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Prioritize Mental Health and Safety This Holiday Season

While many people find the holidays to be joyful, they can be a difficult and a stressful time for some. This is especially true for those who battle with mental health or substance use difficulties. During this season, the Genesee and Orleans County Health Departments (GO Health) and the Genesee and Orleans County Mental Health Departments want to encourage everyone to be proactive and to know where to get support. “This can be a challenging time for many people,” stated Paul Pettit, Public Health Director for GO Health. “We want people to look out for others and know where to go for support.”

Tips for Mental Health Well-Being during the Holiday Season:

- Accept your feelings: It is okay to feel overwhelmed or sad. Allow yourself to process emotions without judgement. Help is available.
- Stay connected: Reach out to friends, family or someone you trust.
- Set boundaries: It is okay to say no to things you can't take on.
- Take breaks: Listen to music, take a walk, or do something you enjoy.
- Maintain healthy habits: Avoid the use of drugs or alcohol. Instead, consider using healthy substitutes such as exercise or relaxation methods.
 - If you use drugs, never use them alone and always have someone with you.
 - Carry naloxone (Narcan), which can save a life during an opioid overdose. For free naloxone, text KIT to 877-535-2461.

“Help is always available and just a call away,” stated Danielle Figura, Director of Orleans County Mental Health. “Reaching out to someone you trust or calling the Care & Crisis Line (585-283-5200) can be the first step toward hope and healing.”

Understanding the risk factors and warning signs of someone experiencing a mental health crisis can promptly prevent a crisis from occurring. “Warning signs are often missed, dismissed or overlooked until it's too late, stated Lynda Battaglia, Director for Genesee County Mental Health. “It is vital to remain vigilant and engage in open

conversations. Be proactive so that together we can ensure that no one feels alone or without hope.”

Know the Signs of a Mental Health Crisis:

Risk Factors Include:

- A history of depression, anxiety, or trauma.
- Increased use of alcohol or drugs.
- Lack of social support or healthy relationships.
- Access to dangerous items like firearms or medications.

Warning Signs Include:

- Talking about wanting to die or feeling hopeless.
- Making concerning statements about self-harm.
- Sudden changes in behavior, such as mood swings, withdrawing from social activities, acting anxious, giving away possessions, or reckless behavior.
- Trouble sleeping.

How to Help Others:

- Ask questions: Check in with them and offer support.
- Listen without judgement: Be a good listener and show compassion.
- Reassure Them: Remind them that they are not alone and that help is available.
- Secure Dangerous Items: Remove access to weapons or pills.
- Carry naloxone (Narcan) to respond to an emergency.

The following are some mental health and substance use resources available:

Genesee County Mental Health
5130 East Main St. Rd., Suite 2 Batavia, NY 14020
(585) 344-1421
Monday-Friday 8:30am to 5:00pm
Walk-in hours Monday-Friday 9:00am to 3:00pm

Orleans County Mental Health
14014 State Route 31 Albion, NY 14411
(585) 589-7066
Monday-Friday 8:30am-5:00pm

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline- Dial 988 or visit and chat at [988 Lifeline](#).
Veterans Crisis Line- Dial 988 (press 1) or text 741741.

SAMHSA’s National Helpline- 1-800-662-HELP (4357) - A confidential, free 24-hour helpline that can provide referrals to local treatment facilities and support groups. To find a local treatment facility, visit [FindTreatment.gov](#). To find support for issues with mental health, drugs, or alcohol, visit [Samhsa.gov/find-support](#).

If you or anyone you know needs
additional support during this time or anytime of the year,
Care & Crisis Helpline at (585) 283-5200
or Call or Text 988 the National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.



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