

MHPSS/GBV Working Group Meeting Minutes– 23 Nov 2017

Re: coordination of *Mental health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)* and *Gender-Based Violence (GBV)* response to Hurricane Maria in Dominica

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Apologies

- Shani Shillingford, Dominica Psychological Society
- Lesley-Ann Waldron, Princess Margaret Hospital
- Marylin Richards, Planned Parenthood

Introductions and overview of activities

- **International Medical Corps (IMC)** collaborated with IsraAID to provide a Training of Trainers workshop on arts-based therapeutic techniques to members of the Dominica Psychological Society; ongoing MHPSS assessment and mapping activities; developing training for community leaders and NGO staff on Psychological First Aid (PFA) in collaboration with IsraAID and the Dominica Psychological Society (DPS); developing training on international best practice guidelines on MHPSS in emergencies for NGO staff.
- **The Franciscan Institute** is working in Catholic schools to train students and teachers in psychosocial skills; psychoeducation and self-care trainings for clergy members.
- **IFRC** has provided PFA training to 11 community members and Red Cross volunteers; PSS to people in shelters; questionnaires to survey needs in South West Area.
- **IsraAID** is training staff for child-friendly spaces and teacher-training in collaboration with Unicef and Social Services; collaborating with IMC and DPS on arts-based therapeutic techniques and PFA trainings.
- **Dominica Council of Women** is doing outreach to communities in shelters, ad hoc.; considering restoring a women's support hotline.

Identified needs, gaps or challenges

- **School teachers** are requesting further psychological support for themselves and training on recognizing signs of abuse
 - **Action:** IFRC will try to engage Grand Bay school

- Members have highlighted the need for a **dedicated child psychologist** in the government system to support children in distress.
- Need for **referral mechanism** to support distressed adults in need to psychological care.
 - **Action:** BG has liaised with Carol Soto, and confirmed that she is accepting referrals.
- Anecdotal evidence of increased GBV and need for greater support for **vulnerable women**.
 - **Action:** JDP will look into reviving the women’s hotline.
- Care for **isolated older people** continues to be a concern. The WG has not been able to engage the government’s Yes We Care program as yet.
 - **Action:** CN will contact Council on Aging and invite to next meeting
- **Communication problems** remain a challenge which limits coordination among NGOs for vulnerable people.
 - **Action:** TA will look into getting support from Flow and Digicel (e.g. phones/top-ups).
 - **Action:** For ease of reading, CN will include meeting minutes in email body text as well as in the form of an attachment.

Other updates

- Lifeline Ministries has applied for a grant from the Maria Holder foundation to purchase sim cards and phones for NGO staff.
- The Red Cross Helpline Numbers are: 1-767-2851030 and 1-767-3171355.

Future meetings

- As the Education and Protection meeting has been moved, it is no longer necessary to hold the meeting in the evenings.
- IsraAID and IMC will be engaged in PFA trainings on Thursdays and Friday’s in December and January. Working Group meetings will therefore be moved to **Wednesdays at 3pm, every second week**.
- The next working group meeting will be on **Weds 6th Dec at 3pm in Fort Young**.