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MEDIA RELEASE

Positive Communication at Home Reduces Risk of Depression Among Youths

Providenciales, Turks and Caicos, June 23, 2016: Young people between the ages of 15 – 19 years old who have a positive home environment are less likely to be depressed, even if they have experienced violence, come from a poor family or have no religious affiliation.

This was revealed by Epidemiologist, Shelly Mc Farlane at the 61st CARPHA Annual Health Research Conference in Turks and Caicos Islands. Mc Farlane and co-researchers N. Younger-Coleman, G. Gordon-Strachan, D. Francis and R. Wilks conducted a study of 1,317 Jamaican youths who suffer from depression. During her presentation, Mc Farlane explained that a positive home environment, where young persons had someone to communicate with, received nurturing and support, reduced the odds of adolescents becoming depressed by a whopping 50 per cent.

Studies also revealed that there is a higher prevalence of females with depression, as much as two times more than their male counterparts. However, Mc Farlane pointed out that being a part of a nuclear family (two parents) or female youths who are in a positive single parent environment are still less likely to become depressed.

According to Mc Farlane, communication in the home has a positive impact on young persons, but she was quick to add that communication levels appear to reduce with age. She explained that the findings showed 74 per cent of 15 years old youths reporting positive communication in the home. By age 18, she said this figure dropped to 59 per cent.

Mc Farlane said there is “a need for interventions that focus on improving parental practices, which include nurturing and active communication, especially for youth during their mid adolescent stage, that is 17 – 18 years.”

The role of the home environment in adolescent depression was one of several public health issues being discussed at the CARPHA Annual Health Research Conference at Beaches Resort in Providenciales, Turks and Caicos Islands. The Conference runs from June 23 – 25 with the theme, Family Health: Living Healthy at all Ages.

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