

MEDIA RELEASE

UNICEF Launches "Hear Me Out" Mental Health Campaign in Guyana

GEORGETOWN, GUYANA, OCTOBER 11, 2024 – UNICEF Guyana, in collaboration with the First Lady of Guyana, Her Excellency Arya Ali, the Ministry of Health, and the Pan American Health Organization/World Health organization (PAHO/WHO), on Thursday, October 10, 2024, launched the "Hear Me Out" mental health anti-stigma campaign. The campaign's goal is to foster open discussions about mental health and highlight the importance of seeking treatment among young people.

At the launch event held at the Port Mourant Community Center Ground in Region 6, First Lady, Her Excellency Arya Ali in her remarks at the opening said “This is an area of health which we continue to mobilise support around and one which is continually evolving, thus making it a more complex issue. In our fast-paced world, we often overlook Mental Health in favour of other goals and pursuits of life. But it is very important that we deploy stress management techniques. and find what works for us best.”

She continued, “But beyond ourselves, we also have a responsibility around us, our family and friends. Their mental health also matters. We must begin by destigmatizing mental health. In a society like ours, that can be challenging, but an allyship like ours will ensure we overcome this challenge, we have the power to stabilize, and we must never forget. That is why today’s activity is so important.”

UNICEF Country Representative Nicolas Pron underlined the importance of mental health in overall well-being. "Mental health is as important as our physical health," he continued, "By encouraging conversations and practices to protect mental health among young people, we can create a society where no one feels ashamed to ask for help."

Director of the Ministry of Health - Mental Health Unit, Dr. Timothy Morgan in his remarks stated “The Ministry of Health, through the Mental Health Unit, has been actively collaborating with our partners to improve the mental health of our Guyanese children and adolescents. We will continue to partner with PAHO/WHO, UNICEF and other like-minded organisations and government agencies to holistically improve the mental health of our Guyanese children and adolescents and reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues.”

The "Hear Me Out" campaign will include a variety of activities, such as school-based programs, television and radio broadcasts, and social media initiatives. UNICEF encourages everyone, from students and parents to teachers and community members, to take part and contribute to the campaign. According to WHO’s global statistics on suicide rates; Guyana is among the countries in the world with significantly high suicide rates.

Globally, one in four people are affected by poor mental health with approximately 280 million people in the world living with depression. Reports have revealed that more than 700,000 people die due to suicide every year, with suicide being the fourth leading cause of death among 15–29-year-olds.

UNICEF remains committed to ensuring good mental health and well-being for every child, everywhere. Through the "Hear Me Out" campaign, UNICEF aims to empower young people to prioritize their mental health and seek the support they need.

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