

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Mental Health should not be taken lightly, SVSG's Awareness Session for Youth at All Saints Anglican Church**

*19 January 2026*

*Apia, Samoa*

Last week Friday at the All Saints Anglican Church in Malifa, Samoa Victim Support Group (SVSG) conducted a mental health awareness session titled “Mental Health in the Pacific Context: Its Effects on Our Youth”

The session was attended by over 20 youths and focused on mental health within the Samoan and Pacific context, highlighting how untreated mental health challenges can lead to trauma, violence, and long-term impacts on youth, families, the church, and the wider community.

During the session, SVSG shared its background, mandate, and services, emphasizing the importance of early intervention, safe support systems, and help-seeking behaviour. The discussion was conducted in a safe, open, and engaging environment, with active youth participation.

A dynamic question-and-answer session allowed youths to openly share reflections and raise important questions, including confidentiality and how SVSG safeguards information received at its office, as well as alternative coping mechanisms to support mental health and overall wellbeing.

Speaking on the importance of mental health awareness, SVSG President Siliniu Lina Chang stated,

*“Mental health is not separate from our safety and wellbeing. When mental health concerns are left unaddressed, they can affect our youth, families, churches, and communities. At SVSG, we are committed to creating safe spaces where young people feel heard, supported, and empowered to seek help early.”*

The session concluded with words of appreciation from both SVSG and participants, reflecting an improved understanding and awareness of mental health and the importance of breaking silence and seeking support.

SVSG sincerely acknowledges Galumalemana Bolivia Smith, Youth Coordinator of LYMC (Lotu Mission Community Samoa), for the invitation and support that enabled SVSG to engage with young people on this important issue.

SVSG remains committed to working alongside churches, youth groups, and communities to promote mental wellbeing and prevent violence across Samoa.

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Ensuring that victims of crime and those in need are well supported to be safe and in control to restore their lives

*2016: With and for Girls Award – Star Foundation of London*

*2017: Innovation & Excellence Team Award – Samoa Public Service*

*2018: Finalist, International Children's Peace Prize 2018 – Kids Right Foundation of Amsterdam, Netherlands*

*2018: Human Rights Champion in Samoa – UNESCO*

*2019: Innovation for Sustainable Development Award – Commonwealth Secretary-General*

*2020: Nominated Person(s) of the Year – Samoa Observer*

*2021: Outstanding Contributions to Human Rights Promotion & Protection – Samoa Office of the Ombudsman/NHRI*

*2023: Healthy Islands Best Proposal Award – World Health Organization*

*2026 Noble Peace Prize Nomination*