

MARCH 2021



The Southern Pulse

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SRHA Recognizes 975 Nurses and Midwives for Exceptional Service and Sacrifice



SRHA Regional Director, Michael Bent presents a token of appreciation to SRHA Supervisory Nurse Practitioner & Regional Rheumatic Fever Coordinator, Andrienne Sylvester at the recognition ceremony of nurses and midwives in the SRHA.

The Southern Regional Health Authority (SRHA) has recognized 975 nurses and midwives for their sterling contribution, service and sacrifice to healthcare, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The nurses and midwives from the parishes of Clarendon, St. Elizabeth and Manchester were recognized at a virtual ceremony on Tuesday, March 2, and received tokens of appreciation and special awards.

Renowned Public Health Specialist, Professor Peter Figueroa who delivered the keynote address, commended the nurses, noting that special tribute must be paid to nurses who have remained in Jamaica, as the country loses scores of nurses annually.

"Nurses are the backbone of the health service and the system would collapse without our nurses. Given the challenges of COVID-19 and the shortages of nurses and equipment and the heavy work load, there are times when all of us do slip, where we get tired and weary and not at our best. This is why team work is so critical and we must be supportive of each other.

Let us support and reach out and encourage each other" Professor Figueroa said.

Professor Figueroa used the opportunity to encourage persons to take the vaccines, which will be given shortly to different groups of the population in phases, in an effort to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. "I would encourage everyone to recognize that the vaccines are safe and effective and at the earliest opportunity you get to be vaccinated, I urge you to take the vaccines. As health workers, we have to set the example for the rest of the nation by taking the vaccines, as we are helping to protect ourselves and to protect others" Professor Figueroa added.

Chairman of the SRHA Board, Wayne Chen noted that while Florence Nightingale is recognized internationally for her contribution to the nursing profession, he is encouraging the recognition of Jamaican Mary Seacole, who has paved the path for excellence for Jamaican nurses and contributed to their demand internationally.

"This afternoon is especially poignant for me because of those of us who have stayed the course and gone to war in this pandemic. When I got the news of the first healthcare worker in our region who tested positive for COVID-19, tears came to my eyes and even now when I think about it and talk about it I still get emotional just thinking of the healthcare workers, the nurses especially on the frontline every day, going to war for the people of this country" Mr. Chen said.

He noted that the negative reports of the bad experiences in the health sector overshadow the day to day good of the staff members, "who see it as just the ordinary day to day service that they provide to the people of this country. But what I see every day are acts of heroism that go unrecognized" the Board Chairman added.

Other speakers who lauded the nurses for their service were: President of the Enrolled Assistant Nurses Association, Esther Campbell; President of the Midwives Association, Asseta Edwards Hamilton; President of the Nursing Association of Jamaica, Patsy Edwards-Henry and Regional Director for the SRHA, Michael Bent.

Recently, the SRHA copped all awards at the Ministry of Health & Wellness' Rheumatic Fever Fifth Annual Review. Manchester received awards for highest educational sessions, highest number of training sessions, Parish Coordinator of the Year and the Early Bird Award, while St. Elizabeth received the award for the highest compliance rate. The SRHA Regional Office copped awards for the highest rheumatic fever coverage, highest number of rheumatic fever audits conducted and Regional Rheumatic Fever Coordinator of the Year.

In the News: Southern Regional Health Authority

Southern Health Care Workers Welcome Vaccination; Leading by Example



Senior Medical Officer at the Mandeville Regional Hospital, Dr. Everton McIntosh (left) is in great spirits after being the first person to receive the COVID-19 vaccine in Manchester. The vaccine was administered by Public Health Nurse at the Manchester Health Department, Maxine Isaacs.

It was a smooth start to the vaccination process in southern Jamaica as 192 health care workers from the parishes of Clarendon, St. Elizabeth and Manchester received the COVID-19 vaccine on the first day, March 10.

Senior Medical Officer at the Mandeville Regional Hospital, Dr. Everton McIntosh, who was the first to receive the vaccine for the parish of Manchester, described it as a historic moment for Jamaica's health sector.

"The only way to really control this pandemic is for a significant proportion of the population to be vaccinated against the virus. This particular vaccine that we are getting which is the AstraZeneca vaccine, to date both in the trials which were done and the millions

of doses which were administered around the world, there have been no reports of serious reactions and so we are pretty happy that we should not have any untoward events." Dr. McIntosh said.

