renew Communique – with a fresh and rebranded look. Have you noticed our change in logos, colours, visuals and tag line?

We offer spaces of hope and healing for anyone in the world from anywhere in the world.

Second - We have rebranded to include a change in tag line from “A Place of Healing from Addiction” to “Spaces of Hope and Healing” to reflect our focus to offer spaces of hope and healing for anyone in the world from anywhere in the world and the range of mental health, addiction, and wellness services that individuals and their families can access.

Third – You have told us that you would prefer to have the information provided in “bite size” pieces. We have heard from you and instead of publishing a yearly magazine with a chockful of information, we will be giving it to you quarterly.

What can you expect in the future?

We will continue to focus on a single topic or theme that provides critical insights into what’s trending in the mental health and addiction space and from qualified individuals. It is one of the avenues where our various stakeholders can turn to for credible information and become more educated and informed about the complexities of mental health, substance use, abuse and addiction but more importantly how to live healthy, happy and productive lives.

The Health and Wellbeing of Youths and Adolescents will be our theme for 2023.

Adolescence is a challenging period in the

best of circumstances. However, in the past three years, our young people have experienced extraordinary mental health challenges. If intervention does not take place, this can have a negative impact for years to come.

In this first issue you will hear from Dominique Harris, an internationally trained, Masters’ Level Clinical Psychologist who has practiced in a variety of clinical residential and outpatient settings in Barbados and internationally. Her research papers and experience on substance use and the treatment of substance use disorders give her a unique perspective on the relationship between mental health and addiction and childhood trauma. She will share on the topic “Treating adults with childhood trauma”. Dominique sits at Verdun & Marina “Clinical Table” and provides counselling services to clients with specialized needs around trauma and emotional wellness.

We offer spaces of hope and healing for anyone in the world, from anywhere in the world including the next generation!

Treating Adults with Childhood Traumas



Dominique Harris,
Clinical Psychologist

There is still a great deal of stigma attached to the idea of being an addict or alcoholic in Barbados. In my experience, one of the greatest ways to combat that stigma is through understanding. If you walked into the doors of Verdun and Marina House you will meet a group of resilient men and women, many of whom have endured extraordinary levels of trauma and adversity – quite often beginning during their childhood and into their adolescent years.

The high level of adversity and traumatic experiences seen in the clients of Verdun and or Marina is no coincidence – trauma and addiction often go hand

in hand. For many clients, substances became a way to cope with their experience.

Research indicates that 83% of all individuals who are receiving treatment for a substance use disorder also have another diagnosable mental health disorder. Furthermore, 46.4% of individuals with a diagnosis of PTSD, also met criteria for a Substance Use Disorder.

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Adverse childhood experiences such as abuse, violence and neglect are associated with increased rates of substance use, addiction, and overdose. Risk and severity of addiction appear to increase with the number of adverse events experienced – e.g., for each additional adverse event experienced, the odds of developing a substance use disorder increases by 30-40%. A statistic that reminds us that for many, substances are often a way of coping with undiagnosed and untreated trauma symptoms.

At Verdun and Marina, one of the most important aspects of treating adults with childhood trauma is education. Prior to entering treatment, many of the men and women were not given the knowledge to understand the experiences that they were going through. For them, learning that symptoms such as nightmares, flashbacks, aggression, avoidance, and negative thoughts and feelings are all common reactions to trauma, is in itself a healing experience. It helps clients

Risk and severity of addiction appear to increase with the number of adverse events experienced



Above: Clients in Session on the Grounds

About the Author

Dominique Harris is an internationally trained Clinical Psychologist having successfully completing her post graduate studies in Master of Arts in Clinical Psychology at the University of Central Florida. She has practiced in a variety of clinical residential and outpatient settings. Dominique collaborates at Verdun & Marina “Clinical Table” as part of the multi-disciplinary team and provides counselling services to clients with specialized needs around trauma and emotional wellness. Most of her time is dedicated to our female population.

to understand that what they are going through is a normal reaction to an abnormal experience. Furthermore, it provides them with one of the most important aspects of treatment – a feeling of hope that they can recover from both their trauma and addiction.

Instead of judging, shaming, and stigmatizing let us focus on greater compassion, understanding, and education for persons who have experienced childhood trauma. In doing this, we can support people in understanding their experience and having hope that healing is possible.

