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MOVING FORWARD

Beyond Hurricane Dorian



Pushpi Weerakoon & Global Conversations Development Centre
Interviewers & Editors

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Photography & Project Coordinator

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) was founded in 1951, in the wake of the Second World War to resettle refugees from Europe. Having become a related organization of the UN on 25th July 2016, IOM is the leading inter-governmental organization in the field of migration with over 9,500 staff and 450 offices worldwide. IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an inter-governmental organization, IOM acts with its partners at the national and international level to assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

The opinions expressed in the report are those of the survivors and volunteers interviewed and do not necessarily reflect the views of the IOM or Global Conversations Development Centre.

This project has been funded by Global Giving & USAID however the views expressed do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the funders.

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ISBN 978-976-8310-0022

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DEDICATED TO

- Victims who lost their lives and are still considered missing
- Survivors who are striving to move forward
- Volunteers who are selflessly continuing their services, despite also being survivors



Essence of Memorialization

As the strongest Atlantic hurricane on record in The Bahamas, on 1st of September 2019, Hurricane Dorian made landfall on the Abaco Island. 3 days it battered the Abaco Islands with wind gusts over 220 miles per hour. Eventually it progressed to the north coast of Grand Bahama and caused widespread flooding. 60% of the island was submerged. It is estimated that 30,000 people and 9,000 homes were severely affected by the storm, with 89% of the damage being concentrated on the Abaco Islands. The official death count is 74, with 282 persons still missing. However, the actual loss of life, including migrants, is likely to be much higher. Since May 2020 it is known that many survivors who were internally displaced have not returned to their place of origin in Abaco and Grand Bahama. Still most are waiting for an opportunity to return or will settle down in their current location or relocate to islands like Eleuthera, Exuma, Long island and Andros.

Survivors of disasters such as Hurricane Dorian are at higher risk for psychological distress and mental health conditions due to continued and overwhelming chaos and uncertainty, as well as the enormity of their loss. In addition, they also fall prey to protection issues which increase alarmingly among vulnerable populations such as elders, women, children, disabled, LGBTQIA+, minority ethnic groups and migrants. Hence, IOM prioritize mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) as one of the main areas of intervention in humanitarian and migration crises worldwide. In doing so IOM emphasize the importance of understanding the collective reactions to adversity, resilience to withstand such a magnitude of loss and the motivations to rebuild, support each other and move on by the individuals and communities. This helps IOM to build support systems based on the existing strengths of the affected communities of which they not only become the beneficiaries but also the owners.

Therefore, based on the feedback we received from the survivors; IOM Bahamas produced this book consisting of stories

highlighting the 'silver lining in the midst of the storm' as narrated by the survivors themselves, in the hope it will assist in bringing closure to at least some individuals and communities striving to move on.

Safe spaces were provided to allow the survivors to speak freely and express themselves while the interviewer listened actively with minimum intervention. Prior to meeting with the survivors all the interviewers were trained in Psychological First Aid (PFA), Do No Harm Principles (including non-re-traumatizing) and IOM guidelines on Providing remote Mental Health & Psychosocial Support by the IOM MHPSS specialists at the Regional Office for Central America, North America and Caribbean. IOM Bahamas also had a MHPSS referral system in place for survivors in need of the service.

IOM Bahamas is grateful to the survivors and volunteers for agreeing to share their stories and photos for the benefit of the rest of the communities.

The monies collected from the sale of the 'Coffee Table Books', will be directed towards the #BahamasKind campaign implemented to promote social cohesion among the diverse communities in The Bahamas.



Pushpi Weerakoon

Project Coordinator (Stabilization & Protection)
IOM Bahamas.



AMBITIOUS Medaline

“ My name is Medaline. I have been living in Abaco for the last 30 years and I'm a mother of 6 and a grandmother of 6.



How I experienced Hurricane Dorian

I was in Spring city at a friend's house when the hurricane hit. We evacuated out of Marsh Harbour because the house was destroyed. When the roof lifted, all of our hope left the room. We thought we were going to die!

Positive incidents I encountered during this ordeal

I got a flight to Nassau and got help from total strangers for the first two months when I had no where to live. I reached out to One Eleuthera Foundation and they assisted me and my family to move to Eleuthera. We currently live in the bottom floor of Janice Pinder's residence. We are very grateful for her.

My message to survivors who are yet not ready to move on

You must have that spirit, that willingness to start somewhere. Start small. I know some people are still in domes and tents. They are desperate to get home. I think you have to first get yourself mentally prepared. You must accept what happened. It's already done. What can we do? What can you do to move forward? How can you move forward? Get counselling for you and your family. Reach out to NGOs and your pastor to get assistance. You have to get yourself mentally prepared to start over. We can't change what has happened in the past. Look to God for inspiration and advice. As He leads, we follow. I believe that God will put the right people in place. The Bible says faith without works is dead, accept it, our lives will never be the same, but we have to keep moving forward.

”



TENACIOUS Elmer

“ I am the parish administrator of St Francis de Sales Catholic Church in Abaco. Originally from the Philippines I have been an educator in Abaco for 16 years and in Nassau for the last 2 years.

How I experienced hurricane Dorian.

In the Philippines, we are used to every form of natural disasters, but Hurricane Dorian was truly one I'd never forget. I was in South Abaco with my family, when the storm hit. We were trapped there in South Abaco for a week. It started on September 1st and we were rescued on September 6th. We witnessed the entire devastation. My 2 kids witnessed the mentally scarring images of dead bodies being transported by law enforcement. They were putting them in white bags and placing them on trucks. I remember being at the airport waiting to get on a small seaplane and a mother holding her one-year- old son coming up to us and begging to come on the flight because they were just robbed a few minutes ago. They took every remaining piece of personal belongings with them in the flight.

