



RENEW

Perseverance

Through the Pandemic

per.se.ver.ance
pur-suh-veer-uhns

Noun

Steadfastness in doing something despite difficulty or delay in achieving success.

Continuance in a state of grace leading finally to a state of glory.

Synonyms

persistence | tenacity | steadfastness



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How to Help



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and lead productive lives.

OUR VISION

To be the leading, internationally accredited
institution in the Caribbean in addiction treatment
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OUR VALUES

Treat every person with dignity and respect | Committed to the
12-step fellowship | Always hopeful and understanding | Open to
new ideas | Teamwork

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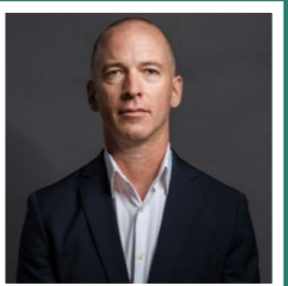
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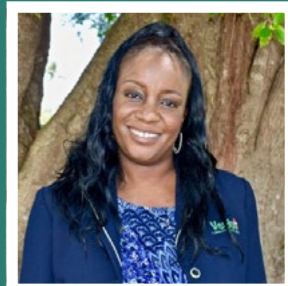
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"All of us must find ways to feel hopeful. It fuels our energy and gives our lives meaning and purpose!"

Marietta Carrington, Editor & Chief Executive Officer

Giving Hope When Everything Around Us Seems Hopeless

Message from the Editor & Chief Executive Officer

Marietta Carrington, Editor & Chief Executive Officer

In previous years, our team would typically sit at “The Table” to discuss and agree upon a topic of national importance to our country and our communities. This didn’t happen for our 2021 edition of Renew Magazine. It just seemed to be the most natural thing for us to dedicate this edition to the most pressing thing facing our world, our region, Barbados and our communities - the COVID-19 Pandemic.

We want to acknowledge the devastation but more importantly we want to be a catalyst for courage and resilience! We want to be one of the sources of gratitude and HOPE!

2020 was being planned to be a big celebratory year for all of us at Verdun House and Marina House. We had hoped to shout out loud about our 20 years of achievements and very pivotal role that we have played in providing critical mental health and addiction services to Barbados and our Region.

We had hoped to allow our stakeholders to hear firsthand from those individuals and families whose lives have been restored and transformed by treatment. We wanted to provide a physical platform where families could share their individual’s stories. We wanted to thank our staff and frontline mental health and addiction professionals who give selflessly every day.

We had hoped to publicly thank our founding directors for their passion, foresight and commitment to establish a treatment centre of world class standards; giving Barbadians and especially the most vulnerable among us an alternative to the Government-owned Psychiatric Hospital for mental health and addiction services.

HEAL, GROW, LOVE

Hope is vital... it provides a positive vision of what we can look forward to, even in difficult circumstances.

All of this we had hoped to be done in traditional physical gatherings. We got to stage a very successful Charity Fundraising Concert under the theme "Heal, Grow, Love" on January 25, 2020. Two months later the COVID-19 pandemic upended the world taking along in its paths millions of deaths, brought economic hardships of enormous proportions and forced us indoors and in many cases to very lonely existences. Unfortunately, too many have turned to drugs, alcohol, food, sex and other behaviours as a way to cope. Too many have taken their own lives, including some of our promising young adults with their futures ahead of them. Our recovery communities worldwide have been one of the hardest hit because they are trying to cope with two pandemics - COVID-19 and Addiction.

So when we look all around us everything seems hopeless. But this doesn't have to

be the case. The American Psychology Association (APA) Dictionary defines Hope as "the expectation that one will have positive experiences or that a potentially threatening or negative situation will not materialize or will ultimately result in a favorable state of affairs".

Hope is important - in fact it is vital because it provides a positive vision of what we can look forward to, even in difficult circumstances. All of us must find ways to feel hopeful. It fuels our energy and gives our lives meaning and purpose!

Here are some of the approaches that I have found personally helpful and you may want to give them a try.

1. Affirm that "All is well...All is in Divine Order" and "the sun will come out tomorrow"
2. Pay attention to your thoughts and let go of those thoughts that make you

feel sad or hopeless

3. Control the things that you can and let go of those that you can't
4. Find ways to have fun, laugh as often as you can
5. Self-care - Make yourself a priority
6. Reach out to someone who you love and trust when you need a lift in your spirits

All of us at Verdun House and Marina House encourage you to look for that rainbow in the sky. Be resilient! Stay Safe. When you sense that feeling of hopelessness - tie a knot on the rope and hold on. We are our brothers' keepers and we are in this together. ▴

<https://dictionary.apa.org/hope>

*"...In our response
lies our growth
and our freedom".*

Victor Frankl



What is a crisis?

By Allison Gotip - Director of Clinical Services

The term crisis is often defined as a "time of great disagreement, confusion or suffering" (Cambridge Dictionary)¹.

Although this definition is one that most people would consider accurate, from a psychological perspective, most clinicians would adhere to Dr. Jim Taylor's more robust definition of a crisis. Dr. Taylor describes it as "an event or situation that arises suddenly or reaches a tipping point in its severity that has the effect of significantly disrupting lives and threatening the status quo, and that may also have long-term, harmful consequences on individuals or groups."² The harmful effects he refers to, often is the basis that mental health professionals focus on not necessarily to the traumatic situation or event, but to a person's reaction to an event.

It rings true that while one person might be deeply affected by an event, another individual suffers little or no ill effects. This current pandemic is rife, rampant and pervasive and has had an impact on every individual on a global stage.

Although the long term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic cannot be determined at this early stage, the research being conducted is looking at the short term and long term consequences on a person's mental well-being. It is pointing to the negative impact of this crisis that includes isolation, bereavement, fear, insomnia, anxiety, depression in individuals and communities. Those who were already suffering from mental health conditions, the pandemic have exacerbated them. It has also been suggested

that COVID-19 has triggered an increase in drug and alcohol use as individuals search for activities to help them cope.

