



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Social Development and Family Services



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Monday July 13, 2020

Priority: **HIGH**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Ministry of Social Development and Family Services to host blended Parenting Workshops**

*Monday July 13, 2020 ---* The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services (MSDFS) is pleased to announce the launch of its first cycle of virtual parenting workshops for interested parents and guardians for the period July to August, 2020. Each class will be ninety minutes long and require that participants have reliable access to internet-ready devices such as a mobile phone, tablet, laptop or desktop computer with video capability. However, some concessions will be made to host a classroom setting for interested individuals who do not meet the technological requirements. These will be conducted with all relevant safety protocols being observed.

According to Sharon Winchester, Coordinator of the Ministry's *National Family Services Division*, the decision to transition from a traditional classroom setting to online sessions, was *primarily in keeping with health regulations that were established to mitigate the risks associated with the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)*. Mrs. Winchester further stated that *it was imperative for the Ministry to ensure a sense of business continuity during this unprecedented period in the world's history*. She emphasised the strategic role that the MSDFS continues to play in enhancing the lives of all citizens, particularly those who are considered to be the most vulnerable and noted that the cancellation of the classes was *non-negotiable*, given that the family remains one of the most at-risk institutions in contemporary communities, in view of the myriad of social ills faced by society.

The parenting workshops have become an annual staple on the Ministry's calendar and seeks to sensitize and equip parents, guardians and expectant individuals with the necessary knowledge and skills to make responsible decisions regarding the safety and well-being of children within their care. As such, topics include adolescents and sexuality, bullying, generational gaps in communication, as well as, strategies for effective co-parenting.

The workshops follow the successful debut of a televised mini-series by the MSDFS, which was aired on TTT Limited between June 7<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020. Entitled: *Living with COVID-19*, the series was broadcasted live and featured NFSD staff and subject matter experts who discussed and gave advice regarding the various challenges that families were encountering in response to COVID-19

and its related restrictions. A key deliverable of the series was the use of remote technology to host virtual interviews via zoom, a feature that the parenting workshops will utilise. The Ministry considers this to be a dynamic addition that will facilitate wider participation of a cross-section of adults from communities, thereby creating a more inclusive approach to parenting education.

The *Ministry of Social Development and Family Services* will host three sessions within this cycle. Two of these sessions will be open for general participants, while the third will be exclusively for adult males, who may be parents, grandparents, uncles or mentors within their communities. Men who are not yet parents, are also encouraged to register.

Interested persons can call the Ministry's *National Family Services Division* at 623-2608, ext. 6701 or 6705 for further information and/or to register.

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**For more information:**

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