Positive incidents encountered during this ordeal.

My employer and The Catholic Board of Education provided temporary accommodation for my family and allowed me to continue my employment in Nassau. There were 3,000 displaced kids and they were all offered Psychosocial intervention by the guidance counselors. We were also able to give out Christmas food packages not only to Catholics but to Abaconians from all backgrounds as well. Seeing the gratefulness on their faces filled my heart with joy.





My message to survivors who are yet not ready to move on.

Every time we are faced with natural disasters like this we first ask where is God? Or why do bad things happen to good people? Why have we lost so many lives and property? Why is it that we need to move to new places? It is normal for us to question, where is God in the midst of all this chaos? No matter how much we claim to be a Christian nation, these things happen. Rather than questioning as such, by having faced such disastrous situations before, by experience I know it serves us better to think positive and do what needs to be done in a timely manner while also having trust in God. He will never give us more than what we can handle. We have been tested for many years and emerged triumphant, so we should not give up now. We should continue to help each other in whatever little way we can, setting aside differences of the diverse communities in the The Bahamas. Rather than questioning and looking for reasons for why the devastation took place, we should always give thanks to God for been alive and strive to make our lives better. Start with small steps. Reach out for help. Your problems are also the community's problems.

Know that we are all hurting and will heal faster together. While doing so let us also not forget that these natural disasters are a result of negative human actions. Therefore, let's be mindful of our behaviour and respect nature as well as one another. It is time to move on, face everything with strength and determination. Life must go on, it is not the end of everything, as much as we create our own destruction, we should be the ones who find the way out of it. There is always hope because God lives within and among us!





OPTIMISTIC Dr. Karis Major

“ I am a Family Physician. I live in a home with five others, including my fourteen-year old child, my ten-year old child, and my three-year old child. None of my family were lost during Hurricane Dorian.

How I experienced Hurricane Dorian

I lived in Grand Bahama, then moved to Nassau, and migrated back to Grand Bahama. Dorian came as a category three hurricane, escalated to a category four hurricane, and within hours, became a category five hurricane. I thought that a category five storm would truly derail the growth that had been happening in Grand Bahama. My immediate family and I were fine and experienced no major damage, but people who were close to me and who I worked with went through heartbreaking ordeals. I tried my best to understand what they went through. I figured some of us needed to not have much damage, to be there for others who did. It was rough. The magnitude of damage that I'm talking about is not the creature comforts of down cables and access to electricity. I am talking about fellow Grand Bahamians who had no more home, and only owned the clothes on their back after the storms passed.

Positive incidents I encountered during this ordeal

Persons in need in the community were blessed with donations by many others in the community. We were even receiving aid on a global level. I did not work at the airport or dock, but I work at a clinic. The amount of provisions that came to my little clinic out of the only seven clinics in Grand Bahama were incredible. I can only guess what other clinics were blessed with. We had doctors and nurses who gave up their own time from around the world to come and help us out. I was overwhelmed with the level of generosity that people were showing us. We saw meals everyday – no need to cook. We were provided with dry goods and water too. It was on a level that was mind -blowing, and that is just from the perspective of my little world. There had to be billions of dollars' worth of much-needed supplies donated to us. It spoke to the love people have for The Bahamas and the outpouring of kindness to help people in need.

My message to survivors who are yet not ready to move on

I would encourage people to know and remember that GOD is our source. If He is your Lord, He is responsible for taking care of you. He is the owner, so He is responsible for you and your needs. Take hold of that truth and let go of the idea that you have to do everything. Allow Him to really show up and show out in your life. Change does happen – planned or sudden. Be attentive and prepared. Know that change will come, and you just must roll with the punches, without giving up hope.





RESILIENT Floyd Smith

“ I am a BTC contractor from Grand Bahamas. I live with my wife and 3 kids aged 26, 22 and 16. Unfortunately, my wife lost four of her family members.

How I experienced Hurricane Dorian

On Saturday September 1st, 2019, I remember clearly that I was boarding up our church (securing the premises) with a couple of other gentlemen that go to the church with me like Deacon Moss, Fritz, and Asst. Pastor Rolle. I was not supposed to leave McClean's Town, but for some reason, I guess the Holy Spirit led me to leave and come down to Freeport. On my way down, I stopped at about four houses where I saw some of the residents lived, and I gestured to them to come down with me as well if they needed a ride. I was more than willing to take them on the back of my truck. They said no, declaring that they would ride out the storm where they lived. Tuesday morning thirty or so of us decided to take the journey back to McClean's Town to see if we could find out what was going on up there since we left a lot of family behind. We wanted to find out exactly 'what was what'. We went as far as Casuarina Bridge, and we could not make it any further due to the waters, so we attempted it again about six hours later around 1pm. We made it as far as University of Bahamas (UB), walking through some 2 feet of water, until a huge truck passed by and assisted us in moving about 11 miles further towards where we were going. We then footed the rest of the way through all that terrain and debris. We found dead animals, two human bodies, exhumed coffins from the graves, etc. It took 18 hours for us to get from UB to McClean's Town.

Positive incidents I encountered during this ordeal

I am thankful that we are still here to talk about it, rather than people talking about us. This experience tells me that we still have a GOD who cares about us. Being able to walk as a group while assisting anyone in need from UB in Freeport all the way to McClean's Town, some 65 miles apart in the water and debris without any damage was a real blessing. I never anticipated walking so far for so long and having to go through so much to get to safety. It was a surreal experience for me.

