



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Mark Walczyk

## Senator Walczyk Wears Green Bow Tie for Mental Health Awareness Month

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| ISSUE: **BOW TIE TUESDAY**



Senator Mark Walczyk is donning a green tie today as May is Mental Health Awareness Month. Mental health relates to our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, how we feel, and how we act. It also is a major factor in how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy lifestyle choices. The CDC also recognizes that Mental health is very important to keeping up your physical health as well. For example, a mental health condition like depression can raise your risk for physical health conditions like

diabetes, heart disease and stroke.

If you're struggling with mental illness, you are certainly not alone. The CDC estimates that 1 in 5 adults in the United States live with some sort of mental illness. It's also estimated that 1 in 25 adults live with what's considered a serious mental illness, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or major depression. Mental health is not just a problem that adults face, about 1 in 5 kids aged 13-18 are estimated to be living with, or at some point lived with a seriously debilitating mental illness.

There is no specific cause for mental illness and just because you're mentally healthy today, doesn't mean you'll be mentally healthy for life. Trauma or a history of abuse, experiences in our day-to-day life, biological factors, chemical imbalances in the brain, alcohol or drugs, feelings of loneliness and so much more have been attributed to causes of mental illness. It's important to constantly monitor your mental health and make your mental well-being a priority when symptoms arise.

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*"Today's bow-tie is tied to ending the stigma surrounding Mental Health. The days of bottling it up and staying silent are over," said Senator Walczyk. "It's okay to not be okay. There are so many organizations and resources at your fingertips to get the help you need. From friends and family to professional services, the tools to fight mental illness are readily available. If you or someone you know is fighting a battle with mental illness, please get the help you need and if your situation becomes dire, please call 988 to reach the national suicide prevention hotline. We are all in this fight together, and together we can beat mental illness."*

"We appreciate Senator Walczyk bringing attention to a greater audience about the importance of mental health awareness," said Lindsey R. Williams, Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner at Samaritan Medical Center. "The month of May is a time to raise awareness of and reduce the stigma and discrimination surrounding mental health illness. Oftentimes

people suffer in silence and mental health conditions go untreated because of the perceptions associated with mental illness. Mental illnesses can affect anyone regardless of age, race, or income. Nor is it the result of personal weakness or a poor upbringing. Without treatment, the consequences of mental illness can lead to an overall poor quality of life including substance abuse, unemployment, relationship problems, and increase risk of suicide to name a few. Mental Health Awareness month is also a time to acknowledge and thank the many mental health professionals who make it their mission to provide care to the millions of people who are living with mental health illnesses.”

Senator Walczyk represents the 49th Senate District of New York State which encompasses either the entirety or part of Jefferson, Lewis, St. Lawrence, Oswego, Herkimer, Hamilton, and Fulton counties. Bow Tie Tuesday is a fun initiative by the Senator to raise awareness to important issues and will be released each Tuesday on his website and social media.