



**PRESS RELEASE
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Tuesday, June 11, 2024



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security, the Hon. Dr. Horace Chang in conversation with the President of the Jamaica Association of Guidance Counsellors in Education (JAGCE), Rochina Anderson at the JAGCE Half Yearly Conference held today (June 11) at the Cardiff Hotel and Spa in Runaway Bay, St. Ann.

The Ministry of National Security continues to collaborate with guidance counsellors to advance case management efforts under the Inter-Ministerial School Support Strategy (ISSS).

Gov't will continue to invest in psychosocial support citing long term benefits
– Minister Chang

The Government will continue to invest in psychosocial support for children ages 10 to 16 as evidence shows this approach is more effective to behaviour change with sustainable benefits for the future.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security, the Hon. Dr. Horace Chang shared this sentiment while addressing attendees at the Jamaica Association of Guidance Counsellors in Education (JAGCE) Half Yearly Conference at the Cardiff Hotel and Spa in St. Ann earlier today (June 11).



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He noted that the Government is fully aware of the **“critical role of psychosocial investments in preventing crime and violence and remain committed to playing our part in developing, implementing and supporting activities towards this end”**.

The Security Minister explained that **“it is our recognition of and commitment to psychosocial support for our young persons, that have driven us to institutionalise case management in the Ministry since 2018.”**

This move was based on evidence of the usefulness of case management in engaging young ,at- risk persons who are faced with a variety of challenges and issues.

Minister Chang admitted that the Government is aware that **“extreme poverty, abuse and neglect, trauma and parental involvement in criminal behaviour are all adverse experiences that dominate our most vulnerable communities and impact our children most.”**

With this, the Ministry remains committed to advancing the case management approach, implemented under the Inter-Ministerial School Support Strategy (ISSS). The Minister emphasised that intervention at the early stage is essential to reversing some of these behaviours among young students and to offer a new direction.

Through a policy shift which was to move the focus away from the 18 to 29 age cohort to the younger age of 10 to 16 years old, the Ministry has seen a positive impact.

“I do not have to tell you that evidence shows that supporting the younger group is much more effective, efficient and the benefits more sustainable,” Minister Chang emphasised.

He further cautioned that this policy shift does not mean that the Ministry has abandoned the older age group, the Ministry continues to advance various activities supporting the 18 to 29 age group under the Citizen Security Plan.

Through a collaborative effort between the Ministry of National Security (MNS) and the Ministry of Education and Youth (MOEY), the Government continues to impact the lives of students under the ISSS.

This joined up support strategy between guidance counsellors and the MNS case managers has resulted in critical behaviour shift in students in some of the most vulnerable communities and schools island wide.