The SMO added that it was critical that healthcare workers were among the first to be vaccinated to ensure that there is a viable health care sector to be able to care for others.

Acting Deputy Director of Nursing Services at the Black River Hospital in Manchester, Erica Myers, who is also an infection control nurse, was the first to receive the vaccine in St. Elizabeth and noted that it was important to lead by example.

"I have to lead by example. I work with the patients and I have a responsibility to protect myself and I have a responsibility to protect my staff and the population at large. Please come along and take your vaccine to protect yourself, to protect your family and to protect the nation. I feel great" Nurse Myers said.

For CEO of the May Pen Hospital, St. Andrade Sinclair it was also important for him to lead by example and take the vaccine. He was the first person to receive the jab in Clarendon.

(more)

In the News: Southern Regional Health Authority

Southern Health Care Workers Welcome Vaccination; Leading by Example (Continued)

“Unless we arrive at herd immunity we are going to have a problem. I have to lead by example and show my staff that you can take it too. I feel great and I encourage all healthcare workers and Jamaicans to come and get vaccinated as we try to combat this pandemic and return to normalcy” Mr. Sinclair said.

The vaccination process began with registration of persons, checking of their vital signs, administration of the vaccine, counselling and then observation.

Fifty thousand doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine from India arrived on Monday, March 8, as the government began the process of vaccinating Jamaicans to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

Acting Deputy Director of Nursing Services at the Black River Hospital in St. Elizabeth, Erica Myers receives the first vaccine in the parish from Senior Public Health Nurse at the St. Elizabeth Health Department, Erica Dennis-Smith.



CEO of the May Pen Hospital in Clarendon, St. Andrade Sinclair, was the first to receive the COVID-19 vaccine in the parish. Administering the vaccine is Public Health Nurse at the Chapelton Community Hospital, Olufunke Adetola.

Staff Highlight

Marvin Gayle makes debut with *Di Reminisce*



Producer Marvin Gayle (right) with engineer Danever Scott.

Five months ago, Marvin Gayle was involved in a life-threatening motor vehicle crash in his native Manchester. He sustained multiple injuries which required extensive medical treatment.

In January, while recuperating, Gayle released his first project as a producer. *Di Reminisce* is the title of a rhythm-driven compilation EP which features several upcoming artistes from Manchester.

It is produced by his Lion Cubb Productions.

A public health instructor employed by the Southern Regional Health Authority, Gayle was on his way to inspect a slaughter house in Spur Tree when his vehicle overturned.

“I got a cracked top jawbone, broken top front teeth, sprained right big finger, cut on my forehead and a cut on my right knee. Different injuries took different time to heal which ranged from two weeks to approximately two months. Because I couldn't eat hard food on the broken jawbone for approximately two months and I couldn't afford the expensive liquid meal, my body weakened as a result of poor nutrition,” Gayle told the Jamaica Observer. “Two months time I went back to work, but I was struggling to attend work early and could hardly keep up on the job because of my weakness so I took 20 days vacation leave to rest and improve my nutrient intake.”

Gayle laid tracks for what became *Di Reminisce* six years ago. Lack of funding stalled the project until 2020 when he revisited it with renewed energy.

During his recovery, he was determined to see it released this year. The best-known artiste on the EP is Ginjah who does *Get up Now*. Others were mainly suggested by singjay T-Drive, his good friend, who does the song *What is Love*.

Loyal Flames with *Play That Song*, Barbir Cassh (*Guide Us*), Jayslick (*Never Too Late*) and Wezdum Fyah with *Too Much Bills* complete the songs on *Di Reminisce*.

Gayle played drums on the EP. It has been his favoured instrument since childhood, having played in the church band and groups while in high school. Marvin Gayle wants to project as much positive energy as possible in music from Lion Cubb Productions.

“The need for more righteous and positive messages in the music industry is my influence and motive to do music. My aim is to create more positive message music that will educate, motivate, uplift and influence people,” he said. “There is a lot of music out there that is influencing people to do wrongs, so if my music could influence some to do good then my mission is accomplished.”