My message to survivors who are yet not ready to move on

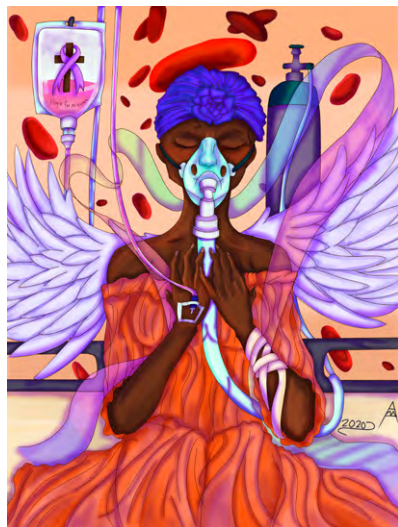
All I could say is, "where there is life, there is hope." My main desire was for GOD to see me through this. To those who are still faced with the devastation, remember that there is hope. If I can make it, I know you can. Continue to trust in GOD and actively make an effort to build from where you were left off. We will make it.





RELENTLESS Thundathil Family

“We are an Indian family living in Abaco. My husband John George Thundathil, works for Abacays Carib Freight. We have two kids.



Olivia Thundathil (daughter) winning entry to 'The Impossible dream Art Competition 2020/21' conducted by The Blue Rose Foundation. Theme "Hope for Healing". Category grades 9-12.

How I experienced Hurricane Dorian

We were in our house when Hurricane Dorian hit. We spent 27 hours in the attic. We weren't feeling safe at that point because we didn't know what was going to happen. Spent whole time praying and trying to make sure kids are not overwhelmed and scared. Monday afternoon my husband came down through the rafters and found the ladder that we used to climb up to the attic and helped us to come down. We were trying find a safe place for the kids so that they won't get hurt since the wind was blowing hard and it was still raining. My husband notices three men walking down the road trying to look for any survivors under the collapsed building. My husband called for help, inquired about shelter and also mentioned to them about us. They helped us to come out of the house and another friend of ours helped us to get to the shelter that was opened at Government Clinic. Our daughter is Type 1 diabetic and she needed medical attention. We spent three nights in the Clinic with the help of our friends who works there.

Positive incidents I encountered during this ordeal

On Thursday, we were sent to Nassau on a chopper because our daughter needed special care. In Nassau, we contacted Ms. Kim, a taxi driver and a good friend of ours. She helped us to get a place to spend the night. In the meantime, our family friend Jolly & her husband Paul were trying to contact us through the Indian Association of The Bahamas. Its president, Dr. Anupama contacted us around 11pm and provided us with all the support we needed. When we were in Nassau, we were able to meet new people from the Indian Community as well as reconnect with old friends from Nassau and Abaco. It was an incredible feeling to receive help from strangers who treated us like we knew them from a long time! We were so happy to hear that our friends from Abaco were safe and they had been moved to other islands with their relatives or friends for the time being. We also felt very sad when we heard about the loss of lives from other families.

My message to survivors who are yet not ready to move on

We feel so lucky to have survived as a complete family even if we lost all our material goods. We are motivated by this blessing bestowed upon us by god to rebuild and relive not only our dreams but also to help other Abaconians to move on. Its important to accept the reality. We will not be able to heal unless we face this painful memory head on and say "yes, I have lost so much but I'm strong, I can overcome this". It will take time and it will take a lot of patience, but with support from family and community we will overcome the grief, heal ourselves every day and rebuild for a better tomorrow.”

FEARLESS

Travis Santon Black

“ I am a native of Marsh Harbour, Abaco. At the time, I was employed as a singer. I am now a student at a university in the United States of America.

How I experienced Hurricane Dorian

It was the most tragic and horrifying encounter I have ever experienced in my life. I woke up on a Sunday with rain beating on my home. I stepped out into the eye of the storm (which I knew little of at the time) and was paralyzed with fear. The water had risen into my home, which were five steps above the ground already.

Rushing for safer ground, I met up with the neighbour named Brian and his dog Otis, and weathered the storm with them in his home. Brian was a former Navy marine, but he had never experienced anything of this. Magnitude. We fled to the hill top and slept in a van for three days.

Brian did not want to leave.

He wanted to look out for his home and possessions. He said it was ok for me to leave, and asked me to take a message to his ex-wife in Florida which he saved in my phone's storage. Eventually, I was able to deliver the message to Brian's wife.

Positive incidents I encountered during this ordeal

My mind was not at its best because of the emotional trauma I suffered during the storm. I was grateful to have a friend, to whom I have sung before, who helped me gain boarding access to a plane to get to Nassau. After finally reaching Nassau, I was so glad to be reunited with my family. I am also very thankful to Dr. Woodyly Thompson and Pastor Ricky Dean who spoke to my soul and helped me pattern my journey post Dorian.

My message to the survivors who are yet not ready to move on

To those who experienced tragedy and loss, never give up! When it seems like there is no way out and the end looks indefinite, if you are still hopeful, you will find a way. There will always be someone or something that will help you. But you must have faith and seek yourself. Faith is the substance of things hoped for; the evidence of things not seen. Walk by faith and not what you can see. “God never fails.” I pray that our testimonies heal us.

”



LEADER Cameel

My name is Cameel McDonald. I am a Jamaican Executive Assistant to General Manager at The Abaco Sporting Club; President of The Abaco Tennis Association, Youth Leader of Strong Tower Community Church and active member of a number of outreach programs. We are a family of three- my husband, our 9-year old daughter and me.

