

IDRF Highlights Successful Canada-Funded Mental Health Initiative in Collaboration with Key Government Agencies

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[/EINPresswire.com/](https://EINPresswire.com/) -- Today, the International Development & Relief Foundation (IDRF) celebrated a significant milestone with the successful showcase of its CAD\$2.9M "Safeguarding the Human Dignity and Rights of Populations at Risk for Ill-Mental Health in Vulnerable Communities across Guyana" (SPAR) project, aimed at suicide prevention in Guyana. The event, held at the Marriott Hotel, Georgetown, reinforced Canada's footprint in the local health sector, as well as IDRF's impact on mental health initiatives in the region.



The International Development and Relief Foundation hosts Canadian & Guyanese government officials at Mental Health Showcase in Georgetown

The Project Showcase served as a platform to highlight the SPAR project's achievements and progress to date since its inception in 2022. Key highlights included the Gatekeeper Training on Suicide Prevention conducted nationwide and the launch of the innovative Mental Health Portal, aimed at fostering community resilience and mental well-being. The Project Showcase also unveiled the project's advocacy campaign, aimed at enhancing mental health education and reducing stigma through various dissemination channels, including both traditional and non-traditional media. The campaign will commence with the "Let's Talk Guyana: A National Conversation on Mental Health" symposium, an inaugural event designed to stimulate nationwide awareness and participation.

Minister of Health Frank Anthony demonstrated his support, stating, "We in Guyana have been actively addressing high suicide rates, and this project contributes to that reduction. By providing in-person training on suicide prevention and launching an online mental health portal, the population is able to access to resources and educate themselves. This is the future."

"This event not only showcases the tangible outcomes of our collaborative efforts but also underscores the deepening relationship between Canada and Guyana in addressing critical mental health challenges," remarked Nabil Ali, IDRF's Chief Operating Officer. "Through strategic partnerships with local stakeholders and government ministries, including the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education, IDRF has significantly enhanced mental health literacy and support systems in Guyana."

Canada's High Commissioner to Guyana, in his remarks, commended the Government of Guyana for its ongoing efforts to address mental health, most recently with the launch of the country's national mental health action plan and national suicide prevention plan (2024-2030). "Mental illness not a Guyanese problem, or even a Canadian problem, it is a global problem from which no society is immune", he added, while pledging Canada's commitment to supporting Guyana's efforts to address mental health as well as to the wider health sector.

The event drew participation from a diverse audience of stakeholders, including government officials, community leaders, educators, and representatives from non-governmental organizations. The discussions and presentations underscored the importance of sustained investment in mental health initiatives to build resilient communities and empower individuals facing mental health challenges.

Moving forward, IDRF remains dedicated to expanding its impact and supporting sustainable mental health solutions in Guyana.

For more information on IDRF's SPAR project and its ongoing efforts in mental health advocacy, please visit IDRF's project page.

About IDRF:

The International Development and Relief Foundation (IDRF) is a Canadian Charitable organization dedicated to empowering vulnerable communities through sustainable, disaster response, and humanitarian assistance. To learn more, visit www.idrf.ca.

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