



**STATEMENT TO THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
BY THE HONOURABLE KIM WILSON, JP, MP
MINISTER OF HEALTH**

COMMUNITIES OF SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS

12 July 2024

Mr. Speaker,

I rise today to address a matter that has deeply affected our community. Bermuda is mourning the recent tragic losses that have touched us all. My heart aches as we reflect on the deaths that have occurred this week. I am deeply saddened and shocked by this news. As the Premier and the Minister of National Security have indicated, our country has been profoundly impacted by these tragic events. The pain we feel as a community is immense, and the mental and emotional well-being of our people has been profoundly shaken.

In these difficult and testing times, we must pause, reflect, and support one another. If you or someone you know is struggling, please do not hesitate to seek help. We must be vigilant and compassionate, looking out for our neighbors, friends, and loved ones. Check-in on each other, offer a listening ear, and pay attention to signs that someone may be struggling. Even a small gesture of kindness can make a significant difference in someone's life.

Though these tragedies may not affect each of us directly, we are a close-knit community, and the ripples of these losses touch us all. Whether within your family, among friends, at church, or in your

workplace, someone you know is grieving. Let us come together to support one another and prioritize our mental and emotional health.

Mr. Speaker,

The Ministry of Health wants to reassure everyone that support is available for those who need it. If you are finding it hard to cope with these events or any mental health issues, please reach out to the following agencies:

- Mid Atlantic Wellness Institute Mainline: 239-1111, which connects to a 24-hour Mental Health crisis line, or call 236-3770.
- Red Cross Psychosocial First Aider: Call 236-8253 between 9am and 4pm Monday to Friday.

Additionally, the Family Centre offers resources and support for parents and children experiencing grief. They provide a Grief Support Tip Sheet for Parents, covering topics such as creating a supportive environment, memorial activities for children, talking about a tragic death, managing fears and anxieties, recognizing and addressing grief in children, and seeking professional help. To access therapeutic grief support for children between the ages of 4-18 years old, please call the Family Centre at 232-1116 and ask to speak with a screener.

I want to take a moment to specifically address youth mental health. Record levels of young people are struggling with academic pressure, social media, bullying, poverty, and a lack of availability of professional mental health support – all contributing to this epidemic of poor mental health in our young people. The Department of Health has made significant strides in its ongoing commitment to bolster adolescent mental health support. Recognizing the crucial role that schools play in young people's lives, the Department has initiated

several key programs to build capacity among professionals who interact with children and adolescents daily.

We have been investing in training for professionals who work with our young people, from educators to healthcare providers, to better understand and support the emotional well-being of children and teenagers. This includes learning how to recognize when young people may be struggling and how to connect them with the appropriate resources and support. By equipping health professionals and educators with the tools and knowledge they need, we are helping to foster a supportive and understanding atmosphere for our young people.

Finally, if you are experiencing a mental health crisis, please call 9-11 at any time. Do not hesitate to contact these organizations for advice and support.

Mr. Speaker,

We are our brother's keeper. Let's stand together in this time of sorrow, offering love, comfort, and support to those in need. Our community is strong, and by caring for one another, we will find the strength to heal and move forward. To the families, friends, and loved ones of those who have lost their lives, we extend our deepest sympathies and condolences. Our community mourns with you, and we stand with you in this time of grief.

Thank you.