

Project Eleutheria

7-19

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Project Type: Single Year

Section 1: Overview

A. Area of Concern

According to the Central Narcotics Bureau, 3524 people arrested for drug-related offences peaked in 2019. The rising proportion of new drug abusers arrested, comprising 42% of abusers arrested, and that 61% of these new drug abusers were under 30 y/o is worrying.

B. Challenges Identified

Recovering individuals face social stigma, engendering low self-esteem, making them feel like burdens to others, hindering them from reintegrating into society. Being a marginalised group, awareness and interaction by society is little. Hence, stereotypes about them are pervasive (The Cabin Singapore, 2016), and suffering from stress-related disorders increases their probability of relapse (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2014).

Our needs analysis found that most respondents knew about recovering individuals in society but lacked knowledge about them. Of those who shared they knew people who struggled with addiction, only some mentioned that they sought treatment.

C. Underlying Problem

Given that there is an increasing prevalence of drug addiction in Singapore, especially amongst young people under 30 y/o, there is a lack of public awareness and support for recovering individuals. How might we raise awareness on issues recovering individuals face such as discrimination, and assist in their reintegration into society in terms of social interaction?

D. Plan of Action

Our plans had to be revamped due to Covid-19, Singapore Anti-Narcotics Association (SANA) preventing us from physically interacting with recovering individuals and holding large

scale physical activities due to SMM. Hence, shifting our focus online, we came up with a two-pronged solution.

1. Substituted physical for virtual interaction sessions held via Facebook Live
2. Created online resources to educate the public on recovering individuals

Section 2: Implementation of Action Plan

A. Actions and Outcomes to date

*Cancelled events due to P2HA

Date	Action	Objective
December 2020	Meetings with SANA staff	Discuss partnership details
January 2021	Attended SANA's webinar on "Impact of Incarceration & Drug Abuse on Families & Children"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Forge bonds, understand recovering individuals better
February-March 2021	Frequent meetings with SANA staff, both virtually and physically <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussed feasibility of initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Finalise partnership details ● Conceptualise ideas
February-August 2021	Instagram account+Website <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● "Insight of the Week" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Motivational quotes/facts about recovering individuals posted weekly ● Online tutorials ● Progress updates+Photos of sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Raise public awareness ● Stay connected to the masses during COVID-19
April 2021	45 mins interview with Mr 'Mohammed' (a peer support leader) via zoom	Understanding social stigma faced by recovering individuals
June 2021	*Hiking with Project Eco-Wildcare and clients	Promote healthy living
June-July 2021	*Physical interaction+sports sessions Weekly Facebook live sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Frequent interaction with recovering individuals through various fun recreational activities such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cardboard painting ○ Terrarium making ○ Making hand sanitiser+ice cream ○ Cooking session (Made army stew, potato salad and banana split from 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Frequent engagement with recovering individuals ● Forging bonds with them ● Promote fitness

	scratch) ○ Upcycling plastics (Handicrafts)	
June-July 2021	*Participating in SANA's Rise Above Campaign <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Showcase project resources, publicise project goals ● Projected outreach: 1000 	
June 2021	*Interaction session@Night Safari <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Exploration of Night Safari via Scavenger Hunt ● Projected outreach: 80 clients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Promote bonding between clients and family
June 2021	Hosted webinar for HCI students on Zoom <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interactive session with 30 HCI students, invited a recovering individual to share her experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase public awareness
August 2021	Helped SANA host a webinar for the public <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assisted in publicity+registration ● Participated during webinar, learnt more about recovering individuals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase public awareness

Section 3: Project Outcomes

A. Accomplishments

We managed to reach out to **800** people through this project, including views on our **Facebook Live interaction sessions** with recovering individuals. Via these sessions, we **impacted 40 clients**.

We conducted **2 interviews** with peer support leaders (recovering individuals volunteering as counsellors) from SANA, and held **2 webinars** with SANA, which garnered **480** participants overall. We shared **interesting insights, challenges** faced by recovering individuals in their lives, convincing the public that recovering individuals **can lead fulfilling lives**.

Engaging **150 followers**, we attained **600 likes** on Instagram where we shared insights regarding addiction and recovery weekly.

B. Reflections on Outcomes

Prejudice towards recovering individuals is deeply-rooted in society. However, through interactions with them, we witnessed their sheer will to recover. Not only were our preconceptions regarding them erased, we also developed a newfound respect for their positivity. This project was eye-opening, and we are grateful for the opportunity to forge newfound friendships with recovering individuals, and empathise with them. Their families' encouragement during their recovery also reminded us to cherish family.

We are proud to have done our best despite challenges posed by Covid-19, which severely impacted our initial plans. Moreover, SANA rejected many of our proposals due to SMM. Improvising accordingly, we provided support and spread awareness to our best abilities. The restrictions reminded us that community service was not always about making the biggest impact; the smallest of differences were the ones that made meaningful impacts on recovering individuals and society. We are grateful for the opportunity to champion for this meaningful cause.

C. Scope of the Project

Community Impact: Members of the public could learn more about the plight of addicts and recovering individuals, and challenges faced during recovery. We hope that the public are more well-versed on challenges faced by recovering individuals, and continue to support SANA and recovering individuals. They can also spread the cause of building a recovering-individual-friendly society free of social stigma.

Community Involvement: Our 3 core OT members were key to making our first webinar a success and spreading our cause to other students. Our 2 webinars also reached out to >400 people, promoting our cause to more people. Regular interaction with recovering individuals also brought us and recovering individuals joy.

Resolution of UP: Given that we have identified a lack of awareness and support for recovering individuals, and low self-esteem amongst them, we have raised awareness on how to build a recovering-individual-friendly society to an estimated 800 members of the public through social media and sharing sessions. Furthermore, our interaction sessions enabled us to empower recovering individuals. Despite the pandemic, we are glad to have contributed to efforts aimed at eradicating social stigma towards recovering individuals.

Word Count: 999

References

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