References:

1. Tuell, C. (2022, October 27). Trauma and substance use: A complex relationship. Lindner Center of Hope. Retrieved April 15, 2023, from <https://lindnercenterofhope.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Education-Day-2022-Trauma-and-Substance-Abuse-A-Complex-Relationship.pdf>

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Teen Intervene

This is an initiative by the Marina Wellness Clinic designed especially for youths and adolescents.

Transforming Lives - One Teen at a Time

Adolescence is a pivotal developmental phase for youth. Significant emotional, physical and mental challenges arise throughout this transitional period. Research shows that the development of the adolescent brain plays a critical role in shaping their behaviour.

The years between 11 and 16 are crucial to building healthy coping and decision-making skills.

Common traits of teen behavior:

- ◇ Difficulty holding back or controlling emotions
- ◇ Preference for high-excitement, exploration and new activities
- ◇ Inadequate planning and limited judgment
- ◇ Riskier and impulsive behaviors
- ◇ More responsive to new experiences and influences, both positive and negative

Environmental impact on our most vulnerable teens can be linked to the current COVID-19 pandemic, increased poverty, inequality, educational losses and greater gender vulnerabilities, including higher levels of gender-based violence within the family setting.

The international state of health emergency created by the global pandemic, social distancing and educational restrictions has further impacted the healthy social development of youth, causing critical disruptions to their emotional and mental development.

Resumption of in-person classroom teaching revealed that there has been a recognizable and predicted increase in stress, anxiety, depression and negative social behaviour and an associated impact on a young person's mental and emotional health.

...intervening to lessen potential risk for challenging behaviours like addiction and poor consequential thinking in adolescents is vital.



Upper: The girls spent time working on what confidence means to each of them and as a group in order to work together as a team and share their experiences about being confident.

Lower: The boys learnt about healthy ways to cope with anger. The stick fighting was done to teach how to channel emotions through martial arts.

Left: Creative Journaling is another activity that the girls learnt how to express their thoughts and feelings by being their authentic self. They were able to make and design their own journals

That’s why preventing or intervening to lessen potential risk for challenging behaviours like addiction and poor consequential thinking in adolescents is vital.

Nationally there is a heightened need for counselling and a range of therapeutic interventions.

Our solution: Teen Intervene and CONFIDENT Me!

C.O.N.F.I.D.E.N.T. Me is a gender-specific youth and adolescent programme that is within our Teen Intervene curriculum. It is designed to improve young persons’ psychosocial function through self–confidence and self-worth exercises, with long-term impact on adolescent development.

The programme curriculum incorporates creative modalities to produce longer periods of well-being and productivity amongst participants. The maximum number for participation in any single cohort is eight, intentionally designed to create an intimate environment where engagement and connection are more easily facilitated and potential challenges are quickly identified.

The Benefits For Our Teens

We piloted this programme with an Easter summer camp with teens without access to traditional therapy, or who may have difficulty communicating deep personal issues.

“I like the fact that you can speak openly”
- 13 year old boy

“It taught me to be patient and less easily angered.”
- 15 year old girl

“I learnt new things and social skills”
- 14 year old boy

“Being here was not what I wanted to be as part of my day but, after doing the sessions on self care, and knowing what trauma looks like, I now appreciated why I was chosen. Knowing I have a lot that I go through, I was not judged and I realized I was not alone with my problems. They have other girls like me. So Ms. Williams made me feel comfortable and safe.”

“Ms. Williams was really cool and she taught about how to understand my body with all the abuse I went through. The group encouraged me to speak out more about the pain and how to love my body again.”



Above: Confident Me Boys

The results were as we predicted! Our Teens need our support!

In C.O.N.F.D.E.N.T. Me, teens learn how to

- ◇ Develop a healthier sense of self-worth.
- ◇ Gain personal tools and resources to:
 - cope with physical, emotional, mental, and social issues
 - work through difficult problems and
 - improve personal communication skills.
- ◇ Increase their range of motion and mobility, through experiential and psycho-education sessions.
- ◇ Express themselves and share what they are feeling, while learning to understand themselves.
- ◇ Develop new ways of coping, thereby reducing anxiety, bullying, low self-esteem and behaviour contracts, among others.

For more information on how you can support our Teen Intervene and Confident Me initiative please contact any one of the following:-

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Verdun & Marina

Verdun & Marina are projects of The Substance Abuse Foundation.

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