



Press Release
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

***DMHSA Employees Continue
Cycle of Improvement
Focus On Life - Suicide Prevention
Village Meetings begin this Friday***

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Wednesday, October 21, 2009- The Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse (DMHSA) - Prevention and Training Branch staff is working with Guam's mayors and vice-mayors on scheduling monthly village meetings to discuss suicide prevention.

In September of 2008, DMHSA was awarded a Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Grant, titled locally as ***Focus on Life*** - Youth Suicide Prevention. One of the goals of this grant is to increase community-based collaboration that will result in successful suicide prevention and early intervention efforts.

"The Department of Mental Health & Substance Abuse staff will continue to conduct community outreach work in partnership with village leaders and residents. With the Focus on Life Program funding, staff will succeed in facilitating increased community-based suicide prevention programs and access to mental health treatment." said Director David L.G. Shimizu, DMHSA Director.

The first of a series of village meetings begins this Friday, October 23, 2009, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., at the Yigo Senior Citizens Center.

The ***Focus on Life*** team is committed to work towards positive changes and plans for three village meetings each month. Key presentors will speak on Guam's Profile on Suicide, what individuals can do to help someone who might be thinking of or who has attempted suicide, and information on available prevention and treatment services and resources. Adults and youth, community organization members and friends are invited to join.

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Guam endures a disturbingly high rate of suicide among its youth and adult population. Suicide is reported as the fifth leading cause of all deaths on Guam, with a majority of suicides occurring among youth and young adults between the ages 10-24 years old.

It is a subject that most often is not openly discussed nor acknowledged, even among close family members who have intimate knowledge of a suicide and related circumstances.

Confirmed village meetings from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. to date:

Date	Village	Location of meeting
October 23	Yigo	Senior Center
November 6	Dededo	Senior Center
November 12 (Thursday)	Tamuning-Tumon-Harmon	Senior Center
November 20	Hagatna	Community Center
December 4	Merizo	Senior Center
December 11	Umatac	Community Center
December 18	Agat	Community Center

For more information, contact Patricia Mafnas, Special Projects Coordinator at 477-8861 or visit www.peaceguam.org.

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