The pandemic has both short- and long-term implications for mental health and substance use, particularly for groups at risk of new or exacerbated mental health disorders and those facing barriers to accessing care. History has shown that the mental health impact of disasters outlasts the physical impact, suggesting today's elevated mental health needs will continue well beyond the coronavirus outbreak itself.³ Analysis reports show that the psychological toll on health care providers during outbreaks found that psychological distress can last up to three years after an outbreak. Due to the financial crisis accompanying the pandemic, there are also significant implications for mortality due to "deaths of despair."⁴ It is also projected that based on the financial downturn and social isolation that there will be an increase in suicidal deaths, alcohol and drug misuse by 2029.

Over the last quarter century, crises have

arisen. Examples of such are war and genocide, terrorism to election violence, disasters and diseases, insect invasion and economic collapses. The spirit of humans faced with such adversities, should be an example of how any crises can bring about an intrinsic ability to overcome.

The overwhelming nature of humans is one of resilience.

We have all heard inspiring stories of persons who have displayed grit and determination. Holocaust survivor and author Victor Frankl has been attributed as stating "Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom". We acknowledge that the pandemic, regardless of what lenses you look through has indeed shaken the world to its core. With this said and acknowledged, how can we respond to this?

Well known inventor Albert Einstein, has been quoted as saying; "In the midst of every crisis, lies great opportunity." There have been some positives in this current crisis. Namely, the

improvement in the environment, increase in unprecedented levels of innovation amongst existing and or new business ventures. It is prudent at this time to take stock of our lives on all levels including, our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health. There is no better time than the present to **choose** to take our own personal inventory.

The overwhelming nature of humans is one of resilience. In looking at crisis as an interruption of life as we know it offers an opportunity for either growth or decline. To refocus, reposition and to realign our responses to this crisis would surely make a more impactful narrative for individuals and communities in years to come.▲

(Endnotes)

1 Cambridge Dictionary, 2020 From [https://www/dictionary.cambridge.org/](https://www.dictionary.cambridge.org/)

2 Taylor J, Crisis to Opportunity 2021 From <https://www.drjimtaylor.com>

3 Panchal N, Kamal R, Cox C Garfield R, The implications of COVID-19 for Mental Health and Substance Use 2020 From <https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/the-implications-of-covid-19-for-mental-health-and-substance-use>

4 Kinsley S, Occurrence, prevention and management of the psychological effects of emerging virus outbreaks on health care workers; rapid review and meta-analysis (2020) From <https://www.bmj.com>

Testimonial

Initially being in Marina during the pandemic was quite frustrating – after three months of primary stage and being in the facility 24/7, I was looking forward to being able to reintegrate into society in the second stage of the programme. However, looking at the bigger picture I am now more than ever grateful that I am in the safe haven of Marina for ,any reasons but foremost that I am safer here than I would be if I was outside working as an essential worker on the frontline. I am further thankful that although sometimes “I feel trapped inside’ I have a beautiful view of the countryside and sea as well as seven other women I can talk to at any time about how I feel, an amazing team of counsellors and a fun loving dog to take on walks and keep my company.

In spite of all this, yes I miss my family but again looking at the bigger picture; me being in Marina is also protecting them because if I was home I would be increasing their exposure and even risking their health so I rather be able to call/video them from Marina occasionally than they seeing me every day with increased possibility of contracting covid. Being in Marina also means that I don't need to worry about where my next meal will come from or about long waits in supermarket lines with increased risk of exposure. At Marina, my basic needs are provided for food, water, toiletries and shelter (at no expense to me). During this time, Marina staff has also ensured that my emotional, physical and spiritual needs are met with frequent check ins, fun game and exercises to keep our spirits up and keep us fit, spirituality sessions and engaging us in online meetings to keep us connected with our recovery. Also looking at this as extra time and an opportunity to work on me. Lastly but definitely not least I can't say for sure but if I was not in Marina during the pandemic I may have jeopardized my recovery in some form or fashion because I could imagine being able to cope with stressors without the strong, healthy support system I have here. I am therefore thankful that although I wanted to leave after Primary (almost kicked up a fuss) that I stayed in Marina because I truly believe with all my heart that during this pandemic, Marina saved me and my recovery.

Anonymous Client

“Mental and emotional wellness hang precariously on a limb. Early recoverers must be intentional about crafting strategies to protect their sobriety and mental health.”

Dr. Jerine Griffith



A Global Pandemic

Its Effect on Mental Health and Addiction

Dr. Jerine Griffith

I recently had the opportunity to work with a small group of church leaders in Odessa, Ukraine. We talked about the different strategies they could use to better assist their congregation during the COVID-19 pandemic. Odessa is 5500 miles away from Barbados, literally and culturally, but right now the concerns of people in both countries are incredibly similar.

The global pandemic is indeed global in its impact on the mental health of individuals and families. Men and women have lost jobs, lost business, lost loved ones. And while we all try to hang on to the hope that the end of the pandemic is near, we have been tossed into the fire of uncertainty about the future. The nature of viral pandemics is that they tend to be unpredictable,¹ which is what fuels our anxiety and depression. Managing unpredictability is no easy task. It takes internal and external resources to be able to shift as life throws its curve balls at us.

Yet, loss and unpredictability are not the only things that accompanied this modern-day pandemic; loneliness and isolation were front and center during the initial days of our countries' shutdown and have resurfaced as we make stalled attempts to re-open and reconnect in person.

For those individuals with substance addiction, and those especially in early recovery, the COVID-19 Pandemic brings

massive challenges. In house drug use has become of grave concern,² and there has been a noticeable acceleration of overdose deaths since the start of the pandemic.³ Additionally, the World Health Organization (WHO) noted a rise in those seeking mental health treatment worldwide.⁴ We do not have published data about the rates of alcohol and drug use in Barbados among adults since the spread of the virus, nor do we have the full picture of reported incidences of anxiety and depression, but we can only assume that we did not escape the effects of the pandemic.

