



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Ministry of the People, Social Development and Family Services

The Honourable Vandana Mohit

MINISTER

**Ministry of the People, Social Development and Family
Services**

on the occasion of the

Launch

Mindful Me Journal

Wednesday 1st July, 2026

@10:00 am

UWI Teaching and Learning Auditorium,

27 Circular Road, St. Augustine

Salutations

- Dr. the Honourable Michael Dowlath – Minister of Education
- The Honourable Wayne Sturge, Minister of Defence, Minister in the Ministry of Homeland Security and Member of Parliament for Toco / Sangre Grande
- The Honourable Shivanna Shira Sam, Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Public Utilities and Member of Parliament for Cumuto/Manzanilla
- The Honourable Khadijah Ameen, Minister of Rural Development and Local Government and Member of Parliament for St. Augustine
- The Honourable Phillip Watts, Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs and Member of Parliament for La Horquetta / Talparo
- The Honourable Saddam Hosein, Minister of Land and Legal Affairs, Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands and Fisheries and Member of Parliament for San Juan/Barataria

- The Honourable Devesh Maharaj, Minister of Justice, Minister in the Office of the Attorney General and Member of Parliament for Aranguez/St. Joseph
- Senator Dr. Natalie Chaitan-Maharaj - Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of the People Social Development and Family Services
- Mr. Ryan Ramcharan – Permanent Secretary, Ag., Ministry of the People, Social Development and Family Services
- Mrs. Vera Deonanan-Balkaran – Permanent Secretary, Ag., Ministry of the People, Social Development and Family Services
- Ms. Michelle Pierre – Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ag., Ministry of the People, Social Development and Family Services
- Ms. Maryam Abdu, UNICEF Deputy Representative/Chief Social Policy and Social Protection
- Ms. Alicia Hospedales, Child Protection Project Manager, Child Affairs Division
- Heads of Division of the Ministry of the People, Social Development and Family Service
- Principals, Teachers

- Boys and Girls
- Stakeholders
- Members of the Media

Good morning.

It is my pleasure to join you today for the launch of the **Mindful Me Journal** for students of the St. George East Education District. Today's event marks the third tranche of the initial launch of the Journal, as we have previously hosted similar events in Port of Spain and Chaguanas. This is undoubtedly a reflection of our commitment to ensuring that every child across Trinidad and Tobago has access to this valuable resource and the support it provides for their emotional well-being.

I extend warm greetings to our distinguished guests, our valued education partners, school principals, teachers, parents and guardians, and most importantly, the students who are with us today.

Today is about much more than the launch of a journal. It is about reaffirming our commitment to the emotional well-being of our nation's children and ensuring that every young person has the tools they need not only to succeed academically, but to thrive emotionally.

As Minister of the People, Social Development and Family Services, I firmly believe that protecting the mental health of our children is one of the greatest investments we can make in the future of Trinidad and Tobago.

This Ministry is also working closely with UNICEF on the development of our National Child Poverty Reduction Strategy to help strengthen the systems that support our nation's children. These realities call on all of us, government, educators, parents, communities and development partners, to work together to create safe, supportive environments where children feel seen, heard, protected and valued.

For many students, this period of the school year can be accompanied by anxiety and uncertainty. Examinations, while important, can also bring significant pressure.

Every child responds differently to these experiences, and some may struggle quietly with feelings of stress, fear or self-doubt.

That is why initiatives such as the **Mindful Me Journal** are so important.

This journal provides children with practical, age-appropriate activities that encourage self-reflection, emotional awareness and healthy coping strategies. It reminds our young people that it is okay to talk about their feelings, to ask for help when they need it, and to understand that one examination does not define who they are or what they can become.

As renowned educator and author Dr. Carol Dweck reminds us:

"Becoming is better than being."

Those simple words encourage every child to understand that learning is a journey. Challenges are opportunities to grow, mistakes are part of learning, and success is not determined by perfection but by perseverance.

This is precisely the message we hope every student will take away from the **Mindful Me Journal**.

Today's launch also demonstrates the power of meaningful partnerships. I wish to sincerely thank the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for its continued technical and financial support in advancing child protection and promoting the well-being of children throughout Trinidad and Tobago.

Through this collaboration including the Ministry of Education, we continue to strengthen programmes that place children at the centre of national development. We are especially grateful for UNICEF's support in producing copies of the **Mindful Me Journal**, helping to ensure that this important resource reaches students as they prepare for examinations, from end of term exams to the Secondary Entrance Assessment and beyond.

To our students, I want to leave you with this message: *Believe in yourselves and I want to say it again, strongly believe in yourselves.*

You are capable. You are resilient. Your value is not measured by a grade, a score or a report card. Each of you possess unique talents, dreams and abilities that will help shape your future.

Whenever you feel overwhelmed, remember that asking for help is a sign of strength, not weakness. There are people around you, your parents, teachers, guidance officers and other trusted adults, who want to support you and help you succeed.

To our teachers and parents, thank you for the encouragement, patience and care you provide every day. Your support helps children build confidence, resilience and hope during some of the most important years of their lives.

I will close with the words of author and motivational speaker Zig Ziglar, who said: *"Little by little becomes a lot."*

Every encouraging conversation, every act of kindness, every opportunity to listen, and every tool we provide to support a child's emotional well-being contributes to building stronger, healthier and more confident young people.

Before I close, I am pleased to share that Cabinet has approved the integration of the Mindful Me Journal into the Ministry of Education's Digital Learning Platform (laptops) boosting access

and ensuring that emotional well-being remains an integral part of every child's learning journey.

Together, let us continue building a Trinidad and Tobago where every child feels supported, empowered and equipped to realise their fullest potential.

Thank you, and may God continue to bless our children and our nation.