GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

PRESS RELEASE

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Community Urged to Take Action Against Domestic Violence

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The Ministry of Health and Social Development, through the Office of Gender Affairs, is encouraging the community to move from awareness to action as the Virgin Islands observes Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October.

This year's campaign, observed under the theme "With Survivors, Always," calls on communities to stand with survivors, strengthen support and take action to prevent domestic violence.

Throughout the observance, the Office of Gender Affairs will lead a public education campaign to increase awareness of the different forms of abuse, help residents recognise the warning signs and promote safe and appropriate ways to support persons affected by domestic violence.

Domestic violence is not limited to physical violence. It can include emotional, verbal, sexual, financial and digital abuse. Threats, intimidation, stalking, isolation and controlling behaviour can also be forms of abuse.

Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Health and Social Development, Ms. Tasha K. Bertie, said the campaign is intended to move the conversation beyond recognising domestic violence to understanding how individuals and communities can respond safely and appropriately.

"Domestic violence can affect anyone. Our responsibility as a community is not only to recognise the signs of abuse, but to know how to respond in ways that support the safety, dignity and choices of those affected," Ms. Bertie said.

The campaign will address six areas: understanding abuse, forms of abuse, persons affected by domestic violence, harmful behavior, the cycle of abuse, community response and support systems, healing and moving forward.

Special attention will also be placed on groups whose experiences may sometimes be overlooked, including men, children, teenagers, older persons and persons with disabilities.

According to Ms. Bertie through the Office of Gender Affairs, the Ministry will continue to strengthen public education, prevention and partnerships so that persons experiencing domestic violence know that support is available and that

they do not have to face these circumstances alone. “I also encourage residents to consider the role they can play in creating safer homes and communities. Recognise the warning signs. Listen without judgement. Respect the choices of survivors and help connect persons with the appropriate support,” Ms. Bertie advocated.

Persons experiencing domestic violence, or those concerned about someone who may be at risk, are encouraged to seek support through the appropriate agency below.

WHERE TO GET HELP

Agency	Contact Information
Royal Virgin Islands Police Force	**Emergency: 911 • Domestic Violence Unit: (284) 368-9705**
Social Development Department	**Main: (284) 468-3650 / (284) 468-3636 • Emergency: (284) 468-9371**
Office of Gender Affairs	**(284) 468-2235**
Family Support Network	**24-Hour Crisis Hotline: (284) 499-0999 • Office: (284) 494-7622 / (284) 542-2085**

The Ministry of Health and Social Development remains committed to protecting and promoting the health and social well-being of the people of the Virgin Islands

through effective policies, sustainable programmes, and strategic partnerships that support a safe, healthy, and resilient society.

For Additional Information Contact:

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