

HEALTH HERALD

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from the MOHW*



WELLNESS IN THE PARK: SHINING A LIGHT ON MENTAL HEALTH AND HOMELESSNESS

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Wellness in the Park Promotes Mental Health for All



“There is a truth that we must confront – homelessness and mental health are linked, forming a cycle of vulnerability that some individuals find themselves unable to escape.” – Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton, MP

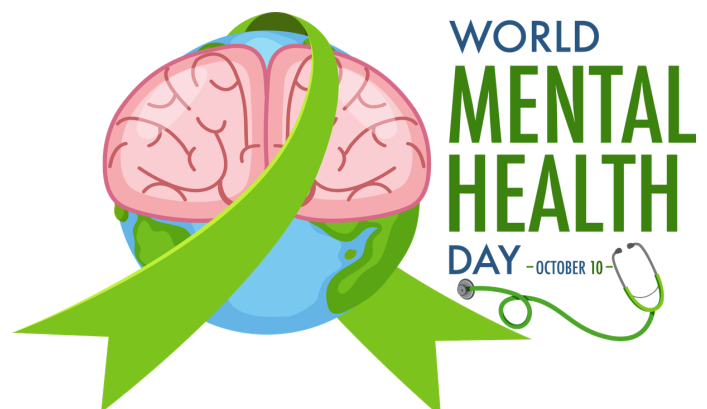
“Behind every statistic is a human story... Homelessness and mental health are not separate challenges – they feed into each other.”

The day’s activities included free health checks, hair and skincare, mental health workshops, aerobics, and giveaways. Patrons were also introduced to support services such as the 888-NEW-LIFE helpline and the U-Matter chatline (text SUPPORT to 876-838-4897 or @ureportjamaica), catering to persons aged 16–24.

Dr. Kevin Goulbourne, Director of Mental Health and Substance Use, underscored the importance of continued awareness. “It has never been more important than right now to give priority to our mental health,” he said. “We can all do something about the stigma associated with mental illness – whether by reaching out for help or supporting someone in need. The fact is, we can all do our share.”

The Ministry of Health and Wellness, in partnership with the Southeast Regional Health Authority and the Kingston & St. Andrew Municipal Corporation, recently hosted Wellness in the Park to commemorate both World Mental Health Day and World Homeless Day.

Held at St. William Grant Park in Downtown Kingston on October 10, the event drew hundreds of Jamaicans and closed out National Mental Health Awareness Week under the theme “Community: Supporting Mental Well-Being Together.” The fair also highlighted the deep connection between homelessness and mental health – a link that continues to shape the Ministry’s holistic approach to wellness.



You Are Not Alone

Recent reports of suicides, including the passing of former Miss Universe Jamaica contestant Tyra Spaulding and a police officer in St. Elizabeth, have reignited national conversations about mental health and the importance of emotional well-being.

Between January and September 2025, the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) recorded 44 suicides, compared to 53 over the same period in 2024—a 16.9 per cent decline year-on-year. While this indicates progress, each life lost is a reminder of the urgent need for compassion, awareness, and accessible support for those in distress.

The Ministry of Health and Wellness continues to champion mental wellness through its Do Your Share campaign, reminding Jamaicans that “You are not alone.” The campaign encourages individuals to reach out, share how they feel, and seek help without fear of stigma. “Many people experience mental health challenges, but help is available,” notes Dr. Kevin Goulbourne, Director of Mental Health and Substance Use.

“Whether you’re struggling yourself or know someone who is, small acts of care—checking in, listening, or connecting others to support—can make a difference.”

Together, as a nation, let’s continue building a culture of empathy, openness, and hope—because supporting each other saves lives. Every act of kindness, every check-in, and every shared moment of care brings us one step closer to national healing.

Persons needing help can contact the Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Helpline at 888-NEW-LIFE (888-639-5433) or the U-Matter chatline, designed for youth aged 16–24, by messaging the word SUPPORT to 876-838-4897 or @ureportjamaica.

Real life happens beyond the screen. It’s okay to pause, breathe, and focus on your own story. Healing begins with conversation, and every conversation can save a life.

The Ministry continues to expand mental health services islandwide, ensuring more safe spaces, trained responders, and confidential support for anyone facing emotional distress or crisis. #DoYourShare



PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS: SERVICE EXCELLENCE MONTH SCAVENGER HUNT AND WELLNESS IN THE PARK





YOU ARE NOT ALONE

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experience

mental health
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For help, call the Mental Health
and Suicide Prevention Helpline at
888-NEW-LIFE (888-639-5433).

