



SOUTHERN REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY

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PRESS RELEASE

October 18, 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Treat Mental Illness As Physical Illness-Health Administrator

Regional Director of the Southern Regional Health Authority (SRHA) Mr. Michael Bent is encouraging Jamaicans to treat mental health illnesses with the same regard and seriousness as physical illnesses.

The Regional Director made the call on World Mental Health Day, celebrated on October 10, as he addressed a Mental Health Forum at the Ridgemount United Church Hall in Manchester.

"So often we have persons seeing mental health illness as something I should disassociate myself from. I have looked at situations where I have seen persons in families and workplaces show a different level of care and support to those with mental health illnesses as opposed to those with physical illnesses. I am going to urge persons to treat mental health illness with the same importance as physical illness" Mr. Bent said.

"It is important that we seek to find an environment in the workplaces where we can promote good mental health. I am challenging all persons to identify with one of the objectives of this Forum, which is aiming to spread the understanding of employment practices that support good mental health" Mr. Bent continued.

Mr. Bent reasoned that if persons in society, including family members and colleagues take a different approach to persons suffering from mental health issues, sometimes the result and severity of the illness can be different. He challenged the audience to take a keener interest in mental health, not only during its commemoration in October, but throughout the year.

Acting Parish Manager for the Manchester Health Services, Mrs. Sandia Chambers Ferguson noted that the lack of support for persons with mental health disorders, coupled with the fear of stigma, prevent many persons from accessing treatment to live healthy and productive lives.

She added that she believes that there is an urgent need to not only
(more)

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restore but maintain dignity in mental health. This, she added requires a multi-faceted approach, which will only be achieved by: increasing awareness, empowering employees to manage persons with mental health challenges, strengthening the capacity of the country's mental health teams to manage persons diagnosed with mental health illnesses and empowering mental health staff to manage their own personal challenges that impact their health.

The Forum, which targeted employers and employees, provided information on relaxation techniques, making the workplace therapeutic, creating a mentally healthy work environment and physical therapy for persons with psychosocial disabilities.

Picture 1



Mr. Michael Bent urges the audience to treat mental illness with the same regard and importance as physical illness.

(more)

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Picture 2



A section of the audience.

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For more information contact:
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