Credit: The Jamaica Observer

Staff Highlight

Farmer Nurse's golden touch: Jodeen Gayle nurtures patients as her crops blossom in therapeutic success



Jodeen Gayle

When Nurse Jodeen Gayle began planting vegetables and other cash crops a few years ago, she was sowing seeds she hoped would grow a relationship with her absentee father, a man she first met at 12 years old.

While the harvest was bountiful, the relationship with her father did not blossom.

Undaunted, the Mandeville Regional Hospital Emergency Medicine Division (EMD) registered nurse/midwife took a critical decision, much like those she makes on a daily basis on behalf of patients. She would stick with nursing because helping patients recuperate brought her great happiness, and she would also continue planting assorted vegetables, which allowed her to eat healthy and share produce with friends and colleagues.

For now, she has no regrets about giving service to her nation, although she successfully sat the nursing examination which qualified her to work in the United States. Almost five years later and despite the hazards and hardships of working in Jamaica – including “the likkle bit a money nurses get” – she chose become

a patriot for the country she loves: Jamaica.

‘Farmer Nurse’ or ‘Farmer Jo’, as she is affectionately called, Nurse Gayle said that engaging her nursing skills and reaping her crops are tremendous sources of happiness.

“It is 100 per cent therapeutic. When I leave the stress of work and get home, I would tend to the plants. Everyone says I have magic fingers because everything I plant, blossom and grow. Now, even persons with whom I share stuff have encouraged me to start selling stuff,” Gayle told The Gleaner.

Born in St Elizabeth, Gayle grew up seeing her grandfather and grandmother in farming – an occupation not uncommon to a significant percentage of the population in the Breadbasket Parish, known for producing much of the country’s herbs, tomatoes and watermelons. She recalled that her grandfather also planted sweet potatoes and peanuts, while her grandmother did peas and beans.

At Hampton School, she chose agricultural science over instructional technology and planted pak choi, the green leafy vegetables that goes well with everything when steamed or as part of green juice for body cleansing.

“The pak choi came out great and that’s when I really fell in love with farming,” she said.

But farming would take a break after she left Hampton and began studying nursing at Northern Caribbean University in Knockpatrick, Manchester. On completing her training in 2013, she was unable to secure a job despite the nursing shortage in Jamaica as the medical facilities were not hiring. She would eventually secure a job at Mandeville Hospital, where her father became a patient a few years ago.

“My mother always told me to forgive him, and at the time, he wasn’t working, so I was trying to find a way to help him earn some money and for me to make some extra money because trust me, nurses don’t make money in Jamaica,” Gayle said.

(more)

Staff Highlight

Farmer Nurse's golden touch: Jodeen Gayle nurtures patients as her crops blossom in therapeutic success (Continued)

With assistance from a relative in St Elizabeth, she cleared a plot of land and employed her father to oversee the crop of carrots, cabbage and cauliflower and “it did very well”. The effort was to build a relationship when they began sowing together, but that took a massive hit of personal and emotion drought and she cut her losses. She discontinued the farm. Fast-forward to 2020, just before COVID-19 racked the world.

Gayle was studying in Kingston, when the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which causes COVID-19, was first confirmed on the island, sending life as Jamaicans knew it into a tailspin. With an eagle eye on the unfolding health crisis, she desperately needed an outlet for the unfolding anxiety.

“I think nurses in EMD have it hardest, because all patients come to us first and we make a decision where they go. I work in the COVID unit, and when that hit, I said I had to find something to occupy mind rather than the situation. It was my boyfriend who bought some peppers, and I took the seeds and planted them,” she said, watering them with love every morning.

Just months later, 15 Scotch bonnet seeds grew into 150-plus plants, and several pounds of pepper for gifts and sale after she began using the lawns of the house she shares with her significant other. She would also seek advice from ‘Mr Bailey’, a porter at the hospital who also grew peppers. Her pepper crop was bountiful, and she was encouraged to purchase other seedlings.

“My backyard became beautiful and people admired it and I would share what I have. I am now harvesting from about 37 pepper trees and I have made over \$20,000. I am using that money to invest in the farm. People from all over are requesting the produce. I am inspired to do more,” she said.

Ten sweet peppers seeds spawned into 350 bearing plants, which will be ready shortly. Kale, carrots, lettuce, scallion, thyme, pak choi, papaya, beetroot, okra, cabbage, pumpkin, pineapples, a few cassava plants, and even a pear tree have adorned the lawns, plus an additional small plot of land adjoining the house.

