YOUTH
LETS TALK ABOUT ALCOHOL
A CONVERSATION THAT COULD CHANGE YOUR LIFE

HEALTHY CARIBBEAN COALITION

Pan American Health Organization
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ENOUGH.
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PERSPECTIVES FROM YOUNG PEOPLE

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INTRODUCTION

• Interviewed several Young People (aged 18-30) from around the Caribbean:
  – Barbados, Trinidad, Jamaica, St. Kitts & Nevis.

• Asked them a series of qualitative questions to:
  – Gather their perspectives on why young people consume alcohol
  – What strategies can be adopted to reduce levels of consumption.
What comes to mind when we say “ALCOHOL”?

• Very distinct Smell!
• Drinking
• Drunken Nights

• Being intoxicated

• Bad Experiences and Decisions

• Carnival!

• Not having control of your behaviour

• Wine, Beer, Rum etc.
• Bars
WHY do you think Young People DRINK?

- To Be Cool
- Because everyone is drinking
- To relieve stress
- To take away their problems
- Ummm... I don’t know
- Good Question!
- Because it’s part of our culture and way of life.
- Recreation
- For Fun
- To be social
Do you think it’s important for young people to be careful with the amount of alcohol they consume? Why?

• **YES!**
  • We need to be VERY CAREFUL!
  • Absolutely!

• **NO!**
  • If you drink a little, it’s fine!

• **It can impair your judgment**
  • Harm your health

• **It’s technically POISON and can kill you if you’re not careful!**

• **It’s not necessarily bad but too much can be.**
How can we **reduce** the levels of **alcohol consumption** amongst young people?

- Be more strict about purchasing laws!
- Check ID at point of purchase.
- **YOU CANT!**
  - You would have to change the culture!
- Make strict consequences about underage drinking.

**Increase prices**
- Raise the drinking age... but we will still drink.

**Talk about the negative effects more.**
- Huh? Not possible!
MY “Youth” PERSPECTIVE

• Alcohol is:
  – Part of our culture
  – Introduced into our every day lives from birth
  – Cheap and easy to access
  – Everywhere – in songs, on buildings, in magazines, on billboards, at school fairs & sports events etc.
  – Associated with having fun and a good time
MY “Youth” PERSPECTIVE

• Ways to REDUCE Alcohol Consumption:
  – Increase the conversation about alcohol and its harmful effects
  – Get popular YOUNG persons in society to share the Alcohol Reduction message and join the campaign
  – Restriction of alcohol sales – Days/Hours/Places/Densities
MY “Youth” PERSPECTIVE

• Barriers to CHANGE:
  – Young people see the ability to drink alcohol as a privilege
  – Societal Pressures – It’s not “cool” NOT to drink!
  – The Business of Alcohol
  – It’s celebrated and infused in our culture
  – Young people feel invincible and don’t think that the negative effects will happen to them personally.
THANK YOU!