#DoYourShare

Staff Spotlight

Michelle Richards-Henry

#PeopleInHealth

Name: Michelle Richards-Henry.

Job Title/Position: Programme Development Officer

Division/Department/Unit: Technical Services/Health Services Planning & Integration/Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services.

What is your core function: Providing managerial support, coordinate the implementation of mental health programmes, including assisting in the development of national guidelines, monitoring service delivery, advocating for the development, planning and implementing of programmes/activities etc. and collaborating with stakeholders and government agencies to achieve national mental health programmatic goals.

My vision for the MOHW is: For all members of staff to work together as a team, with the needs of the population we serve be each person's optimal focus, from the executives to the grounds-men.

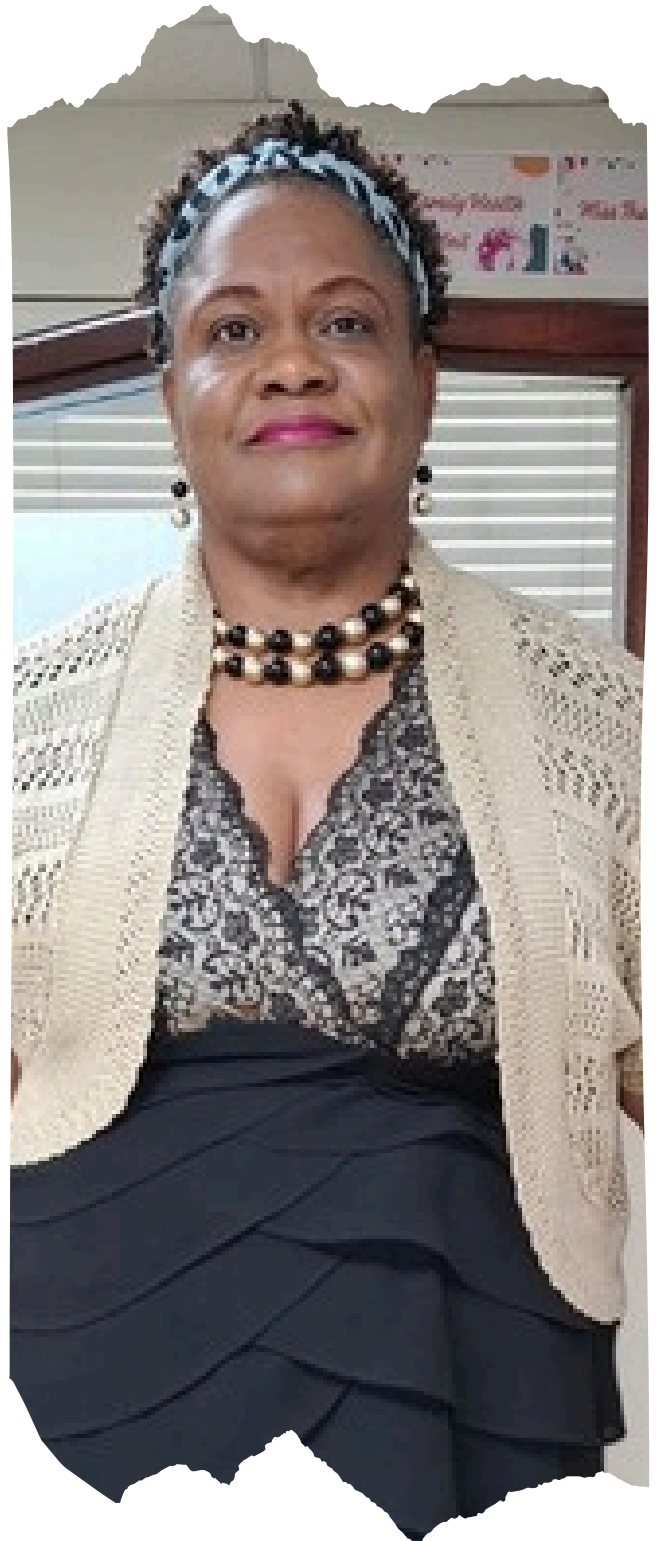
What do you enjoy about your job: When an event/programme being planned comes together successfully when implemented.

What high school did you attend: Merl Grove High School.

Favourite childhood memory: Playing Cowboys, Indian, Police and Thieves during my summer holidays and climbing the mango trees in the yard.

Favourite colour: Red.

What would be your dream vacation: Visiting Africa, particularly Nigeria/Ghana to see where my forefathers originated. To also see and interact with the wild life.



CREDITS:

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