Loneliness, Stress, Anxiety and Depression, what I call the Four Horsemen of the Pandemic, charge into the lives of those in recovery and can reap havoc. Fighting to stay sober one day at a time becomes a grueling battle when social contact is reduced, job security is threatened and the possibility of resurgences of the

virus looms in the air. Mental and emotional wellness hang precariously on a limb. Early recoverers must be intentional about crafting strategies to protect their sobriety and mental health. They can reach out to one another via virtual platforms using the worldwide network of AA and NA Fellowships who have made concerted efforts to put meetings online. They must check in regularly with others who support their recovery. Even those of us who prefer our alone time, must make the effort to reach out to others and stay connected. Have structured routines that include getting out of bed, showering, going outside for fresh air and consistently engaging in some form of exercise are essential to maintaining mental wellbeing. Not engaging in over-snacking can also maintain emotional balance. Being mindful of time spent on the internet or social media sites is another preventive strategy to decrease the risk of new addictions.



Having structured routines that include getting out of bed, showering, going outside for fresh air and consistently engaging in some form of exercise are essential to maintaining mental wellbeing.

For those of us who are friends, family members or employers of someone in early recovery, we must not be afraid to ask uncomfortable questions. Ask how they are doing with cravings or isolating themselves or managing mixed emotions. At the least, we can reach out and share a positive message that says, "I'm thinking about you." Our collective well-being in Barbados, in the Ukraine, or wherever else in the world is linked to those around us, making this time in our shared history a time more than ever to be our brother's keeper. ▴

Footnotes

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Overdose Deaths Accelerating During COVID-19

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COVID-19 disrupting mental health services in most countries, WHO survey

From: <https://www.who.int/news/item/05-10-2020-covid-19-disrupting-mental-health-services-in-most-countries-who-survey>

*"It was the best of times,
It was the worst of times,*

*It was the age of wisdom,
It was the age of foolishness,*

*It was the epoch of belief,
It was the epoch of incredulity,*

*It was the season of light,
It was the season of darkness,*

*It was the spring of hope,
It was the winter of despair."*

(A Tale of Two Cities - Charles Dickens)



Family in Crisis

Al Layne

In January 2020 I was just returning from a conference in the Middle East with plans set to return in April for a series of workshops. By February "corona virus" had become the buzz word, and by March international travel was being restricted.

Since then the whole world has been reeling from fear of infection and the shock of rising death tolls. Sometimes, it feels like we all went to bed one night and fell into an Orwellian dystopia of government lockdowns and mass vaccinations. And, it certainly doesn't help that social media has highlighted the U.S. Centers for Disease Control's website, "Zombie Preparedness," where one can find instructions on how to survive in a world plagued by the "undead." William Shakespeare in his pastoral comedy, "As You Like It" wrote, "All the world is a stage, and all the men and women merely

Perhaps, the “New Normal,” ...is more a reflection of the old normal than we think. A time when families, routinely sat down together and ate lunch and dinner.

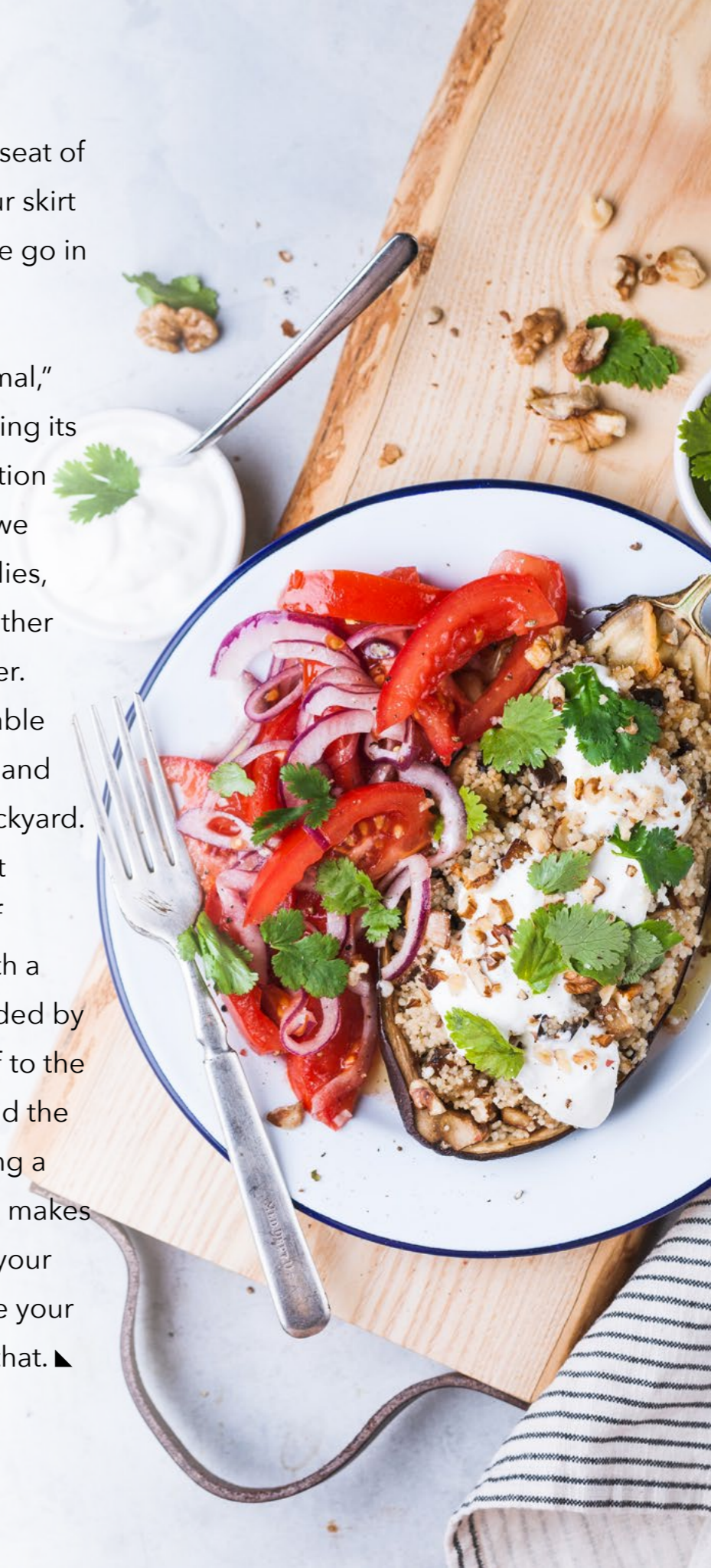
players.” The million dollar question is, “What part do we play in the unfolding drama?”

