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PRESS RELEASE

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Mental Health Resources Available in Allegany County
How To Get Help For You or A Loved One

Belmont, New York- Allegany County Community Services and the Allegany County Suicide Prevention Coalition wish to stress the importance of seeking help for individuals who are struggling with emotional, mental, and social well-being. Confidential services are only a phone call away for you or a family member who may be experiencing a mental health crisis and those who are looking for support.

"Although services may be delivered differently right now, mental health providers are available to help those in need," explained Lindy White, Deputy Director of Allegany County Community Services. "Support is provided via phone, in person, and through secured websites. Interventions may include in the moment support, mediation, follow-up support, information and referrals, and linkage to outpatient mental health services. Due to COVID-19, most community-based mental health counseling services are being offered through secure, online appointments. Yet, the mental health system is prepared to support families and individuals in crisis through in-person interventions when needed."

Toll-free hotlines and warmlines are also available for those experiencing a crisis or simply need someone to talk to. Unlike a hotline for those in immediate crisis, warmlines provide early intervention with emotional support that can prevent a crisis.

"Hotlines and warmlines allow individuals to talk to someone when they are feeling anxious, depressed, or simply need someone to listen," continued White. "While most people will find positive ways to cope in the face of adversity, loss, disasters such as COVID-19, and other stressful events; some people will exhaust their personal coping mechanism and struggle to find hopeful solutions. We want to remind county residents that resources are available."

If your life or someone else is in imminent danger, C**all 911**.

If you are in crisis and need immediate help, please contact the following resources:

Allegany County Crisis Hotline: 1-888-448-3367
Allegany County Community Services: 1-585-593-1991 *(Mon.-Fri.: 8:30a.m.-4:00p.m.)*
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
NYS Crisis Text Line: Text "GOT5" to 741741
Veterans' Crisis Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255 (Press 1)

Allegany County's Behavioral Health Providers are working hard to serve our community during the COVID-19 crisis:

Allegany County Community Services: 585-593-1991 *(Mon.-Fri.: 8:30a.m.-4:00p.m.)*
Allegany Council on Alcoholism and Substance Abuse: 585-593-1920
Clarity Wellness Community: 585-593-6300

OMH Emotional Support Line: 1-844-863-9314
Free and confidential support, helping callers experiencing increased anxiety due to the coronavirus emergency. The Help Line is staffed by mental health professionals and volunteers that have received training in crisis counseling.

Research shows individuals may display warning signs when they are in crisis or prior to harming themselves. Although not everyone who dies by suicide demonstrates warning signs, if you do notice any of the following, the Allegany County Suicide Prevention Coalition urges you to seek help immediately.

Important Warning Signs:

- **Focuses on death.** Some people talk openly about wanting to die or to commit suicide. Or they dwell on the topic of death and dying. They may research ways to kill themselves or buy a gun, knife, or pills.
- **Makes plans.** The person may take steps to prepare for death, like updating a will, giving away stuff, and saying goodbye to others. Some may write a suicide note.
- **Becomes withdrawn**. The person avoids close friends and family, loses interest in activities and social events, and becomes isolated.
- **Shows despair**. The person may talk openly about unbearable pain or feeling like they're a burden on others.
- **Shows swings in mood or sleep**. Often, the person may be depressed, anxious, sad, or angry. They also may be very irritable, moody, or aggressive. But they can suddenly turn calm once they've decided to go through with the suicide. Then they may sleep a lot more or a lot less than usual.
- **Drinks or takes drugs**. Substance misuse raises the chance of suicide. Using a lot of drugs and alcohol may be an attempt to dull the pain or to harm themselves.
- **Acts recklessly.** The person may take dangerous chances, like driving drunk or having risky sex.
- **Loss of Identity.** Such loss of identity can result in increased levels of generalized anxiety, low self-esteem, depression, a loss of self-confidence, social anxiety, isolation, chronic loneliness, all of which threaten our ability to connect with other people.

Risk-Factors:

- Mental illness

- Addictions to alcohol or other drugs
- A serious physical illness
- A major loss (such as the death of a loved one or the loss of a relationship or job)
- Serious legal or financial problems
- A history of trauma or abuse

If you suspect someone is in crisis seek help from local resources, such as hotlines and our behavioral health community. If you or someone you know is thinking about suicide, don't leave them alone. Call 911 and try to keep the person calm and get help from others

Seeking help is not a sign of weakness. It's important to stop the stigma and open the door for improved mental health. For further information about Allegany County's Behavioral Health System, please contact Lindy White at 585-593-1991. To learn more about the Allegany County Suicide Prevention Coalition, visit us online at www.ardentnetwork.org.

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