

BROUGHT TO YOU BY



'I may not be a very good role model from the start but I'm trying to be one now'

Cut along this line to get your ribbon strip!

The female toilet on the fourth floor was our perfect haunt. Students seldom used it because they believed it to be haunted and teachers were rarely seen there. As all the cubicles were occupied by my friends, I sat down outside the toilet stalls, next to the sinks instead. No one else would come in, I told myself. No one would ever find out.

I knew exactly what to do. Soon, I was seeing unicorns and all sorts of strange and funny images before my eyes. I felt like I was standing on top of a building, free from all my worries and stresses from school.

But the "high" didn't last long. In the midst of laughing hysterically, I saw a dark figure enter the toilet and move towards me. The soft drink can was snatched from my hands and it dawned upon me then that I had been caught.

With my whole world still spinning, the figure — I later found out he was the school's discipline master — pulled me to my feet and started banging his fist on the cubicle doors.

I was 14 when I first broke my mother's heart.

I abused inhalants because...

My secondary school seniors asked if I wanted to try sniffing glue. They said that it would be exciting. The first time I tried, I experienced hallucinations for almost an hour before I managed to pull myself together and head back to class.

As the school year went on, the stress of having to do well academically really got to me. Throughout the rest of the year, I continued to sniff glue with my friends, seeing it as a momentary escape.

I began losing weight; my once superb memory was reduced to that of a goldfish. I couldn't even remember what I did five minutes ago. But I made excuses for myself: Who cared about what happened five minutes ago?

The moment the effects of glue sniffing kicked in, the present was all that mattered. I didn't care about the future.

I quit because...

I broke my mum's heart not once, but many times. I was arrested time and again over the next few years for other offences.

My seniors also introduced me to other drugs like methamphetamine, commonly known as "Ice". It can have serious physical effects such as permanent damage to blood vessels. I felt jittery all the time, had hallucinations and couldn't sleep. My dark circles were awful and I lost more weight.

When I was 15, I was sent to a girls' home. I spent a month there before I was sent to a hostel for a year. There, I had an epiphany of sorts: Sure, the drugs offered a temporary escape, but when the effects wore off, I still had to face reality. Stress is a part of everyday life — everyone experiences it and we all need to find our own ways to manage it.

Before I left the hostel in 2015, I resolved to face the reality of life's stresses and troubles. Only then could I move on with life.

I want to share my story...

That same year, I went back to school and started exercising — going for walks and runs — to distract myself whenever I was feeling stressed. I eventually completed secondary school and found a job. Today, I'm saving up in the hope that one day, I can go back to school and get the qualifications to become a social worker. I want to help youth who are struggling like I did.

I may not be a very good role model from the start but I'm trying to be one now.

Every year, on **June 26 — the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (or the World Drug Day)** — students are given green and white anti-drug ribbons that represent **vitality, strength and health**. The ribbon is a strong symbol of the pledge for a drug-free Singapore.

The day is a reminder that every choice I make impacts my future. I've been fortunate enough to have a second chance, but there may not be a third chance in life.

Along the way, I've lost some friends, but I've also gained in other aspects: closer ties with my family and clarity in my life direction and purpose.

I am taking responsibility for my life and living it to the fullest by staying drug-free.

zeline

Zeline (not her real name), 23, has been sharing her story with students from primary and secondary schools. If you know of friends with a drug problem or have any drug-related information to report, immediately inform your teacher or call the Central Narcotics Bureau (CNB) at **6325-6666**.

GRAPHICS: KIMMIE TAN

Fold your own ribbon

Cut out the ribbon strip on the right and fold it into half along the dotted line.

1



With the #DrugFreeSG as a reference point, fold the paper about 45° up. 2/3 of the paper will be angled like the picture.

2



Fold the longer side of the paper 45° down, leaving enough space to tuck the folded side under the other arm of the paper.

3



Tuck the folded side under the other arm of the paper. Press neatly along the edges.

Contest

Answer these three simple questions correctly to stand a chance to win a limited-edition DrugFreeSG goodie bag and \$12 worth of Grab vouchers! Submit your answers to **CNB_Preventive_Education_Unit@cnb.gov.sg** by June 26, 2020. Winners will be contacted via the e-mail address used to submit the answers.

1. When is World Drug Day?
2. Name one of the effects that inhalant and drug abuse had on Zeline.
3. What do the colours of the anti-drug ribbon represent?

Did you know?

The Central Narcotics Bureau (CNB) and the National Council Against Drug Abuse (NCADA) are organising this year's **DrugFreeSG Light-Up on Friday, June 26**. Scan to check out last year's light-up!



#DRUGFREE\$G
AWARE AUSTY ADVOCATE