A doctor friend of mine continues to insist that the SARS corona virus pandemic is an opportunity for the world to pause and reflect upon where we are, the values we hold, and the ones we left behind. He cautions that in his twenty-nine years of seeing patients, families have become less connected and an increasing number of people are suffering

with stress related chronic diseases. He also offers his considered opinion on the positive things we might do in the pandemic. During the lockdowns, he says, why not tidy the garage that you have been promising to clean for the last two years, have that family meeting, read that book, spend the time you could not find to build back your relationships, and have plenty sex. “People underestimate the power of sex,” he crudely reminds, “to squelch anxiety and lift depression, God didn’t just make sex to have children.” And while I have not yet made use of the dear doctor’s advice having worked through the several lockdowns, it’s certainly high on my “to do list.” The fact of the matter is, none of us have read the script and so we are, for the

most part, flying by the seat of or pants, or perhaps, our skirt tales – improvising as we go in an ever thickening plot.

Perhaps, the “New Normal,” another buzz word making its rounds, is more a reflection of the old normal than we think. A time when families, routinely sat down together and ate lunch and dinner. When Daddy was available to help with homework and pitch marbles in the backyard. When afternoon delight was a double serving of chocolate ice-cream with a cherry on top, or preceded by hustling the children off to the grandparents so you and the misses could enjoy being a couple again. See? It all makes perfect sense. Change your perspective and change your reality. It’s as simple as that. ▀



Hope - a feeling of expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen.



Giving Hope When Times are Uncertain

Raphael Saul, Member of the Board of Directors

It is now undeniable. We exist in a global state of flux. It seems like we are playing a game where winning feels impossible because the rules change every day. Under ordinary circumstances, one of the things that tends to give us a sense of peace of mind is prediction. In other words, we repose a measure of confidence and hope for a positive future when we are able to predict with reasonable certainty what lies ahead. This can present us with some difficulties.

What happens to our hope when there is no certainty? Like the proverbial ship, tossed and beaten amidst stormy seas, one thing shines through as being of utmost value. In the absence of an ability to predict, we must lean into what we have prepared.

Imagine a mountain climber setting out for a journey. She expects that conditions may be adverse and as such, she is prepared for any eventuality. She recalls her experiences in training for the climb

and the lessons she has learnt therefrom. She recalls previous climbs she has successfully made and reminds herself of obstacles she has already overcome. All of this was her preparation and has given her an arsenal of confidence that she can endure whatever awaits her on this new and unpredictable climb.

Each of our lives contains a dossier of challenges and experiences, the lessons from which have built in us the character to persevere. We may not have realized it before, but we were being built to endure. The difficulties of the past have prepared us for the uncertainties of the future. Therefore, we must liberate ourselves from depending on future certainty to inspire our hope when we have such a rich legacy and heritage of triumph from which to draw.

Many of us have had to walk difficult roads and the character built on those roads will help to sustain us. So we look above; we remain hopeful; and even if tomorrow doesn't get better, we can get better. ▴

Testimonial

"Being at Marina House has given me back my life and I will be forever grateful to the staff at Marina House for not only helping me with my recovery but for taking care of me during this pandemic. If it was not for the love and care of the people at Marina, I know that I would be [in] serious problems with my addiction to alcohol. I also take into consideration that they are the reason for the new person that I am becoming as I continue to put in the work on myself. Marina is keeping me safe from the outside world because no one can come on the compound without a mask, not even the workers so I call that keeping me safe. Additionally, when I have to go to my appointments they take me and bring me back so I do not have to take the bus with everyone else. I know this may not seem like a lot but when you are out there and so many persons are not wearing a mask is when something can happen but no one can come near you without a mask at Marina because they would have fit since they want to keep me safe. I would have to say that this is the safest I have been in so many years not only for how they make sure you comply with the protocols but they make sure you never forget your masks when you leave to go anywhere so you don't put your life at risk or anyone else. They teach you how to be responsible for each other and not only for yourself. Being in Marina is not only about getting over your addiction it taught me how to be safe and how to keep my family safe. I am thankful for the time I have spent here, for all I have learnt and for being a part of the Marina community. A very big thank you for being here."

Anonymous Client



"We don't only grieve for what's missing, but also for the ways in which those losses affect our senses of self."

George Bonanno, PhD




Grief: Coping During this Pandemic

Veronica Thomas, Licensed Counselling Psychologist

It has been approximately one year since we have been grappling with the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020. This disease is an epidemiological crisis first, but similarly a psychological one.

For those of you who are grieving the loss of a relative, friend or colleague, my heartfelt condolences to you. As people around you try to help ease your grief, you may hear that the death of a loved one changes you for the rest of your life, and this is a fact. As a result of this finite event, you will also learn many lessons, such as how to move on with your life as you carry those cherished moments of the person, and the value they brought to your life and to the world. And yes, it is undoubtedly going to be a difficult time, making it probably one of the most challenging experiences you will (ever!) know.

