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DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION OBSERVES TEEN SUICIDE PREVENTION WEEK: "YOUR FEELINGS MATTER, LET'S TALK"

[09-16 FEBRUARY 2025]

The Department of Basic Education is this week observing Teen Suicide Prevention Week to raise awareness about measures that can be put in place to prevent suicides particularly among teenagers.

The Department recognises the tragedy of children and young people dying by suicide. Suicide remains a global public health challenge, and South Africa is no exception, with the National Department of Health (NDoH) data indicating that approximately 7426 children under the age of 18 were treated for suicide attempts from April 2024 to December 2024.

This concerning data from the NDoH highlights the need for comprehensive and coordinated efforts to address mental health challenges and prevent suicide among young people.

This year's theme for Teen Suicide Prevention Week is "Your Feelings Matter, Let's Talk," emphasising the importance of recognising and acknowledging young people's feelings, encouraging them to open up and seek help when needed. This week serves as a platform to empower young people with the knowledge and necessary skills to cope with emotional distress.

"In keeping with the theme of this year's campaign, we want to encourage learners to treat each other with kindness and to consider how their behaviour might affect others" said Sibongile Monareng, Director of Psychosocial Support in the Department of Basic Education. "We also urge parents and other adults to create psychologically safe homes and spaces where children can experience peace, support and acceptance," Monareng said.

The DBE urges educators, parents, and community members to engage in meaningful discussions with young people about their emotional well-being and to promote looking after one's mental health. By creating safe spaces for dialogue, we can help dismantle the stigma surrounding mental health and promote positive help-seeking behaviours among young people.

As a department we are committed to continue working with our sister departments and all our stakeholders to ensure that our schools and communities are emotionally safe zones for all young people. Together, we can reinforce the message that the feelings of young people matter, and that open dialogue is the first step towards healing and resilience.

ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION

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