GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

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Tel: (284)468-2730
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Ministry of Health Marks International Men's Day with HEAR HIM Initiative

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The Ministry of Health and Social Development marked International Men’s Day on Thursday, 19 November, with HEAR HIM, a special engagement at His Majesty's Prison aimed at promoting positive masculinity, healthy relationships and personal accountability.

Organised by the Office of Gender Affairs in collaboration with His Majesty's Prison, the initiative brought inmates and invited speakers together under the theme **“Rebuilding with Purpose: Skills, Second Chances and Positive Contributions.”**

The session encouraged participants to consider what it means to be a positive influence. Discussions focused on respect, communication, managing anger, resolving conflict without violence and taking responsibility for choices that affect others. The engagement also reinforced the role males play in preventing domestic and gender-based violence.

Minister for Health and Social Development, Honourable Vincent O. Wheatley, urged participants to recognise that personal growth and second chances must be matched by a willingness to change harmful behaviours while accepting responsibility for their decisions and their impact on others.

“Being in prison does not remove your dignity or your ability to learn and contribute,” Minister Wheatley stated.

The Minister emphasised the importance of developing practical skills, looking after mental well-being and preparing for life beyond incarceration. He encouraged participants to make use of learning opportunities and set realistic goals for their personal development and reintegration into society.

The discussion featured perspectives on positive masculinity, mentorship, behaviour change, rehabilitation and reintegration, with an opportunity for inmates to ask questions and reflect on what they could do differently moving forward.

A highlight of the observance was the unveiling of a pamphlet display stand constructed by inmates for the Office of Gender Affairs. Minister Wheatley commended their craftsmanship and recognised the work as a practical example of

skills being put to positive use.

“Your craftsmanship shows how skills can be used with purpose to make a positive contribution,” he said.

Through the HEAR HIM engagement, the Ministry used International Men’s Day to affirm that positive masculinity involves respect, accountability, non-violent choices and the capacity to contribute meaningfully to society. The Ministry thanks His Majesty’s Prison, the Office of Gender Affairs and the participating speakers for supporting the observance.

The Ministry of Health and Social Development remains committed to strengthening social protection, improving access to public services and supporting the well-being of vulnerable individuals and families throughout the Virgin Islands.

For Additional Information Contact:

Natasha Lettsome-Humphrey
Public Health Communications Specialist
Ministry of Health and Social Development
Telephone: 468-2286

Email: nlettsome@gov.vg

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