



# Town of Falmouth

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## HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE & CALENDAR LISTING

#### Contacts:

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#### Local Organizations host DeeDee's Cry virtual event - Mental Health While Black: A Panel discussion

**Falmouth, MA –August 17, 2020** – Toy Burton of Roxbury, MA lost her sister, Denita Shayne Morris, in 1986 to suicide at the age of 23. In 2017, Ms. Burton started the organization, DeeDee's Cry, after she noticed that organizations that focus on suicide prevention still didn't have events in communities of color, despite suicide being the 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of death among African Americans according to the Centers for Disease Control. In response to the lack of racial equity, Ms. Burton was compelled to start an organization that brings mental health awareness and suicide prevention to communities of color. Instead of asking for a seat at the table, she built her own table, starting with the workshop "Mental Health While Black." Pre-COVID, the events DeeDee's Cry provided were in-person, family and community focused. In response to COVID, Ms. Burton moved to online panel discussion to continue educating the public and let people know that they are not alone. DeeDee's Cry believes that "when we share our stories that we chip away at the stigma that surrounds mental health in communities of color." The work of the organization has been recognized by Boston Mayor Marty Walsh and the Massachusetts House of Representatives among others.

It is through one of DeeDee's Cry's online advertisements that Cape Cod resident, Barbara Monteiro Burgo, connected with Toy Burton in February 2020. The advertisement was for a Mental Health While Black conference organized by DeeDee's Cry during Black History Month. Barbara was compelled to drive to Boston to participate, listen and learn. Barbara had lost her oldest brother Richard Alan Monteiro in 1978 at the age of 28 and her baby brother, Robert Michael Monteiro 1994 at the age of 37, both by suicide. With both brothers buried alongside their mother in her hometown of Taunton, MA Barbara knew immediately that she'd found the resource and venue she'd been seeking for decades to help others cope, destigmatize suicide, and highlight the depth of culturally-specific mental health resources missing – predominantly overlooked or ignored - within Black neighborhoods. Barbara, now living on Cape Cod, is the Clerk/Curator of the Cape Cod Cape Verdean Museum and Cultural Center. She and Toy worked together to bring Mental Health While Black to the Cape through an accessible online forum. With marketing assistance from Deb Berglin, social worker and Director of the Boston University School Social Work campus at Cape Cod Community College, and support from Falmouth Human Services and the Museum and Cultural Center, we offer this important Zoom conference to all who seek to learn, need hope or help! **Join us for this live streaming event on both DeeDee's Cry and Cape Cod Museum and Cultural Center's Facebook pages on Saturday, August 22, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.**

~We can no longer hear the cry of others and do nothing. ~ Toy Burton