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PRESS RELEASE

Ministry of Health to Observe World Suicide Prevention Day with “Light A Candle” Event

Belmopan, September 9, 2020. 4:00 p.m.

The Ministry of Health will once again commemorate World Suicide Prevention Day (WSPD) on September 10th to raise awareness of suicide and suicide prevention. For the second consecutive year, the International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP) selected the theme “Working Together to Prevent Suicide,” which is even more significant during this time when the world is focusing on overcoming COVID-19.

Globally, someone dies by suicide every 40 seconds and up to 25 times as many make suicide attempts. However, as often as this happens, the topic is still surrounded by much stigma. Furthermore, people who express suicidal thoughts and behaviours are shamed and blamed by many who simply do not understand that most people who are suicidal do not want to die but simply want to end their pain.

Collaboration is the most essential element for effective global suicide prevention and together we can collectively address the challenges presented by suicidal behaviour in society today. We need to work together to prevent suicide in our own communities, and helping to save a life by allowing people to openly talk about their suicidal thoughts and feelings.

On the observance of WSPD, the Ministry of Health invites Belizeans to take part in its **Light a Candle** event. Participants are asked to light a candle near a window at 8:00 p.m. on September 10th as a symbol of support for suicide prevention or in remembrance of a loved one.

Suicides are preventable. Let us do everything in our power to get suicidal persons the help they need. If you or someone you know is struggling with suicidal thoughts, the Ministry of Health encourages you to the mental health clinic in your district. Services are free of cost.

To learn more about WSPD, please visit www.iasp.info/wspd/.

Ends

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