

Cut along this line to get your ribbon strip!

“Is this what you want your life to be forever?”

These words from Mr Ismadi’s mother helped him turn over a new leaf

Mr Ismadi, a 52-year-old welfare officer at Jamiyah Halfway House, reflects on his past and the choices he made in his search for belonging



PHOTO: WEE TY

Q How did you get involved in drugs?

Growing up in a neighbourhood where drugs and secret societies were rampant, I got involved with drugs at a very young age. I wanted to be part of a community, and by the time I was 11, I had already been introduced to smoking, drinking, and was taking cannabis and pills. Even though I was doing well in school, getting “high” soon became a daily routine.

Q How did drug addiction affect you?

My addiction went on for years. When I was sent to the Drug Rehabilitation Centre (DRC) at 20 years old, it was a scary experience. I learnt the ways, the ropes and the codes that all inmates have to abide by.

Even though I felt like it was not a place for me, I found myself returning again and again, which was something I also could not understand at that time.

After a week out from my first incarceration, I returned to drugs because I was back in my old neighbourhood, and back to my old friends and life.

Q What was the turning point to choose a different path?

On the day I was arrested for my last incarceration, my mother who has never missed any of my visitation sessions reminded me that I was going to turn 40 in a few months. She asked, “Is this what you want your life to be forever? Do you have no dream of a better life?”

At that moment, I decided that enough is enough. I came to realise that I was also a son and a father, and that I could mould myself to be more than who I was at that point in time.

Q How did you break the cycle of addiction?

I found a new community, and I continue to be part of that community today. I am currently working as a welfare officer at Jamiyah Halfway House (JHH). Since undergoing my rehabilitation programme at JHH nine years ago, I was given the chance and trust to be a part of a family of passionate individuals who help people like me begin their journey to recovery. We equip them with knowledge and skills to start their life anew.

Each time I remind my peers to

turn away from drugs, it is also a reminder for myself to stay strong mentally and always choose a life where I can help others make better choices too.

Q What is the most difficult thing about starting over?

One of the hardest things is gaining the trust of loved ones again. I have lost many things, from my marriage to friends. However, this tough journey in turning my life around has given me the chance to regain all that I have lost. It takes patience and a strong will in facing the adversity that I will probably continue to face for the rest of my life.

Making the right choice involves thinking about how our choices can benefit us as a person, for our family and future. Only by doing so was I able to find a new purpose in life, and that is to help others. Be proud of who you are and work hard if you wish for more in life. Most importantly, it is never what you have but what you can give that matters in life.

If you are going through a difficult time, be strong and patient with yourself. Never forget that you are special too.



DID YOU KNOW?

June 26 is the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (or World Drug Day). It has been observed in Singapore and around the world since 1989. Cut out the anti-drug ribbon strip, fold it and write your pledge of support to keep Singapore drug-free! Take a photo and send it to CNB_Community_Partnership@cnb.gov.sg by June 14, 2021, to stand a chance to win a bunch of exclusive collaterals!



Scan the QR code to learn how to fold your own anti-drug ribbon.



WHAT'S NEW?

Looking for a new game to play? Check out CNB’s “Man in the Mirror”, a VR experience where your choices shape the story and outcome. Scan the QR codes below to download the game on Google Play and participate in a giveaway on CNB’s Facebook!



Scan to download the game!



Scan for the giveaway!

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