

A message from OMH Commissioner Dr. Ann Sullivan

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To: NYSOMH DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION@LISTSERV.OMH.NY.GOV <NYSOMH DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION@LISTSERV.OMH.NY.GOV>

The racially motivated hate crime targeting the Black community in Buffalo has devastated us all.

The tragedy in Buffalo comes at a time when New York's communities of color are already living through the effects of racism, disproportionate levels of violence, poverty and COVID-19 death and infection rates. The effects of events like this run deep and well beyond the City of Buffalo and Erie County. The threat of violence, discrimination and racist rhetoric all have a strong, negative impact on a person's emotional and mental health.

OMH is dedicated to ensuring that all New Yorkers, and especially those in underserved communities, have access to resources to mitigate mental health needs caused by racism, discrimination and hate crimes.

In addition [to our work addressing the more immediate needs of those most closely affected by this tragedy](#), we are mindful of the impact on those not in close proximity to Buffalo who are also affected because of social media and underlying historical trauma (especially in communities of color).

Earlier today, the New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) hosted a Statewide community webinar - "Addressing Community Grief and Trauma in Wake of the Tragedy in Buffalo". The presentation, designed to help community leaders (e.g., clergy, education officials, local government, public safety leads, behavioral health providers) with understanding how to assist individuals/families/youth coping with the grief and trauma caused by this horrific event, will be available on OMH's website (https://omh.ny.gov/omhweb/disaster_resources/emergency-mental-health-resources.html).

Additionally, please take the time to share and explore these resources:

NY Project Hope Emotional Support Helpline - ([1-844-863-9314](tel:1-844-863-9314)) can help you address the psychological stress caused by this tragedy.

SAMHSA's Disaster Distress Helpline - ([1-800-985-5990](tel:1-800-985-5990))

Mental Health Effects of Racism - (https://omh.ny.gov/omhweb/cultural_competence/the_mental_health_effects_of_racism.pdf)

National Child Traumatic Stress Network - (<https://www.nctsn.org/>)

Ann Marie T. Sullivan, MD,
Commissioner
New York State Office of Mental Health

Feeling stressed by the COVID-19 pandemic? You are not alone. Call the NY Project Hope Emotional Support Helpline 7 days a week, 8am-10pm at 1-844-863-9314 or visit <https://nyprojecthope.org>

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