World Mental Health Day

Today is World Mental Health Day and Jamaicans are being urged to consider mental wellness as a part of their general health care and to pursue and defend the rights of the mentally ill.
The call has come from Dr Maureen Irons-Morgan, director of mental health services in the Ministry of Health, under the theme 'Making Mental Health a Jamaican Priority - Improving Services through Citizens' Advocacy and Action'."What we need is advocacy at the grassroots level. Because of this, we are actually focusing on parish level interaction. That is why we are not focusing on a large national conference. What we are expecting and encouraging is that at the parish level people will be having meetings and getting the people active in advocating the cause of the mentally ill," Dr Irons Morgan stressed during a JIS Think Tank."The aim is to get citizens informed about mental health issues and to let them know how they themselves can make a difference. We want people to recognise that this issue of mental health and wellness affects us all," she emphasised, adding, "We want to get people to understand that they can make a difference through advocacy and through specific action."Meantime, noting that October 5 to 11 is also being celebrated as Mental Health Week, Dr Irons Morgan pointed out that the activities have been strategically spread across the ministry's four health regions - Western, North East, South East and Southern - as part of its inclusive approach adopted to encourage a community, and by extension national ownership of mental health as everyone's responsibility.Advocacy, she added, is of extreme importance and can empower people to effect changes in legislation, policy, mental health service delivery, and the overall protection of the rights of persons living with mental illnesses.Source Jamaica Observer