



Media Statement

CYBERJAYA

24 July 2019

MCMC AND TELCO OPERATORS JOIN FORCES TO WAIVE CHARGES FOR BEFRIENDERS

- **Calls to Befrienders helpline is free-of-charge effective 1 August 2019**
- **MCMC teamed up with eight (8) telco operators in support of Government's effort to increase awareness on the society's responsibility in tackling emotional health and stability among Malaysians**

The Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) joined forces with eight (8) telecommunications operators to waive call charges made by their customers to the Befrienders helpline effective 1 August 2019.

They are - Celcom Axiata Berhad, Digi Telecommunications Sdn Bhd, Maxis Berhad, Telekom Malaysia Berhad, TIME dotcom Berhad, U Mobile Sdn Bhd, Webe Digital Sdn Bhd and YTL Communications Sdn Bhd.

Echoing the Minister of Communications and Multimedia YB Gobind Singh Deo's recent call that no one should be excluded in the country's journey towards a digital shift, the announcement made is timely for those in need, distress, despair and having suicidal thoughts to seek assistance via the Befrienders helpline.

According to the National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS) 2017, which was released last year, one (1) out of five (5) adolescents is depressed, two (2) out of five (5) are anxious; while 11.2% have suicidal ideation and 10.1% had attempted suicide.

MCMC Chairman Al-Ishsal Ishak believes that suicidal symptoms can be prevented and eradicated with collective efforts from various stakeholders, including the Government and industry players.

“Suicidal symptoms are a tragedy in every society, regardless of social, moral and economic aspects. Among the key steps that need to be taken is to eliminate the stigma in the community against mental illness and suicidal symptoms are through assistance such as enable access to Befrienders, which is now free for those who need advice, counselling and emotional support. As we advance through digitalisation, a collaborative effort that focuses on ways to leverage social media and latest technology to identify those most at risk, can be explored,” said Al-Ishsal.

Befrienders is a non-profit organisation that provides emotional support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to the distressed and the suicidal. Anonymous callers can express their problems and dilemmas to the trained volunteers at Befrienders. All conversations are confidential.

Befrienders can be contacted at 03-79568145/8144 or email sam@befrienders.org.my for assistance. For more details on Befrienders helpline in other states, visit www.befrienders.org.my.

About Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC)

The Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) is a statutory body established under the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission Act 1998 (MCMCA) which implements and promotes the Government's national policy objectives for the communications and multimedia sector. MCMC regulates and promotes the development of the communications and multimedia industry, which includes telecommunications, broadcasting, and online activities, postal services and digital certification. The Communication and Multimedia Act provides that MCMC undertake a policy implementation role, while policy decision-making is vested with the Minister.

For more information, visit www.mcmc.gov.my or contact:

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