

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## Program To Address Increase Of Violence Among BVI Youth Launched

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TORTOLA -- Youths who are at risk here would be given special attention through a Juvenile Intervention Program recently launched, The Consortium has learned.

The program is to address the increase of violence among youth.

The program titled A.V.O.I.D (Anti-Violence ongoing Intervention Defense) is an intensive ten-week life skills workshop which will provide young persons between ages 11 and 18 who are in need of psycho-educational support with the necessary skills to solve problems, make decisions and interact positively in social situations.

Deputy Secretary for the Ministry of Health and Social Development, Natalie Fahie-Smith said that during the ten weeks of training, the objective is to reduce the risk levels of the youth and to increase the protective factors on the risk assessment such as drug and alcohol, school attendance, criminal referrals, anti-social behavior and suspensions and expulsions.

Fahie-Smith said children will be referred into the program once they meet the following criteria which are, if they are between the ages of 11 and 18, they are at risk, they have a pre-delinquent case and they agree to abide by the rules and regulations of the program.”

The programme will be facilitated by Lewis Edwards of Edwards Consultants, who is a certified A.V.O.I.D Master Trainer, Juvenile Justice Administrator, Probation Counselor, Drug Court Coordinator, Coach and Program Facilitator. Registered Counselor Lesa Edwards is also one of the program's facilitators.

Edwards has over 20 years' experience in social services and is a director of mental health, vocational and residential programs, and an A.V.O.I.D and HIPAA Certified Instructor. The program will be based on interactive classes, course materials and participants will receive a personalised certificate on completion.

A Train the Trainer Course has also commenced where key individuals directly involved with the youth will become qualified to facilitate A.V.O.I.D classes thereafter.

The Train the Trainer course began on September 28 and continues until October 2.