How I experienced Hurricane Dorian

When Dorian made fall on the Island on September 1st, we were home in our two-bedroom apartment in Murphy Town. The first part came with strong winds and twisters/tornadoes. We could hear a lot of banging on the doors, roof and windows with the items that were flying around including our storage with construction tools and other objects. The roof got chopped and water began to pour in, and my daughter kept asking if we were going to die. Within five minutes, relatives and friends came knocking on our door. We remained on the Island for five days with a lot of chaos, trauma, disbelief, confusion and crying. We formed ourselves into two groups. I led 15 ladies and children and left first and my husband leading 6 men who left after us, once they knew we were safe.

Positive incidents I encountered during this ordeal

While we waited at the seaport desperate to get off the Island, I recall one of the Defence Force officers telling us not to worry because there were several boat owners on standby to take us to safety. In Eleuthera, persons welcomed us, directing us to water, food, and clothing. They showed love and compassion when I could not “breathe” in the mailboat. A bus ride was provided from North Eleuthera to Current where the Fast Ferry departed. I’m also grateful to Ms. Kef-fiean Ferguson and Hon. Patrick Hanlan (Past Jamaican Consular) who assisted us with transportation and accommodations.

My message to the survivors who are yet not ready to move on

When I left Abaco, I did not want to return, I was willing to leave everything behind and start over somewhere else. It felt like it was too much to bear. My husband decided he wanted to go back and “check it out” and my employer motivated the staff to consider returning to work. That spark challenged me to revisit even though I could not bear to look at the extend of the damages. We set up a Tennis club to encourage the youngsters to get over the traumatic experience. Through similar community engagements we want to provide psychosocial support to everyone. We must actively help ourselves to find ways to move on and tell ourselves that it is possible to regain, repaire and rebuild.





MOTIVATOR

Alberty



I'm a Haitian from Abaco

How I experienced hurricane Dorian.

I was living in Murphy Town with my three daughters when the hurricane hit. The water came over the building and my car. The water was coming through the tub, the sink, and everything was flooded. Me and my three kids were afraid, and we started praying to God that we make it through. The entire roof of the building was blown away.

Positive incidents encountered during this ordeal.

I received help from total strangers when I move to Nassau and was also able to find a great job.

My message to survivors who are yet not ready to move on.

You cannot keep thinking of the hurricane and the damage. If you sit around feeling sad for yourself, you will never move on. You must find help. You know you need help, we all need help, so you must go out and find it. No one will come to you and drop anything in your lap, you must work for it. You are alive. That is good enough motivation for you to get up and move on.





"Rotary has risen to the occasion and done the best that they can do. We can rise from this with the help encouragement and support of everyone."

Stephen Dean,
President Rotary Club of Nassau,
2020/2021

"Rotary is here and we will be here until the very end. Until the last person is feeling like they are back to where they should be."

Barry Rassin
Rotary International President 2018/2019
Rotary Club of East Nassau

"Psychological assistance is very important. We are going to remain with this program until we can help the last person who deserves, who needs, and who will accept our support."

Kendal A. Strachan
Assistant Governor Bahamas East,
Rotary Club of The Bahamas (RCOB)
Rotary International, District 7020

SERVICE ABOVE SELF Rotary Leaders

Rotarians from across the globe came together to assist The Bahamas. They were able to raise over 250,000 tons of food supplies to assist our Bahamians in need. Volunteers hand-packed food and other supplies and shipped them to Abaco and Eleuthera. Transporting people from Abaco who lost everything into Eleuthera, was a serious task. The One Eleuthera Foundation also assisted more than 2,000 individuals from Abaco with relocating.

In Grand Bahama the Rotary's Water Plant distributed approximately 300,000 gallons of water to shelters, churches, mobile distributors, hospitals and clinics; repaired 1000 homes; distributed 10,000 Emergency Food Kits in partnership with GlobalMedic Canada and Lyford Cay Club Charitable Trust; donated beds to The Rand Memorial Hospital along with wheelchairs, walkers, masks, gloves and other medical equipment; erected 80 temporary shelters; provided gas for 200 generators; repaired 119 fishing boats

and donated 50 boat engines. They also provided mobile laundry facilities.

The Rotarians dispatched contractors and doctors to rebuild our broken nation. Realizing that they were a major part of the change and support that The Bahamas needed. Rotarians made it their duty to support whomever, however, they were able to. Rotary was here from the beginning. With more work to complete, they commit to remain here until the very end.



PROVIDER Valentino

“

I am the past president of Rotary Club of New Providence and an attorney-at-law from Nassau.

My experience after the storm

Two days after the storm we assessed the islands to see the best ways we could assist the survivors. There were so many stories of heroism of survivors and volunteers. Major companies, civic organizations and private citizens all lent a hand providing supplies, play area for children and even hugs! At the airport we collected data on the survivors who flew into Nassau. We got Information such as their names, addresses, family connections in other islands and if anyone was missing. We were trained not to ask if a family member had died. Telecommunication companies provided survivors with free mobile phones so that they could contact their families. The experience was traumatizing for everyone, including the caregivers. Dr. David Allen and his team provided a psychosocial help for survivors.

Positive incidents encountered during this ordeal.

The New Providence Community Church asked residents to shelter families as there was no more room at the church's shelter. I then volunteered to accommodate a Haitian-Bahamian couple and their 2-year- old daughter. Two days later, we were able to help the father to find employment on a construction site. The amazing thing was that the site was literally next door to my house. The family stayed with me for three months. I feel blessed to have played a small role in helping the family to get back on their feet before they returned to Abaco. I still keep in touch with them.

