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Darien Human Services Can Provide Support and Referrals for Those at Risk of Suicide

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Tagged as : [Darien Department of Human Services 2020](#), [Darien Human Services 2020](#), [Suicide Prevention 2020](#)

Date : September 9, 2020

To the Editor:

September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month and there has never been a more critical time to focus on depression and our mental health. Our lives have been disrupted by COVID-19, social distancing, and unprecedented economic challenges.

Many of us may be experiencing symptoms of anxiety or depression for the first time. Suicidal thoughts, like other mental health conditions, can affect anyone regardless of age, gender or background.

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Although common, they should not be considered normal and often indicate more serious issues. According to the CDC, suicide rates have increased by 30% since 1999.

Comments or thoughts about suicide can begin small like, “I wish I wasn’t here” or “Nothing matters.” But over time, they can become more specific and dangerous.

Each year thousands of individuals die by suicide, leaving behind friends and family members who are distraught and often don’t know where to turn.

Warning signs of suicide may include:

- Increased alcohol and drug use
- Aggressive behavior
- Withdrawal from friends, family and community
- Dramatic mood swings
- Impulsive or reckless behavior

Suicidal behaviors are a psychiatric emergency. If you or someone you know starts to take any of these steps, call 911, seek immediate help, or call The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-TALK (8255).

National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month is a time to share resources in an effort to shed light on a subject that is often considered taboo. We can all benefit from honest conversations about mental health and suicide because even one conversation may change a life.

While the Department of Human Services does not provide therapy to individuals, we are available to parents and families by telephone or email to provide supportive counseling and referrals to necessary services and resources.

Human Services can be reached at 203-656-7328 Monday through Thursday 8 a.m. to 5:15 p.m. or by email at aramsteck@darienct.gov.

All information is held strictly confidential. Now, more than ever, we understand the struggle that mental illness can bring. We are here to help.

Sincerely,

Ali Ramsteck, LCSW

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Director of Darien Human Services`