Recently planted garlic are “coming up”, said the nurse, who was not yet born when former Prime Minister Michael Manley urged Jamaicans to “grow what you eat and eat what you grow” in the 1970s. The message would be repackaged over the years and supported by different administrations.

With dedication and commitment, she cleared and prepared the land herself with a hoe, using the same hands that are committed to the healing.

She talks to the crops, telling them of her expectation and watering each plant individually from rainwater harvested in a donated blue plastic drum.

“When I started, my boyfriend would just watch me, kind of sceptical, but when he saw how they were turning out, he began to help. So I collect the water from the drum, cut a plastic bottle and water them one by one. It moves faster. It is love. It is love,” she said, beaming.

The unavailability of land in the parish has stymied expansion efforts so far, but Gayle is not about to give up, telling The Gleaner that when she retires from nursing, she would continue farming even if it means hiring help if she is unable to do much physically.

“Farming is fun,” she said, adding that Agriculture Minister Floyd Green and Clyde Williams have been inspiring in their message to Jamaicans.

“Use farming as therapy in this pandemic. If you buy something with a seed, just plant it and nurture it and see what happens. You might just surprise yourself,” she urged Jamaicans.

Credit: The Jamaica Gleaner

Peppers reaped by Jodeen Gayle in her backyard garden.





Carleen Mitchell-Hennie

**Public Health Inspector/Regional Environmental Health Officer
SRHA Regional Office**

“Public Health Inspector Extraordinaire”



Carleen Mitchell-Hennie, can be described as Public Health Inspector extraordinaire, having honed her craft since 1997 and always seeking ways to improve her discipline.

Now functioning as the Regional Environmental Health Officer at the Southern Regional Health Authority (SRHA) Regional Office, Carleen explains that her duties include being the technical advisor to the Regional Technical Director (RTD) on matters pertaining to Environmental Health across the SRHA, coordinating the preparation and implementation of regional strategic and operational plans on Environmental Health (EH), which are consistent with national policies and priorities, providing technical guidance to relevant staff at the parish/ regional levels in the development and implementation of EH programmes and liaising with and advising the RTD and technical groups on matters relating to the interpretation and enforcement of the Public Health Act, and parish regulation and other environmental concerns.

She adds that she also plans and executes the auditing of EH programmes in the different parishes, identifying, sourcing and procuring equipment and supplies needed for the effective functioning of the Regional Environmental Health Unit and liaising with the Director of EH and EH Specialist in the Health Ministry and participating in the preparation of national Standards and Protocols for EH.

Though faced with very big tasks, Mrs. Hennie finds the time to extend herself personally and professionally, achieving many feats. She notes that professionally she has been instrumental in transforming the transportation of meat from the Christiana Abattoir to the Christiana market, implemented training of Food Handlers by category at the Mandeville Comprehensive Clinic and initiated the hosting of monthly health district staff conference at the Mandeville Comprehensive Clinic for the first time in decades. She shares that personally she has composed and written theme songs for Family Bible Hour at her church, songs for her church harvest service, written poems for Mother's and Father's Day celebrations, Christmas programmes, Child's Month celebrations and Vacation Bible School.

Inspired to do her best by her heavenly Father, Carleen notes that she knows she was created to make a difference and is guided by the Bible verse, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me”. She also believes that if you believe very strongly in something, you should fight for it.

Describing herself as God fearing, passionate, resilient, strong, caring and an active listener, Mrs. Hennie has received several awards and recognitions over the years, including: Second Placement in Basic Public Health Inspection-1998, Public Health Food Safety Inspector Manchester-2003- 2004, Public Health Inspector of the Year Manchester-2004-2005, Worker of the Year Christiana Health District-2005, Worker of the Year Manchester Health Services (2nd Runner up)-2005, Public Health Inspector of the Year Manchester-2007- 2008, Public Health Food Safety Officer of the Year, Manchester-2011, Parish Nominee for Public Health Inspector of the year-2014, SRHA Long Service Award for 23 years service-December 2020 and SRHA Worker for the Month April 2021.

Mrs. Hennie is involved in several organizations and committees including being a member of the Jamaica Association of Public Health Inspector, member of the Jamaica Occupational Health and Safety Professional and Chairman of the SRHA Health and Safety Committee.