My message to the survivors who are yet not ready to move on

No matter what you are going through survivors, do not give up hope. You will suffer setbacks in life but remember there is a saying, "You suffer setbacks for a major comeback". Which means we must learn lessons from the storms and challenges and face the future much stronger. Look at the silver lining in the cloud. It was an opportunity to meet new people, establish new connections and open up your hearts to help and get help from total strangers. Let us not waste this opportunity to rebuild better, bigger and stronger than we have ever been before not only in Abaco but also as Bahama islands.

”





DETERMINED

Karolyn

“ I am Haitian mother. I'm still in temporary shelter in Abaco with my son Tyson. My husband and other 3 boys died in the hurricane.

How I experienced hurricane Dorian.

It was a dreadful experience I will never forget. I was inside of a building as the hurricane was passing and I fell to my knees and began praying. As everyone around me saw me praying they started to do the same. The roof of the building that I was in was blown off completely. My husband and three kids were in the building across the street from me, but the building collapsed on them and killed them all. All that's left of my family is my autistic 24-year-old son and myself.

Positive incidents encountered during this ordeal.

I lost my family, house and job because of the hurricane. But luckily, because of good people, I found a little job and shelter for me and my son. I thank God for that. I may not have everything I want now to live happily but, I know that one day God will grant me and my son a happy life.

My message to survivors who are yet not ready to move on.

We are all shocked, but you must keep going. You must find something to help your family and yourself. You cannot stay at home in shock, you must go out and find some form of work to do. Many of you are Bahamian, it will be easier for you to go out and find a job. As a Haitian, it was hard for me, but I still found some form of work. Trust God and get active he will show you the way ”



THE VOICE

Odiles Paul



I am a Haitian Abaconian.

How I experienced hurricane Dorian.

I was called to open the church so people can have a place to stay and rest their heads. During Hurricane Dorian, I lost two houses, a bakery, and my only means of transportation. I'm retired now so the only money that I had came from the bakery.

Positive incidents encountered during this ordeal.

Everyone helped. There was no one who said no. By giving food, shelter or even physical labour. Everyone helped.

My message to survivors who are yet not ready to move on.

God saved your life. Therefore be positive, have faith, you will also have the strength to get back all the material things you lost. Make an effort, help yourself by helping your neighbours. Offer a kind word or listen in silence. Be a blessing when you can be.





ANGEL

Simone Hudson

I am originally from Guyana. Both my husband and I are educators in Grand Bahama.

How I experienced Hurricane Dorian

I was home with my family during Hurricane Dorian. We experienced other hurricanes but did not expect the magnitude of Dorian to be as bad as this. Before losing the internet access, we watched videos of the damage caused by the storm. Then the raging storm surrounded us!

Positive incidents I encountered during this ordeal

Our house was on a hill and we were able to shelter few survivors. After the hurricane, it was amazing to see people helping each other, sharing whatever was left with each other, and showing compassion despite the emotional and psychological trauma. The selfless acts of service were admirable. Community bond grew deeper and incomparably strengthened. My husband, other teachers and I volunteered to teach students during the aftermath at our church to give parents an opportunity to rebuild their lives and give students something to look forward to.

My message to the survivors who are yet not ready to move on

Know that people do care about you. From food, supplies, to shelter, persons locally and internationally raced to our aid. We must remember that we are in this together. We need each other and we must not allow pride to get in the way. Know that it is okay to ask for help. People cannot help you if they do not know what you need. You may have lost it all but we have one another. Change your outlook on life. Be optimistic, this can birth a new beginning





FRONTRUNNER

Rouchard Martin

“

I am an Attorney-at-Law and former chairman of Roots Junkanoo Group in Nassau.

How I experienced Hurricane Dorian Junkanoo is a form of art, music and meditation to many. It brings you a sense of calm and peace. With Junkanoo, the Roots group was able to assist persons in as many ways possible in 2019 when many had to leave home and move to Nassau. During fear and a season of darkness, as their host, we were able to provide a glimmer of hope.

Not only were we able to help individuals rest their heads by renting hotel rooms for them, but we also assisted in finding jobs for the Abaconians that had to move to Nassau. As Bahamians, most of them were already involved in the Junkanoo scene, so we found them places to paste and create costumes to take their minds off the negativity around them. Not only paste costumes, but they were also allowed opportunities to perform in the Junkanoo parades. The hefty task of feeding the survivors was successfully handled by the food drives facilitated by the 'Roots Care Program'.

Positive incidents encountered during this ordeal.

Roots had to secure a facility to protect our costumes in Nassau since our warehouse was damaged, but it was not as drastic as what the other islands experienced. We used our networks and social media to contact individuals in Abaco to assist them. Many of the Junkanooers in those islands were travelling to Nassau but they experienced issues getting flights out of the islands.

We were grateful to be a shining light for the survivors. Junkanoo became an outlet for survivors. I contacted the University of Miami (UM) to request assistance to replace instruments like saxophones that were damaged in the storm. UM contacted R.S. Berkley who was kind enough to donate brass instruments to survivors.

My message to survivors who are yet not ready to move on.

God says we must provide for ourselves and not wait in despair! In the season of darkness and fear, what encouraged and kept us pressing forward was the rallying spirit of the Bahamians. We have bounced back resiliently as a cohesive community before, and we can do so repeatedly. We are all in it together. Reach out we are there for you.

