GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

PRESS RELEASE

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Office of Gender Participated In Domestic Violence Outreach

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The Office of Gender Affairs (OGA), in collaboration with the Family Support Network (FSN), participated in a Domestic Violence Awareness Outreach Day in Great Harbour, Jost Van Dyke under the theme “Domestic Violence: NO!”

The event brought community members together to learn about domestic violence, recognize signs of abuse, and discuss ways individuals and families can seek support.

Guest speaker and Licensed Clinical Psychotherapist, Dr. Albert Thompkins, spoke on the different types of domestic violence - psychological, physical and economical abuse and its impact in the home and across the community. He underscored that “Domestic violence is not a private issue; but it is a community issue… If it happens in one home, it happens in all of our homes.”

Dr. Thompkins added that the honeymoon phase in a romantic relationship is intense emotions; but after that phase the explosion of abuse starts. Participants were encouraged to seek help and safety. He reminded attendees, “Silence protects your abuser. Speaking up protects the community.”

Ministerial Special Adviser on Gender Affairs, Ms. Patricia Hackett, addressed the importance of communication, compromise and emotional healing in building healthy relationships. She said, “How do we build healthy relationships? We first have to compromise and communicate. Holding on to hurt from 20 or 30 years ago only affects your present relationship.”

Ms. Hackett then led participants through an exercise for building self-esteem after going through a domestic violence trauma. Each participant was required to a select a statement and expressed their feelings-. “I am worthy,” “I am energetic,” “I am successful,” “I am beautiful,” “I am free and I am Peace.”

The Gender Affairs Special Adviser later added, “Don’t let any man tell you you’re not worthy. Don’t let any woman tell you you’re not worthy. Because you are worthy of love.”

During the activity, a survivor of domestic violence spoke about her experiences noting that her situation was not easy and the violence got extreme which resulted

in her leaving the relationship. However, she added that she is now at peace and the statement "I am Peace" made her feel good about herself.

Meanwhile, Executive Director of FSN, Mrs. Prudence Charles-Phillip, thanked attendees and highlighted the importance of continued public engagement. She noted,
“This wasn’t just a presentation. It was energetic and engaging. We need to do this more often because people need to learn how to manage relationships. When we understand our roles, we have less violence.”

Mrs. Charles-Phillip also announced that FSN plans to continue joint outreach activities across the Virgin Islands.

The outreach concluded with a reminder that domestic violence affects entire communities and requires a collective response. Participants left with information, affirmations and support resources aimed at helping individuals build safer and healthier relationships.

The Office of Gender Affairs confirmed its ongoing commitment to partnering with Family Support Network to advance public education and support services for domestic violence throughout the Virgin Islands.

For Additional Information Contact:

Fitsroy Randall

Information Officer I

Ministry of Health and Social Development

Vorinica's House of Commerce, Long Bush

Tortola, British Virgin Islands

Telephone: (284) 468-4138

E-mail Address: FRandall@gov.vg

Gallery





Additional Documents or Media

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