She loves spending time with God, reading, listening, observing and analyzing human behaviour, conducting investigations, socializing, meeting and helping people, writing poems and songs, site seeing and watching television.

A Closer Look at Your Department

SRHA Regional Office–Management Information System ‘Dream Team’



Left to right: Senior Systems Engineer, Dalton Myrie, Director - Management Information System, Rohan Smith, Programmer Analyst, Ryan Dixon, Systems Development & Implementation Manager, Doranie Morgan, System Administrator, Ramon Nelson, Systems Network Administrator, Roger Miller, Systems Administrator, Dwayne Colquhoun, MIS Administrator/ Project Echo Coordinator, Kadene Simpson.

Priding themselves as a “dream team” and “innovative thinkers”, the Management Information System (MIS) team based at the SRHA Regional Office in Manchester notes that they are equipped for global transformation.

The MIS Director, Rohan Smith explains that the department’s main function is to use information technology, people, and business processes to record, store and process data to produce information that decision makers need. He adds that the department extracts data from varied sources and derive insights that help the organization to make critical decisions.

“The department consists of the following components: People – people who use the information system Data – the data that the information system records, Business Procedures – procedures put in place on how to record, store and analyse data, Hardware – these include servers, workstations, networking equipment, printers, etc. Software – these are programs used to handle the data. These include programs such as spreadsheet programs, database software” Mr. Smith adds.

He notes that the team of seven males and one female offer services to the entire region, including: a help desk and support, which is a system that responds to all users and system related challenges in a timely manner. Other services include: computer repair, maintenance and upgrade; provision of staff identification cards, management of virtual meeting platforms and graphic design and desktop publishing services.

Software development and maintenance of all software packages such as human resources, accounting transactional and management systems is another function of the department. They also manage all servers, storage device and printers and the physical network cabling, router, switches and end devices across the region, in addition to managing network security on all devices. They also train all network user on the latest application software’s and manages the regions online learning platform.

Describing themselves as a closely knitted family oriented team, the team views challenges as opportunity to grow and improve any system which they come in contact with.

Wellness Bytes

"Coronavirus"

Credit:
Ministry of Health
and Wellness



What is a coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are known to cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

What is a novel coronavirus?

A novel coronavirus (CoV) is a new strain of coronavirus that has not been previously identified in humans.

Can humans become infected with a novel coronavirus of animal source?

Detailed investigations found that SARS-CoV was transmitted from civet cats to humans in China in 2002 and MERS-CoV from dromedary camels to humans in Saudi Arabia in 2012. Several known coronaviruses are circulating in animals that have not yet infected humans. As surveillance improves around the world, more coronaviruses are likely to be identified.

What are the symptoms of someone infected with a coronavirus?

It depends on the virus, but common signs include respiratory symptoms, fever, cough, shortness of breath, and breathing difficulties. In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure and even death.

Can coronaviruses be transmitted from person to person?

Yes, some coronaviruses can be transmitted from person to

person, usually after close contact with an infected patient, for example, in a household workplace, or health care centre.

Is there a vaccine for a novel coronavirus?

When a disease is new, there is no vaccine until one is developed. It can take a number of years for a new vaccine to be developed.

Is there a treatment for a novel coronavirus?

There is no specific treatment for disease caused by a novel coronavirus. However, many of the symptoms can be treated and therefore treatment based on the patient's clinical condition. Moreover, supportive care for infected persons can be highly effective.

What can I do to protect myself?

Standard recommendations to reduce exposure to and transmission of a range of illnesses include maintaining basic hand and respiratory hygiene, and safe food practices and avoiding close contact, when possible, with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness such as coughing and sneezing.

Are health workers at risk from a novel coronavirus?

Yes, they can be, as health care workers come into contact with patients more often than the general public WHO recommends that health care workers consistently apply appropriate infection prevention and control measures.