”





FORTUNATE The Ferguson Family

“ I am Nadia Ferguson and I was an accountant at the Abaco Beach Resort. My husband Carlton Ferguson was a Firefighter at Air Aviation at the airport. We are a family of four.

How I experienced Hurricane Dorian

During the storm, our front door blew into the house above my daughter's head. My husband jumped up and carried all of us into the bathroom. As the walls fell and the roof lifted, he kept pressing his body weight against the door. I started to pray as the water came in. I pretended as if it was okay for the children. After the storm, we stayed in the apartment for one week because there was too much water to get out.

Positive incidents encountered during this ordeal.

My husband heard that evacuation had begun to Nassau. We were able to catch the plane, but we did not know where in Nassau we would go. My aunt told me about cousins who we have never met before. They lived in Nassau and the United States. They came to pick us up. We met our cousins Terrance and Leslie for the first time in our life at the Nassau airport.

They took us to a hotel. Leslie and other persons assisted us with emergency and hygienic supplies, and housing for four months at the hotel. There were five other families receiving support at the same hotel. They also enrolled our children in one of Nassau's top schools. We felt so fortunate and were so grateful because we did not have to stay in tents or in the shelter. She also helped us to get jobs. We were in Nassau for a while before moving back to Abaco. My husband had to travel back and forth to Abaco for work. Even then, we were fortunate to have a trailer to live in. Many persons did not have the same opportunity that we had.

My message to survivors who are yet not ready to move on.

My kids were traumatized by the whole experience. I had to move on so my children can move on. Sometimes I had to pretend for them. I tend to look at what has happened to others and find reasons why we should be grateful. Unlike many we are still alive and fortunate to be able to function. Therefore, we must find a purpose to pick up and move forward. Do it for yourself, your family and community. We must be persistent and trust God. We will always have challenges in life when we are trying to pursue something or start new. Do not be scarred have faith. We survived the storm, from now on its uphill. Together we can get through this.”





HOPEFUL

Adrian Farrington



I am 40 years old. My wife Julita Farrington is 43. She has six kids of her own. I am a carpenter in Marsh Harbour Abaco. I lost my son.

How I experienced hurricane Dorian.

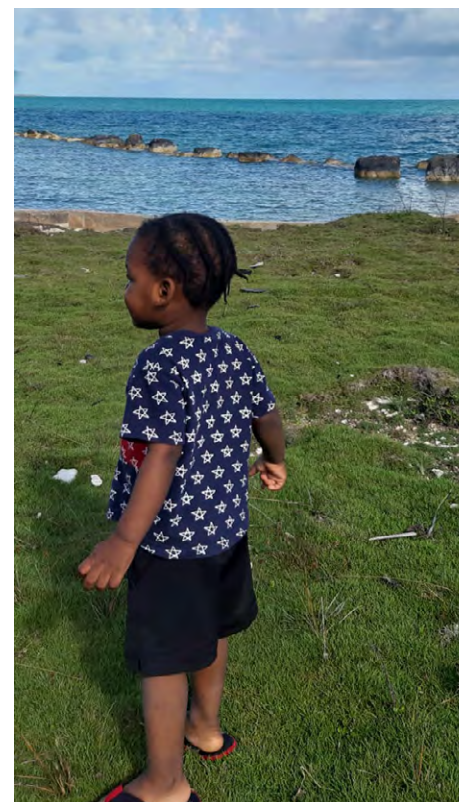
It was a horrible experience. I was trying to take my 5-year-old son to safety with my wife when I realized my leg was bleeding. I noticed sharks swimming nearby, so I placed my son on top of a roof. Unfortunately, the wind and waves swept him out to sea. I can still hear him screaming 'daddy...daddy'. My poor boy was lost! The shelters were not safe as they fell on us. What the wind did not damage was destroyed by waves.

Positive incidents I encountered during this ordeal

When I had ankle surgery in Nassau, we received a lot of help from strangers, especially from the Haitian community. They helped everyone and anyone that needed help. They listened to my story.

My message to survivors who are yet not ready to move on

It is not easy to move on, I lost my only son. But I know that we must move forward. I take it a day at a time, focus on what needs to be done now to make tomorrow better. Concentrate on what you have rather than on what you have lost.



HOW TO SAFEGUARD, YOURSELF FROM EMERGENCY AFTERMATH

Disaster situations gives rise to many other social issues. Following is a guide to how to identify and cope with such situations with contact details of support services available to assist you in such crisis.

Gender Based Violence (GBV)

What is GBV? “Any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person’s will and that is based on socially ascribed (i.e. gender) differences between males and females.” It can include incidents of forced marriage; psychological/emotional abuse; physical assault; denial of resources, opportunities or services; sexual assault and rape.¹

What is Domestic Violence? Also called “domestic abuse” or “intimate partner violence”, can be defined as a pattern of behaviour in any relationship that is used to gain or maintain power and control over an intimate partner. Abuse is physical, sexual, emotional, economic or psychological actions or threats of actions that influence another person. This includes any behaviours that frighten, intimidate, terrorize, manipulate, hurt, humiliate, blame, injure, or can cause death. Domestic abuse can

happen to anyone of any race, age, sexual orientation, religion, or gender. It can occur within a range of relationships including couples who are married, living together or dating. Domestic violence affects people of all socioeconomic backgrounds and education levels.²

Anyone can be a victim of domestic violence, regardless of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, faith or class

Victims of domestic abuse may also include a child or other relative, or any other household member. Domestic abuse is typically manifested as a pattern of abusive behaviour toward an intimate partner in a dating or family relationship, where the abuser exerts power and control over the victim.



