



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **WAYNE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH & WAYNE CO. REGIONAL OPEN ACCESS CENTER PROVIDING INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE TO THE PUBLIC DURING THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK**

#### **Taking Care of Your Emotional Health – Stress & Coping During the COVID-19 Outbreak**

It is natural to feel stress, anxiety, grief, and worry during and after a disaster. Everyone reacts differently, and your feelings will change over time. With the outbreak of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), many people may find the event stressful and may have difficulty coping during this time. Fear and anxiety about a disease can be overwhelming to some, and also cause strong emotions in adults and children.

Mental health problems such as anxiety and depression, as well as alcohol & drug use, are likely to spike among many people in the coming weeks because of the uncertainty created by the pandemic.

Taking care of emotional health during an emergency will help you think clearly and react to the urgent needs to protect yourself and your family. Self-care during an emergency will help your long-term healing. How you respond to the outbreak can depend on your background, the things that make you different from other people, and the community you live in.

#### **People who may respond more strongly to the stress of a crisis include:**

- Older people and people with chronic illness who are at higher risk for COVID-19.
- Children & teens.
- People who are helping with the response to COVID-19, like doctors, nurses, and other health care providers, or first responders.
- People who have mental health conditions including problems with substance use.

#### **Stress during an infectious disease outbreak can include:**

- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones.
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns.
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating.
- Worsening of chronic health problems.
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs.
- Increased feelings or thoughts of suicide.
- Increased irritableness or feelings of anger and domestic violence activity.



**Things you can do to better cope during the COVID-19 event and to support yourself:**

- Take care of your body – try to eat healthy well balanced meals, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep. Avoid alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.
- Connect with others – share you concerns with others, talk to people you trust about how you are feeling (maintain proper social distancing). Maintain healthy relationships, and build a strong support system.
- Take breaks - make time to unwind. Try taking deep breaths, stretch, or meditate. Go for a walk. Try to do some activities you enjoy.
- Stay informed, but avoid too much exposure to news – limit your time for watching, reading, listening to news stories, including time spent on social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting.

**For Parents:**

Children and teens react, in part, on what they see from the adults around them. When parents deal with the COVID-19 event calmly and confidently, they can be a positive and reassuring role model and provide the best support for their children.

**Not all children and teens respond to stress in the same way. Some common changes to watch for include:**

- Excessive crying or irritation in younger children.
- Returning to behaviors they have outgrown (for example, toileting accidents or bedwetting).
- Excessive worry or sadness.
- Unhealthy eating or sleeping habits.
- Weight loss and lack of appetite.
- Irritability and “acting out” behaviors in teens.
- Difficulty with attention and concentration.
- Avoidance of activities enjoyed in the past.
- Unexplained headaches or body pain.
- Use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs.
- Isolating from others.
- Feelings of hopelessness or sadness. Giving away possessions.
- Thoughts or expressions of suicide.

**Things you can do to support your child:**

- Take time to talk with your child or teen about the COVID-19 outbreak. Answer their questions and share facts about COVID-19 in a way that your child or teen can understand.
- Reassure your child or teen that they are safe. Let them know its ok if they feel upset or scared. Share with them how you cope with your own stress and partner together to reduce stress together so they can learn from you.
- Limit your families exposure to news coverage of the event, including social media.



**COUNTY OF WAYNE**  
**DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH**  
**WAYNE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH NETWORK**

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- Try to keep up with regular family routines. While schools are closed create a schedule for learning activities and relaxing or fun activities.
- Be a role model. Take breaks, get plenty of sleep, exercise, get fresh air and eat well. Connect with friends and family members while maintaining safe social distancing.

**If stress gets in the way of your daily activities for several days in a row, seek professional help:**

- **Call the Wayne County Behavioral Health Network Open Access Center – 1-833-WAYNE-CO (1-833-929-6326 or 1-315-946-5750). Professional counselors & medical staff are available to assist you with mental health and/or addiction issues. The Open Access Center is available to all residents of Wayne County and the surrounding counties of the Finger Lakes Region. Help is available during the COVID-19 event. You can receive a telephone or video call evaluation with a clinician and begin treatment right away. Just make the call.**
- Call your healthcare provider.
- Contact your clergy member, counselor, or doctor's office.
- Contact LifeLine at 211 for information and referral sources.
- National Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-799-7233
- National Alliance on Mental Illness Helpline 1-800-950-6264
- If you're overwhelmed call the NYS Office of Mental Health "Reach Out" line 1-844-863-9314
- The NYS Office of Mental Health Crisis Text Lin: Text "Got5" to 741-741
- The NYS Office of Addiction Services and Supports 24/7 HOPEline: Call 1-877-8-HOPENY or text 467369.

**In an emergency contact the following:**

- Call for emergency services by dialing 911.
- Go to your nearest hospital emergency department.
- If you're feeling suicidal you can contact the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK (8256).

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**The Wayne County Department of Mental Health & Wayne Behavioral Health Network** operates mental health and substance abuse out-patient treatment clinics licensed by the NYS Office of Mental Health (OMH) and the NYS Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS). The clinics are staffed by licensed professionals, para-professionals, and support staff who provide immediate access to psychiatric and addiction counseling, therapy, medication assisted treatment and support services through individual and group interventions to improve overall emotional health and wellbeing to those in recovery from addiction or mental illness. The main mental health & substance abuse clinics are located in Lyons, NY, along with many satellite mental health clinics located in 31 schools throughout Wayne County.

For anyone struggling with an addiction or mental health problem, you can call Wayne Behavioral Health Network at 315-946-5722 or the Open Access Center at 833-929-6326 or 315-946-5750, or to find help and hope 24 hours/7 days a week you can contact the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-8255, or contact Life-Line at 211, or in an emergency call 911.

Contact for Additional Information: Wayne County Department of Mental Health, James Haitz, 315-946-5728.

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