The process is never easy, whether the loss was sudden or prolonged, or whether the departed was hospitalized or in hospice care. When my mother died, which was way before the



It helps to “name and claim” our grief.

pandemic, one vital aspect of the process that helped me was being surrounded by family and friends. Visiting her in the hospital and being with those close to me during the ritual that followed her passing (just being physically present) helped me to cope. However, the fallout from this crisis has impacted on the intimacy of healing and we are experiencing its isolating effects which has been prolonged...yet again for us in Barbados.

Collective Grief

In addition to personal grief, there is collective grief when, like the rest of the country, we all feel loss. Like some of you, I have not lost anything as tangible as a job or a loved one, but I am grieving visiting family and friends at will; going to church; grocery shopping when I care to; the ability get my hair done or dine at my favourite eating spot (with my beloved tribe - sad face emoji). I am also battling the fear of contracting Covid-19; adapting to Zoom, and not being able to have face to face sessions with my clients.

I could extend the list and so could you as we collectively experience the life-changing effects of this invisible enemy. Some may say that these are not really losses but consider for example, the psychological impact of children not being able to sit in the classroom with their friends and socialize with them after. Their feelings must not be trivialized. Running around on the playground or hanging out at the mall should not be minimized.

Caution, parents and adults: Stop negating or quantifying others' grief, particularly that of children and teens. Kids, whatever loss you are feeling, it is validated here! Grief is only defined by the person feeling it.

Note to kids and teens: No one has to die in order to feel grief. It's more than okay to feel this grief, to talk about it, and to figure out how to move forward with this new reality. I want children and teens to reach out to someone they trust to talk through their pain. If not an adult, then a peer who is also feeling the same loss.



The Grieving Process

You will observe if you are in tune, that as individuals we experience stages of grief and loss: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Sounds familiar? Noted psychiatrist Elisabeth Kübler-Ross takes credit for this research. These stages are best navigated when support is given. This theory can also fit into other losses—think about the non-tangibles we're grieving right now.

The problem we face is that the navigating process is often supported in part by aspects that we are missing because of the pandemic. In the case of death, one element that is different now is not being able to hug someone, to give or receive a simple embrace! An embrace of love, support, and 'I am here for you' without saying a word, is missing these days because of all the restrictions.



Points to remember:

Grief is natural, and most people are resilient.

Though grief is difficult, it helps when we recognize that it's natural and useful, says George Bonanno, PhD. "Grief is really about turning inward and recalibrating and thinking: 'This is not the way the world is anymore, and I need to adapt,'" he says. "It's okay to feel grief over what we're losing. When we do that, it allows us to let grief do its job, so that we can move on."

We lose attachments.

We don't only grieve for what's missing, but also for the ways in which those losses affect our senses of self, Bonanno says. Research from the bereavement literature shows that the nature of a person's attachments influences their grief reactions. We form attachments outside of the human kind and we can lose places, business deals, possessions, jobs, and savings, all of which we may be strongly attached to. This pandemic forces us to confront the frailty of such attachments,



whether it's to our favourite dining/liming spot, or the routines that sustain us through our days. Many of the losses we're experiencing now are so-called ambiguous losses. Simply put, these lack the clarity and definition of a finite event, such as a death. Studies show that a lack of clarity can make it hard to move forward.

"You can experience grief over anything that feels like a loss of identity." Studies show, for instance, that losing a job can trigger a period of prolonged grief distinct from anxiety or depression. That prolonged grief seems to be related to the impacts of job loss on self-esteem and belief in a just world.

It helps to "name and claim" our grief.

It has been noted that people often have a vague sense of anxiety or wordless suffering. The key is to put a name to the loss we are experiencing, which will in essence allow us to claim it, so that we can in turn heal. As therapists we often ask clients to consider their loss and determine the impact on their lives (in some case it may be positive and in other cases the impact may be negative) in order to get to a place of acceptance. It is an organized way of taking action to help people cope with their losses, whether that's their jobs, relationships, sources of self-worth and self-efficacy or other.

"The human spirit is stronger than anything that can happen to it."

C.C. Scott:



Write about it.

Keep a journal to put words to losses, and to help you identify ways to move forward. Writing about emotional upheavals can improve both physical and mental health.

Stay connected to your social networks.

It's well established that social support can be critical in helping move on from grief, rather than get stuck in it. That poses a problem in an age of physical distancing, when people are isolated in their homes away from loved ones. "During this time, there may be an erosion of social support and the meaningful social roles that buttress our identities," Neimeyer says.

Disasters have taught us the ongoing importance of social supports. Keep checking in on people and keep the support going even after the period of lockdown ends. Stay connected to your social support networks through phone calls, text messages, video chat and social media. This should continue even after we emerge from the lockdown. For some people the stress will continue after quarantine ends, especially if their jobs or relationships are affected."

Finally, it has been said that: "One thing about crisis is that it can galvanize creativity and commitment." As quoted by C.C. Scott: "The human spirit is stronger than anything that can happen to it." You too can recover! ▲

Extracts of this document were taken from the American Psychological Association article entitled: *Grieving Life and Loss*: 2020/06

"...we have a strong history of being our brother's keeper... Community is everything."

Katrina Sam



Helping Employees Cope

By Katrina Sam, Member of the Board of Directors of The Substance Abuse Foundation, Senior HR Executive

For over a year now, the World has been in a “death-like” struggle with the COVID-19 virus. The World Health Organization declared COVID-19, a pandemic on March 11, 2020. At that date, there were over 118,000 cases of the illness in over 110 countries. At the date of penning this article, there were 108,000,000 cases and 2,500,000 deaths, almost one year later.

On March 11, 2020, none of us could have imagined what life in the next 11 months would be. It has been an unprecedented pandemic, and every aspect of life has changed. As we reach the 11-month mark, many of us have hit the “pandemic wall” and are in a desperate struggle to secure our physical and mental well-being. We have lived through repeated trauma, and terror, confusion, and in recent weeks, extreme fatigue exists.

