



MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ministry of Social Development and Family Services Reaches Out to the Family of the deceased St. Stephen's College Student

Port-of-Spain --- The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services has reached out to the family of the St. Stephen's College student who unfortunately committed suicide recently. The Ministry has offered its support to the traumatised relatives of the young man, who have indicated their willingness to meet with the Ministry's Social Workers. The general public is advised that the Suicide Prevention Hotline continues to be available and that the National Family Services Division continues to reach out to families to offer counselling and psychosocial support following the tragic loss of a loved one.

As a part of the case management strategy, the National Family Services Division provides the necessary support to families for counselling and any other psychosocial-social matters which may be deemed necessary, as family members' journey through these challenge of losing a loved one.

The Ministry further advise that the Suicide Prevention Hotline, 800- COPE (2673), which is free of charge and available 24 hours a day, 7 days per week, is intended to efficiently support persons with crisis issues related to suicidal ideations, abuse, and anxiety and help those in need of emotional support.

This hotline serves as a helping hand and a listening ear for those who feel unheard. Since its inception, the Hotline have received approximately 3,500 calls, demonstrating the urgent need for support in our community. Trained staff operating the hotline address crisis-related issues such as suicide and suicide ideation, family crises, gender-based violence, mental health challenges, substance abuse and child abuse.

In addition, the Hotline provides both internal and external referral systems, ensuring individuals can access additional services if needed. To enhance our support network, we have established collaborations with the Ministry of Health, Non-Governmental Organisations, Community Based Organisations, and various government and non-government agencies.

While the Suicide Prevention Hotline is not the lead agency in the provision of mental health support services to all members of the public, the Hotline is affiliated with the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services (MHPSS). This inter-ministerial, inter-agency group of mental health professionals, chaired by the Ministry of Health, provides a range of support to help individuals cope with emotional, psychological and social challenges.

If you or someone you know is a victim of abuse, having thoughts of suicide, in need of emotional support, or struggling with anxiety, please contact the Ministry's 24-Hour Suicide Prevention Hotline 800- COPE (2673); Childline at 800-4321; or the Domestic Violence Abuse Hotline at 800-SAVE (7283).

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For more information, please contact the:

Communications Unit

T: 623-2608 ext. 5400 – 5411

E: cceu@social.gov.tt