Disaster Preparedness Tips

"Corona-Virus Preparedness Tips"

Credit:
SRHA & Ministry of
Health & Wellness



MANCHESTER, CLARENDON AND ST. ELIZABETH

STAY HOME TO HELP STOP THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

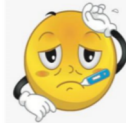
REDUCE YOUR RISK OF CORONAVIRUS INFECTION



Covid-19 Signs and Symptoms

Symptoms may appear 2 days or up to 14 days after exposure. Common symptoms include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath



COVID-19 HELPLINE

TOLL FREE LINE:

- 1-888-ONE LOVE (1-888-663-5683) OR
- 888-754-7792
- 878-542-5998
- 878-542-8006
- 878-542-8007

Email: covid19@moh.gov.jm
jacovid19@gmail.com

MANCHESTER

Call the Manchester Health Department
Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m.-9:00 p.m.
Saturday-Sunday 8:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m.
Telephone: 876-961-0128
Email: srhamhd.eoc.srha.gov.jm

ST. ELIZABETH

Call the St. Elizabeth Health Department
Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
876(965-2266, 913-1571, 715-4172) or
Whatsapp: 876-589-0811
Email: stelizabethcoc20@gmail.com

CLARENDON

Call the Clarendon Health Department
Sunday-Saturday 8:00 a.m.-12 midnight
Telephone: 876-986-9043
Email: clarendoneoc36@gmail.com

SRHA Regional Office (24 hours-Everyday) 876-962-2752
Email: srharo.eoc@srha.gov.jm

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS



Plan



Prepare



Recover



HOW & WHEN TO WASH YOUR HANDS

/// COVID-19

HOW



After coughing or sneezing

After taking public transportation

When caring for the sick

Before, during and after you prepare and eat food

After toilet use

When hands are dirty

After handling animals or animal waste

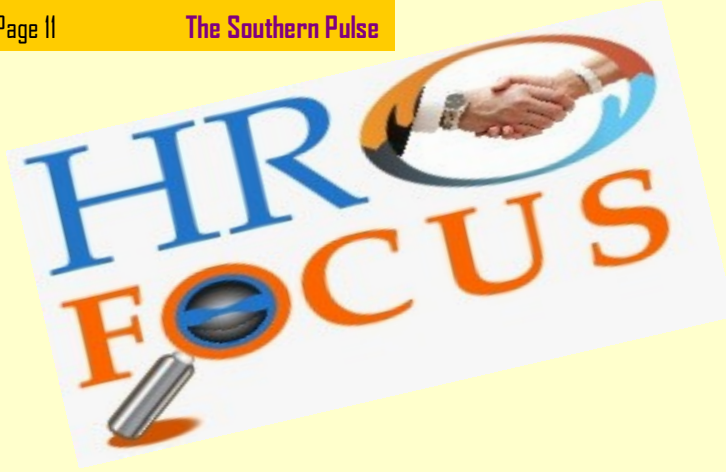
WHEN



"You should check your e-mails more often. I fired you over three weeks ago."

The Lighter Side





The Ministry of Health and Wellness is encouraging Jamaicans who may be experiencing anxiety or stress out of concern over the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) to contact its mental health line at 888 NEW LIFE (888-639-5433).

“Anxiety and stress are normal responses to a public health challenge of this magnitude. Among other things, COVID-19 has required that people self-quarantine or otherwise physically distance themselves from others. This can be stressful for anyone and in some people can lead to feelings of isolation,” said Director of Mental Health and Substance Abuse at the Ministry of Health and Wellness, Dr Kevin Goulbourne.

“We urge Jamaicans to talk about their fears and anxiety. It is amazing how therapeutic it can be to share your feelings and with someone who takes the time to listen. The mental health team at the Ministry is here to listen and to support our Jamaicans through this public health challenge. We therefore welcome those calls,” he added.

It is now more important than ever that Jamaicans take care of their emotional health and there are a number of ways that they can do that from home.

HR And You:

“COPING WITH COVID-19”

- **Stay in touch with friends and family.** Give them a call or reach out to them via social media.
- **Take a break from social media.** While social media is a good way to stay in touch with friends and family, the excessive use of social media has been known to fuel anxiety among some persons.
- **Keep a journal.** It is always a good idea to have an outlet for self-expression. A journal is a good way to do so.
- **Exercise.** Feel free to work up a sweat, increasing, in the process, the body’s ‘feel good’ chemicals known as endorphins.
- **Smile.** A smile, research has shown, can work wonders in helping to reduce blood pressure while improving your mood and reducing stress.

Credit: Ministry of Health & Wellness

SUBMIT AN ARTICLE

We welcome your input. Please submit your articles and feedback for the April edition to:

Latoya Laylor Brown, Public Relations Officer

Email: latoya.laylor@srha.gov.jm

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