Today we are now contemplating a future where COVID-19 is a factor of life with which we must learn to coexist. Some of us have started to allow some hope and optimism to set in as we turn our attention to COVID-19 vaccines and ways to mitigate, if not eliminate, the spread of COVID-19. We are also slowly recognising some of the positives this wretched pandemic has birthed.

From a business perspective, as we look to the “new normal, in our future, we will do with so with some key lessons learnt from this pandemic, among them are:

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1. Communication is critical

The communications campaigns and public health awareness initiatives that have been executed throughout this pandemic have been unprecedented. All media has been deployed in the fight against COVID-19 in engaging the various publics. Governments and public health officials have spent millions to ensure effective communications were rolled. Businesses quickly recognised that inadequate communication systems would be their undoing and that effective crisis management demands robust communications systems. This lesson has been firmly cemented, and I expect that businesses will continue to leverage the communication systems put in place during this health crisis in the future.

For many of these businesses, having a business continuity plan will now be firmly viewed as must-have going forward. Many managers now understand the need to be honest, and to create transparent work environments with effective, constant internal communication.



2. Community service is vital

In the Caribbean, though we have a strong history of being our brother’s keeper, in these modern times many in our society may have moved away from some of the values that are buried deep in our cultural ethos. The pandemic has laid bare the need for community service at every level of society and for businesses to exercise more corporate social responsibility. Our people and businesses



have, for the most part, stepped up to the challenge. We have seen donations of digital devices, food, aid, and services. “Community is everything” is the lesson that will be taken away from this pandemic.

3. Invest in people’s wellness

As businesses worked hard to prioritise employees’ health and safety during the pandemic, it became painfully apparent that there were gaps in how many organisations supported the well-being of employees. We have learnt that sick employees must stay home and not be made to feel that they should come to work no matter what. It has perhaps exposed the fact that some employees cannot afford to stay home when ill, and we must address this problem. In the last few months, we have had open and frank discussions on mental health in a manner I have hitherto not experienced in Caribbean businesses and society. In the “new normal”, companies will and must invest in keeping their employees well not just by offering the traditional health insurance plans but taking definitive steps to address and safeguard the emotional well-being, including staff’s mental health.



4. Invest in technology

The ability to move to remote working and e-business made the difference between survival and lagging. Many small businesses that held the view that digitalisation was for “certain types” of businesses think differently now. Retailers and restaurateurs have embraced delivery and /or pickup services and returned “customer convenience” to the top of their priority list. We have seen innovation and ingenuity given new life, and the entrepreneurs among us have been busy cashing in. The pandemic has driven the rapid adoption of digital technologies in businesses worldwide.

Sir Winston Churchill is credited with first saying, “never let a good crisis go to waste.” He said it in the mid-1940s as the world was approaching the end of World War II. COVID-19 pandemic has caused immeasurable pain and human suffering, and it has destroyed lives and livelihoods. We all irrevocable changed by what we have experienced living through this pandemic. The crisis has also afforded us positives that we should and must take forward and use for our betterment. ▲

In the News



Allison Gotip, Director of Clinical Services (Right) discusses how to check labels to ensure items are free of alcohol with Michelle Whitelaw (left) and Karen Griffith, Addiction & Mental Health Counsellor

CIBC First Caribbean

Helping during the pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has created unprecedented challenges of enormous proportions around the world. The intersection of the pandemic and those suffering from the disease of addiction, including substance use disorders have created a set of interlocking crises that

have also affected our region and our country. We at The Substance Abuse Foundation who are on the front line have had to provide safety nets for Barbados' most vulnerable.

Clients of our treatment centres (Verdun House and Marina House) were adversely affected by the lockdown due to monthly donations from our corporate and individual sources came to a screeching halt. Out of an abundance of caution and following strict

COVID-19 health protocols we restricted all visitors to the facilities which meant that relatives and friends could not visit to bring vital personal care items for their loved ones.

Our “asking hand” to one of our regular donors CIBC FirstCaribbean for assistance was met with a \$10,000 donation that allowed us to purchase the necessary personal care products and toiletries for clients as well as supplies which were desperately needed to keep our facilities clean and sanitized.

Michelle Whitelaw, Director of Retail Banking Channels, who is no stranger to our “houses” was greeted by grateful clients and staff who thanked her and the bank for their on-going support. Without a doubt,

CIBC FirstCaribbean and their team are committed to giving back because they recognize that a safe and healthy Barbados is EVERYONE’s business! ▲

Asha Phillander completes her Professional In Residence Programme at The SAF

For several years, we have provided training opportunities for students and interns from local and regional educational institutions to obtain practical field experience in the human services field. These include

counselling, social work and nursing. In 2020, we formalized our Professional In Residence (PIR) Programme in order to give seasoned professionals and those already operating in the mental health and addiction space opportunities to strengthen their competencies in addiction, mental health and mental wellness.

We launched the programme with an inaugural PIR scholarship and the recipient was Trinidadian born Asha Phillander. Asha is a Masters’ level psychologist who had been stranded in Barbados during the COVID-19 Pandemic and Barbados national lock down. During the period that she spent with us, she was able to learn more about our trauma-informed treatment programme and

