

Zero Male Suicide - 30 Male Students Look To Bright Futures

Kingston, Jamaica, November 30, 2023 - Thirty male students of five of Jamaica's high schools have reassured their teachers and representatives of CIBC FirstCaribbean bank that suicide is not in their present or future path.

Speaking frankly at an International Men's Day Forum hosted by the bank at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel on November 23, 2023, the students spoke emphatically about their resolve to do well in school, further their education to attain the qualifications necessary to achieve their dream jobs, respect for girls and women and love for their families. This year's theme for International Men's Day was "Zero Male Suicide".

The students from Munro College, Dinthill Technical High, Ardenne High, St George's College and Kingston College responded positively to Nigel Holness, Managing Director of the bank and to guest presenters Verol Billet, Registered Associate Clinical Psychologist, Clinical Director at Dr. kAD Morgan and Associates and Team Lead for Healing at Kahle and Christopher Brown, Programme Manager, Boosting Innovation, Growth and Entrepreneurship Ecosystems (BIGEE), Development Bank of Jamaica who shared his life lessons, missteps and successes with the group.

Mr Holness reinforced the role of men in society and the need for boys to respect and honour the roles both men and women play. Noting that annually, November 19 is celebrated as International Men's Day, Mr Holness said that "while it is universally acknowledged that women have a significant role in all spheres of everyday life including as productive members of society, men are very, very, very important too".

Men, he said "can serve as positive role models and though today, we all tend to idolize sportsmen, celebrities or movie stars, it is infinitely better to have a regular man, for instance, a father who is leading a normal, decent life as a good human being, as a role model. That way, children will also realize that you do not have to be famous or celebrated on social media, to be an example to others. If you are honest, hardworking, and disciplined, you are also a hero," he reminded.

Mr Holness said that "while boys tend to be traditionally raised with the stereotypical notion that as a man you should be strong and not show any weakness. This is totally wrong. Men are also human beings and can face problems both on the personal and professional front. What's more, it is healthier to openly talk and resolve such issues, than to stay quiet", he recommended.

The Psychologist, Verol Billett shared information and facts on suicide including statistics, gender distribution, noting that men are at least four times more likely to complete suicide than women.

He explored the concept of mental health among men, the concept of Adverse Childhood Experiences and its relationships to later outcomes, ways to take better care of one's mental health, how to help others and the need to combat the stigma among men and mental health.

The discussion with the students evolved around the fact that men traditionally are not the most willing to seek help and take care of themselves physically and mentally, “There is a need to challenge the cultural notions about men and emotions, a need to learn better coping mechanism to handle stress, and a need to make changes in our daily lives to lower the incidence and the perpetuation of trauma in our society. Lastly, in light of the theme, it all points to the need for men to take holistic care of themselves as this will therefore create the positive impact on their general wellbeing and therefore lower the rates of suicide among men”, Mr Billett asserted.

Christopher Brown imparted nuggets from his own journey from high school to university to professional life, touching on the need to maintain focus on one’s studies, balancing sports and social activity including the pursuit of love interests. To his question, “What does success look like for you?” The boys were unequivocal in their responses. Bugattis, Dodge Challengers, Lamborghinis featured heavily in their wish lists along with “good jobs, big salaries to buy anything, nice houses and happy families”.

Mr Brown told the students, “discipline is key to achieving your dreams. Give everything you do one hundred percent and use your initiative, be helpful at home, at school and eventually, at work. There may be bumps in the road - failure may happen sometimes but don’t let it break you. Next day will come and what happened yesterday will be in the past. A new day is always a new opportunity to succeed if you work at it”, he declared.

End



Nigel Holness (r), Managing Director, CIBC FirstCaribbean, greets some of the students hosted by the bank at their International Men’s Day workshop at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel on November 23, 2023.



Verol Billet, Registered Associate Clinical Psychologist, Clinical Director at Dr. kAD Morgan and Associates and Team Lead for Healing at Kahle in conversation with some of the students who participated in the CIBC FirstCaribbean International Men's Day workshop for 30 students and teachers at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel on November 23, 2023.



Renee Whitehorne (l) Marketing Manager, CIBC FirstCaribbean, and Jerome Griffiths, Head of Human Resources, welcome Christopher Brown, Programme Manager, Boosting Innovation, Growth and Entrepreneurship Ecosystems (BIGEE), Development Bank of Jamaica, one of the presenters at the bank's International Men's Day workshop for 30 students and teachers at the Jamaica Pegasus on November 23, 2023.



Students respond enthusiastically to questions posed by presenter Christopher Brown, Programme Manager, Boosting Innovation, Growth and Entrepreneurship Ecosystems (BIGEE), Development Bank of Jamaica, at the CIBC FirstCaribbean International Men's Day workshop at the Jamaica Pegasus on November 23, 2023.



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CIBC FirstCaribbean executives, students, teachers and presenters at the bank's International Men's Day workshop at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel on November 23, 2023.

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CIBC FirstCaribbean is a member of the CIBC Group. CIBC is a leading Canadian-based global financial institution with 11 million personal banking and business clients. Through our three major business units - Retail and Business Banking, Wealth Management and Capital Markets - CIBC offers a full range of products and services through its comprehensive electronic banking network, branches and offices across Canada with offices in the United States and around the world.

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