Emotional abuse: includes undermining a person’s sense of self-worth through constant criticism; belittling one’s abilities; name-calling or other verbal abuse; damaging a partner’s relationship with the children; or not letting a partner see friends and family. You may be in an emotionally abusive relationship if your partner:

- Calls you names, insults you or continually criticizes you.
- Does not trust you and acts in a jealous or possessive manner.
- Tries to isolate you from family or friends.
- Monitors where you go, whom you call and with whom you spend your time.
- Does not want you to work.
- Controls finances or refuses to share money.
- Punishes you by withholding affection.
- Expects you to ask permission.
- Threatens to hurt you, the children, your family or your pets.
- Humiliates you in any way.

Psychological abuse: involves causing fear by intimidation; threatening physical harm to self, partner or children; destruction of pets and property; “mind games”; or forcing isolation from friends, family, school and/or work.

¹ Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)

² <https://www.un.org/en/coronavirus/what-is-domestic-abuse>

Financial or economic abuse: involves making or attempting to make a person financially dependent by maintaining total control over financial resources, withholding access to money, and/or forbidding attendance at school or employment.



Physical abuse: involves hurting or trying to hurt a partner by hitting, kicking, burning, grabbing, pinching, shoving, slapping, hair-pulling, biting, denying medical care or forcing alcohol and/or drug use, or using other physical force. You may be in a physically abusive relationship if your partner:

- Damages property when angry (throws objects, punches walls, kicks doors, etc.).
- Pushes, slaps, bites, kicks or chokes you.
- Abandons you in a dangerous or unfamiliar place.
- Scares you by driving recklessly.
- Uses a weapon to threaten or hurt you.
- Forces you to leave your home.

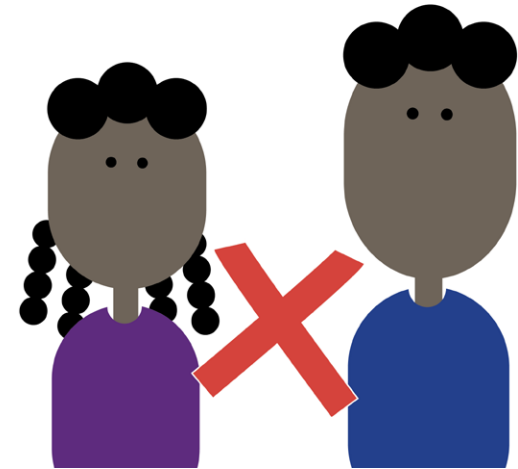
- Traps you in your home or keeps you from leaving.
- Prevents you from calling police or seeking medical attention.
- Hurts your children.
- Uses physical force in sexual situations.



Sexual abuse: involves forcing a partner to take part in a sex act when the partner does not consent. You may be in a sexually abusive relationship if your partner:

- Accuses you of cheating or is often jealous of your outside relationships.
- Wants you to dress in a sexual way.
- Insults you in sexual ways or calls you sexual names.
- Has ever forced or manipulated you into having sex or performing sexual acts.
- Holds you down during sex.

- Demands sex when you are sick, tired or after beating you.
- Hurts you with weapons or objects during sex.
- Involves other people in sexual activities with you.
- Ignores your feelings regarding sex.



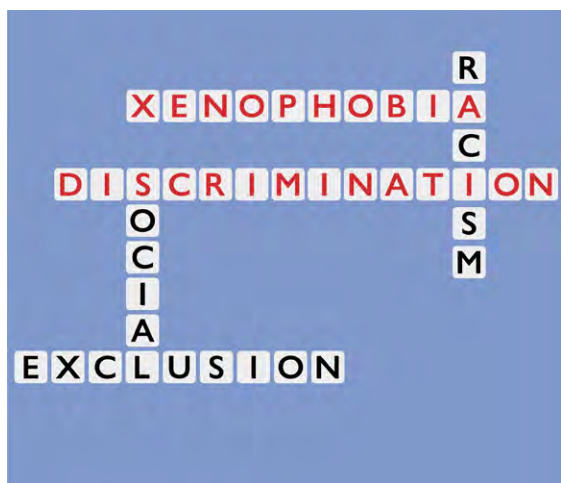
Incest: sexual relations between people classed as being too closely related to marry each other. Such as sexual intercourse with a parent, child, sibling, cousin, grandchild or any other family member.

Stalking: involves any pattern of behaviour that serves no legitimate purpose and is intended to harass, annoy or terrorize the victim. Typical stalking activities include repeated telephone calls, unwelcome letters or gifts by mail, surveillance at work, home and other places that the victim is known to frequent. Stalking usually escalates.

Always remember...

- If any of these things are happening in your relationship, talk to someone. Without help, the abuse will continue. Making that first call to seek help is a courageous step.
- NO ONE deserves to be abused. The abuse is not your fault. You are not alone.
- DON'T worry about threats to your visa. We have information about visa options for your situation.
- DON'T worry if you do not speak the local language. We can get you help in many Languages

Xenophobia: Xenophobia is described as attitudes, prejudices, and behaviours that reject, exclude, and often vilify people who are often from other countries or different. Being xenophobic implies to have a strong hatred or fear of those perceived to be outsiders or foreign to the community, society, or national identity. These feelings and beliefs can be manifested in discrimination or violence. It also tends to generalize about a group of people based on stereotypes showing that a country or identity is superior. Xenophobia is similar, in this manner, to racism³.



