



3rd July 2023

Copen Awareness Proven Positive

The RSIPF-AFP Policing Partnership Program (RAPPP) copen awareness program conducted in schools across Honiara has proven to have helped curb copen use among students who participated in the program.

The trend of students using copen appears to have declined, according to teachers interviewed. The awareness has reached thousands of students from about 30 schools. Teachers from at least three schools have come out to share this positive update.

Deputy Principal of Mbokona Community High School, Mr. Jeffery Kausiho, said copen use was high among students in their school and it had become a serious concern for their administration.

Mr. Kausiho, who is the teacher responsible for overseeing the School's Disciplinary Committee, said he had to push the committee to actively deal with the issue.

"The first thing we did was to strengthen and enforce rules against copen in the school. While implementing these rules, we also invited RAPPP to bring the copen awareness to our school. We are delighted with the result," Mr. Kausiho said.

He said it was clear that many students were using copen at the beginning of the year and one could see empty copen packs laying along the school walkway or the school's ablution blocks.

"We disciplined a good number of students in relation to copen use. Copen use was not only high among young students but also older students," Mr. Kausiho said.

He said the bold stance they took against copen, along with the awareness RAPPP conducted in their school, has helped to reduce copen use among their students.

"As a staff member of the school who closely observes students, I have noted a huge change," Mr. Kausiho said.

He thanked the school administration and staff for their commitment to fighting copen and for agreeing to bring the RAPPP copen awareness program to the school.

Mr. Kausiho said the awareness has also helped broaden the understanding of teachers about copen.

"I can say, copen use in our school has reduced significantly over the past months," Mr. Kausiho said.

Principal of Lungga Community High School, Mrs. Joy Cornelius, said their school attempted to control the growing number of students who use copen but they found it difficult.

She thanked RAPPP for the awareness as it helped to reduce the trend.

"I can't guarantee that this school is now copen-free but I can confidently say that it has declined," Mr. Cornelius said.

She said she can tell this based on the behaviour of students after attending the awareness program.

Mrs Cornelius further stated, "I think more awareness about copen needs to be conducted in schools to help students understand the effects of this drug."

She said more awareness should also be provided within the community because this is where copen is produced.

Mrs. Rosalinda Manekaea, who is responsible for the welfare of students at King George Sixth School, said since copen was new, many students wanted to taste it.

Mrs. Manekaea said copen use was high in their school and it became a concern because it disturbed students' concentration. It was also impacting attendance at school with the number of students missing class also growing.

"There was instability in our school. Copen use was high among students both male and female," Mrs. Manekaea said.

She said the RAPP copen awareness was well received by their students, with around 300 students attending, far in excess of the 100 initially invited.

"I believe many of our students have listened to the message, which was shared during the awareness program," Mrs. Manekaea said.

She said they have monitored the students after the awareness program and can report that the results are positive.

"Our students are now actively involved in school activities and programs and we are happy with the progress we made against copen," Mrs. Manekaea added.

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