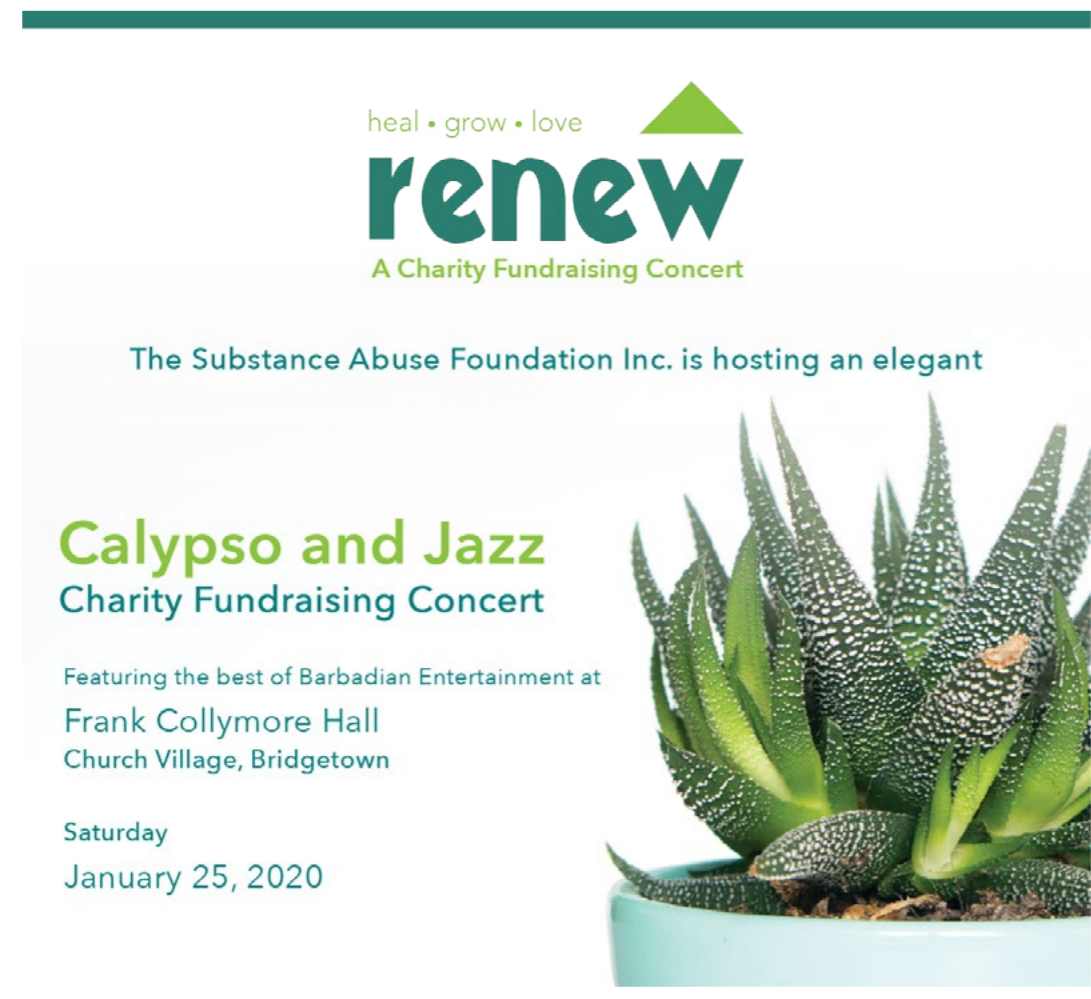
gain additional knowledge in areas relating to mental wellness. The opportunity to observe clinicians at work from a multi-disciplinary perspective was an invaluable experience.

In presenting her Certificate of Completion, Allison Gotip, The SAF’s Director of Clinical Services remarked that the PIR programme is a strategic training initiative of the organization. “As we continue to make the programme more readily available, participants can be assured of a holistic approach to addiction and mental health that includes evidence-based, trauma-informed practices and the Twelve Steps philosophy.” ▲

Excerpts from The Weekend Nation, published Friday, October

RENEW - Heal • Grow • Love Charity Fundraising Concert

The SAF's Jazz & Calypso Charity Fundraising Concert, took place on Saturday, January 25th, 2020, at the Frank Collymore Hall. It was the highlight of the 20th Anniversary of our Organization.



Above: Invitation to the Calypso and Jazz Charity Fundraising Concert



Above: Families of our Founding Visionaries

From the opening act from Operational Triple Threat which set the stage for what was an outstanding performance by Barbados' young and upcoming "mini maestros" to the soulful performances of the Dr. Anthony "Gabby" Carter accompanied on the piano by Andre Daniel that brought the curtain down on the concert - guests were entertained by Barbados' finest artistes. Entertainers included the Barbados Community College Jazz Ensemble, Biggie Irie, Kellie Cadogan, Lennox and Hashim.

In addition to honouring three visionary founders - Harold Hoyte, Mousa Moses and Desmond Niccolls -- the concert sought to raise critical funding for rehabilitation and educational programmes and our sustainable funding solutions, the 'gifts that continue to give', our social enterprises in renewable energy and eco-farming that provide therapeutic work arrangements for our clients.

Feedback from our guests indicated that they enjoyed an outstanding guest experience and were wowed by the talent showcased. This was indeed a concert of international standards.

It was the extremely generous contributions of all of the entertainers, MC Mac Fingall, programme coordinator Anies Jordan, Mount Gay reinforcing the message

around responsible drinking, the families, many individuals and organizations who donated food for the stations, beverages and ancillary services that helped us to achieve our overall financial target of \$75,000.

THANK YOU for contributing to Barbados being a safer and healthier place to live and work! ▴