MENTAL HEALTH & PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT (MHPSS)

- Mental health is not only the absence of mental disorders.
- Natural disasters and armed conflict are not normal stresses of life, this is why they are considered “emergencies”.
- A temporary inability to cope with extreme situations and stressors should not be pathologized or associated with mental disorders or diseases. We have to help people overcome their situation without pathologizing them.

What causes stress?

- Identity and role changes
- Changes in surrounding social, economic and cultural structures
- Devaluation of traditional values
- Stigma and discrimination
- Instances of violence's and/or exploitation
- Limited access to basic services

Common psychological responses

- Disorientation
- Confusion
- Sense of Instability
- Sense of loss
- Mistrust
- Isolation
- Looking to the past, the future, but not the present

Selfcare: How to cope with stress?

- Think about what you have done to stay strong and have helped you cope with stress in the past.
- Eat, rest and take time to relax doing what makes you feel best even for a short period.
- Do not exhaust yourself over working. Take regular breaks. Share responsibilities and ask for help.
- Minimize intake of alcohol, nicotine, caffeine, and non-prescriptive medicine.
- Create a buddy system. Check in with fellow co-workers, neighbours and friends. Have them check in with you.
- Keep in touch with loved ones, family and friends, those whom you trust most for support. Talk to them about the incident, challenges you faced and the limits imposed on you to help others and yourself.
- Remember that you cannot solve everyone's problems during a crisis period. You can only do so much to help them and yourself. Do not burden yourself by over stretching. Acknowledge what you were able to do even in a small way to help. Positive thinking goes a long way!

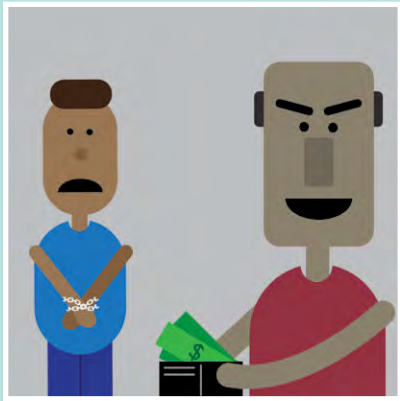
³ <https://www.iom.int/xenophobia>

TRAFFICKING

What is trafficking in persons and human trafficking?

Trafficking in persons is a modern-day slavery.

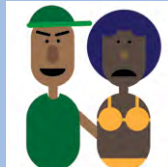
It is a serious crime and a grave violation of human rights.



Victims of trafficking are usually forced or deceived, often by people they know, into situations where they are exploited.

Human trafficking has many forms of exploitation

These include:



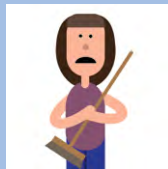
- Sexual exploitation



- Forced labour (construction)



- Forced labour (agriculture)



- Domestic servitude



- Forced begging



- Organ removal

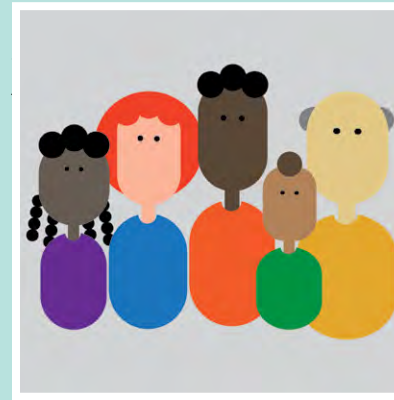


- Servile marriage

Who can become a victim of trafficking?

Human trafficking can happen to anyone.

ALL are vulnerable to being trafficked, regardless of sex, age or background



It is believed that more than 20.9 million people are victims of trafficking worldwide.

What can I do to protect myself and my family?

- If you are offered an attractive job outside your community, village, region or country, make sure you ask a lot of questions about the job to be sure it's a genuine opportunity



- Leave your phone number and intended address with family and friends before you travel, and call them when you arrive

so they know you've reached safely.

- Know who to call for help and bring those phone numbers with you.



- Keep your passport and ID card in a safe place and don't give them to someone else for safekeeping.



- Be careful of who you trust your children with, especially if they want to take them to another community, town or country.

REMEMBER!

Human traffickers use **TRICKS** and **LIES**. They offer work opportunities, lots of money, trips abroad or study opportunities, and instead, you or your family could be sold in sexual slavery or forced labour.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS TO REMEMBER



Royal Bahamas Police Force and Fire Department	919/911
Fire Department	352-8442/888
Department of Gender and Family Affairs	397-8600/35
Princess Margaret Hospital	322-2861
Air Ambulance	327-7077
Doctors Hospital	302-4747
The Bahamas Red Cross	323-7370
The Family (Counselling)	698-0155
The Bahamas Crisis Centre	328-0922
Abuse Support	325-8864
	359-4888
Child Abuse	322-2763
Crime Stoppers	328-8477
Department of Immigration	322-8504
Department of Social Services	604-4200/1
Department of Labour	302-2550-62



The #BahamasKind Campaign is a community program launched to encourage community solidarity and social cohesion. The program's aim is to promote positive relationships between all persons in our communities to diminish xenophobia and stigma.

Bahamas Kind has established the following key objectives:

- To promote social cohesion in The Bahamas by facilitating community-driven initiatives, in accordance with the United Nations Sustainable Development goals.
- To enhance learning and sharing among government, civil society and non-governmental organizations to strengthen their ability to improve their impact on society.
- And to empower the next generation of community leaders and activists through workshops and educational training.

Donate at: <https://usaforiom.org/bahamaskind>
Email: IOMBahamas@iom.int
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/KindBahama/>



ISBN 978-976-8310-00-2



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