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SANA to revamp role to address changing drug scene

Talk2SANA portal with live-chat; new brand identity to be launched

The Singapore Anti-Narcotics Association (SANA) will revamp its role to address the changing drug addiction scene, including using new online tools such as a portal, Talk2SANA, to reach out to youths and to bring down the growing number of young drug abusers. The portal will have a chat-line allowing people to talk anonymously to counsellors and para-counsellors.

The re-positioning will come with a new brand identity for SANA – a new logo marking a new phase in the Association’s engagement with at-risk youths and ex-offenders. It is a move by SANA, which was set up in 1972, to become relevant in today’s climate.

The revamped role and new identity will be launched on Friday 24th March at SANA’s Step-Up Centre at its premises in Sengkang Square. The Guest-of-Honour will be Mr Desmond Lee, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Home Affairs and National Development.

The change in role also marks a shift in the manner in which SANA has been addressing the drug problem. Up to now, apart from its efforts to educate the young on the dangers of drug abuse, SANA stepped in after a drug abuser was incarcerated and during the last 2 months of his/her prison term.

With the new role, SANA targets young people before they are caught for drug abuse. It creates an avenue for those who feel they are at risk or are already abusing drugs, to seek help.

The Association will now take on a pro-active role to engage the young. It will reach out to youths who are at risk via the Internet. And, it will open its doors to enable people to approach SANA anonymously via its chat-line.

Drug-abuse among youths is on the rise. Statistics on drug arrests in 2016 show again an increase in the number of new drug abusers arrested. Close to two-thirds of all new abusers arrested in 2016 were under the age of 30.

A key challenge is that young people are being influenced by a growing acceptance of drugs, in particular, recreation or “party” drugs. Another major challenge is the availability of drugs on the Internet.

New features to be introduced by SANA

- **Talk2SANA**

- This will provide a single point of access to issues on drug-abuse matters. It will comprise:
- an e-resource centre with information on drugs, drug abuse and its consequences. This centre is ready for visitors.

- a live chat platform intended for youths who need to talk to someone to clarify doubts about harmful drugs and the consequences of consuming them or those who are already taking drugs and need help to quit the habit. With the live chat line, SANA will open its doors to people to seek information or advice anonymously. The e-resource centre is ready for visitors. The live chat will be available from 1 July 2017, operating from 6 pm to midnight, Monday to Saturday, excluding Sunday and Public Holidays.
- an e-learning link with training materials on drug abuse. The materials can be accessed by the public. This is available from 25 March 2017.

The portal can be accessed from any computer or mobile device, with a connection to the Internet, including smart phones or tablets. SANA's para-counsellors will assess the caller's situation, provide information and support as well as referral options to help him/her to make informed choices.

- **SANA Badge Scheme for secondary school students**

The SANA Badge Scheme, a motivational workshop introduced in 1977 for secondary school students from the uniform groups, will have a new-tiered system that allows students to conduct anti-drug campaigns and activities in their schools and the community. To be implemented in June 2017, the expanded scheme is designed to strengthen the impact of preventive drug education in schools and raise awareness of SANA.

By enhancing the scheme, which reaches out to about 5,000 students a year, SANA hopes to create a new team of young ambassadors who will influence their peers on the dangers of drug abuse and work within their communities to spread awareness. Students will organise and lead anti-drug campaigns.

New brand identity to be launched

SANA commissioned a branding agency, Activiste, to create a new logo that will reflect its more contemporary role in engaging at-risk youths and ex-offenders. The vibrant new logo, with its positive messages such as building self-esteem, determination and positive thinking, is designed to inspire youths to make positive choices.

Why the elevated "A"?

Dealing with drugs is about working with people, and the logo is intended to help build their self-esteem and celebrate newfound self-worth. The elevated "A" in the SANA logo represents an individual rising above the influence of drugs. SANA believes that everyone can stand tall, rise above peer pressure, instant thrill and self-doubt.

For further information

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