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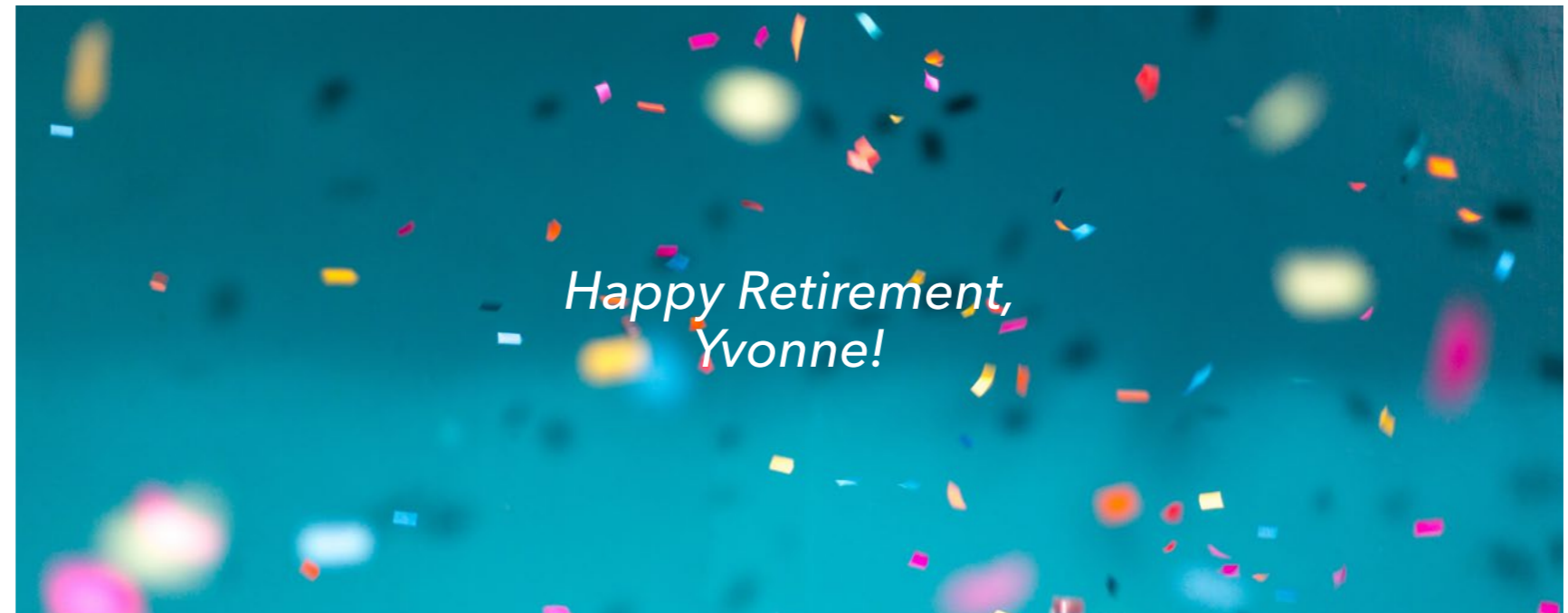
*Below: Dancing to the sounds of Lenox & Hashim
Right Upper: Courtyard entertainment
Right Middle: Verdun Patisserie baked goods
Right Lower: After concert mingling*



Yvonne Bradshaw, BSM Retires but refused to say GOODBYE!

In December 2020 in the midst of the COVID-19 Pandemic, observing all health protocols we bid farewell to one of Barbados' outstanding citizens and ushered her into a well-deserved retirement. Miss Yvonne Bradshaw, BSM retired from The Substance Abuse Foundation Inc. effective December 31, 2020.

From the beginning of Verdun House and for approximately 20 years, Yvonne has served The SAF and its clients with distinction. She has been a beacon of hope, encouragement and in many instances a life line to men,



women and their families suffering from the disease of addiction. All across this Region, Yvonne is known for her care and passion for human life. It is this passion that contributed to her being acknowledged in 2016 in Barbados' 50th Anniversary year of independence and awarded the Barbados Service Medal in recognition of her work in helping those persons addicted to drugs and alcohol. In Yvonne's words "Having experienced addiction and

being called nobody...I am now SOMEBODY!

At a very emotional farewell function attended by clients who often remarked that they owe their sobriety to her, we conveyed our thanks and appreciation for the tremendous contribution she had made over the years and for the integral part that she has played in helping to shape The SAF into an organization with world-class treatment and recovery

services.

In retirement Yvonne has indicated that she can never say no to anyone who needs her help. What a powerful demonstration of her commitment to the Twelve Steps principles and traditions. She will continue to be one of the voices you will hear at the other side of on our hotline. Happy Retirement, Yvonne! ▀

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Testimonial

For me the scenery is very lovely amidst the major problem which awaits me outside this compound, which is covid-19. I am grateful for the fact that I was granted the opportunity to be part of the programme during this pandemic because they are some who are not fortunate for such a privilege. Either they are dead, still suffering from addiction or just not strong enough to be here. Suffering has now taken its toll on society and other addicts like me who either wasted the opportunity to be present here working on themselves and learning to keep their sanity intact. They either gave it up to be using drugs and be more vulnerable for not only catching covid19 but probably being arrested or fined for breaking curfew, living in sheer destruction and poverty, not being able to find work and committing serious crimes just to survive on a daily basis.

In here I am somewhat priviled to have a roof over my head, luxuries of a hot bath water, three square meals a day, access to a phone to contact my family and children, watching television and no bills to pay. I enjoy the teachings, affirmations, activities and meditation I receive from the counsellors day and night to help keep me sane. Despite all of these luxuries my heart still yearns although my recovery is what I want. It is hard to be comfortable not knowing how my family is coping with the ongoing pandemic financially and mentally when I have no need to worry about food and shelter. I know that I have to reintegrate with society and live life on its terms and face the scares of the covid-19 pandemic, but for now I am thankful for a peace of mind, nature to enjoy, a healthy support system, people who made it possible for my recovery to happen even now in these times, serenity and time spent with my peers.

In here it is like another test and lesson teaching me to be patient, appreciative and giving me the strength and endurance I need for preparing to manage myself outside of these walls especially now with this pandemic on the rise. I continually pray for the safety of my family, children, loved ones, significant others, counsellors, essential workers and fellow Barbadians struggling to make ends meet form here on in that these things will get better in time.

Anonymous Client



HOW TO HELP

Every Gift Counts! Every Life Matters!

Annual Golf Tournament

Sponsored by Royal Westmorland and Diamonds International this is held around February each year and is a major fundraiser.

Covenants

Corporate and individual covenants are for a three-year period and both are tax deductible.

Cash Donations

Cash donations are always welcome.

Non-cash donations

Companies and individuals donate various services and supplies which are extremely useful to help us keep our costs to an absolute minimum.



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