



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Samra G. Brouk

New 9-8-8 Line is a Resource During Holiday Season

SAMRA G. BROUK December 21, 2022

| ISSUE: **MENTAL HEALTH, HOLIDAY SAFETY, 988, ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES, FAMILY HEALTH**

ROCHESTER, NY - The holiday season is often a source of stress and contention for many. Financial concerns, family strain, and concerns about health and travel are just some of the reasons that this time of year can elicit an increase in negative feelings.

In fact, the National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI) reports that 64% of people living with mental illness feel that their symptoms worsen during the holidays. A second study from NAMI suggests that 3 out of 5 adults feel that their mental health generally worsens around the holidays.

But you don't need to have a mental health diagnosis to feel the strain of the holiday season. The American Psychology Association recently issued a report that indicates that 41% of Americans will feel increased worry surrounding the holidays, and approximately one third of Americans will feel more stress and anxiety than they did in 2021.

Mental health advocates in our region want to remind residents that new resources are available to help them cope during the holiday season—and year round. Thanks to legislation sponsored by Senator Samra Brouk, New York became one of a handful of states to fully implement a three digit 9-8-8 support line for mental health and substance use

emergencies earlier this year.

Brouk's advocacy on this topic also resulted in a 35 million dollar investment from the state earlier this year to ensure that the line was fully staffed and operational. The line, which can be called or texted, is staffed and operated locally. Goodwill of the Finger Lakes, who already operates the region's 2-1-1 line, operates the 9-8-8 line with local staff who are trained and familiarized with the resources available in the Greater Rochester Area. The 9-8-8 line is accessible 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Senator Samra Brouk said, "It's no secret that concerns surrounding mental health and support have increased following the pandemic. I'm proud to have pushed for the creation of a 9-8-8 line in New York State, as well as made sure that those who staff the line are local to the communities they serve and have been trained appropriately. At a time of year that can be difficult for so many, I'm proud of the resources we have available in our region, and I am hopeful that this line can help connect our neighbors to the compassionate care and support they need."

Jen Lake, President and CEO of Goodwill of the Finger Lakes said, "While this holiday season brings a lot of joy, we know it's a time when many struggle too – and often in silence. Our team is trained to listen and have compassionate conversations so the person on the other line is supported during their mental health crisis or substance abuse crisis, and they are not alone during their time of crisis. We are here 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and if you need us, our 988 team will be available to help you."

Heather Newton, CEO of NAMI Rochester said, "It is so important to have this resource during the holidays because many clinicians' offices are closed, however mental health crises are still occurring. 988 is the perfect resource for anyone to reach out at any time."

Sara Taylor, Founder of BIPOC PEEEEEEK said, “The holidays may be joyous for some but often a lonely tough time of year for others. Thanks to Senator Brouk, we are fortunate to have 988 as a resource for anyone who may be struggling with symptoms related to mental health. Don’t suffer silently—pick up the phone and call 988.”

RELATED LEGISLATION

2021-S6194B

- Introduced

- ◦ In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate

- ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate

- ◦ Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate

- Delivered to Governor

- Signed By Governor

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[Relates to establishing a 9-8-8 suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline system](#)

April 14, 2021

Signed by Governor

Sponsored by **Samra G. Brouk**

Do you support this bill?