

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 3 • AUGUST 2025

SAC NEWS



Official Quarterly Newsletter of the St. Lawrence County
Suicide Awareness Coalition

Together, We Rise: Compassion. Courage. Connection.

As summer gives way to fall, we are reminded that healing, like the changing seasons, takes time, patience, and the support of a caring community. In this issue, we shine a light on the power of conversation, the importance of meeting pain with compassion, and the unshakable truth that every life matters.

From the powerful words of new voices like Brooke Ghize, to the bold creativity of our upcoming Chalk the Walk community event, this quarter's stories invite us **to listen more deeply, judge less harshly, and stand together in purpose**. We also address difficult realities, like gun suicide, and honor the strength of suicide loss survivors who continue to show up for each other and for the world.

This is a time to lean into hope, to build courageous spaces where vulnerability is welcome, and to remember: **we each have a role to play in preventing suicide and promoting mental wellness**.

Thank you for being part of this Coalition. Together, we are making a difference—one conversation, one sidewalk message, one community at a time.

This issue:

- * Talking about Suicide with Compassion
- * 3rd Annual Chalk the Walk-September 13-20, 2025
- * Gun Suicide in America-What we can do to build a safer, more compassionate community
- * Courageous Communities Stand Together
- * Local Suicide Loss Survivor's Support Group now offers Virtual Option



 stlcsac@stlawco.gov

 stlawco.gov/departments/CommunityServices/STLCSAC



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UNCOMFORTABLE BUT NECESSARY: TALKING ABOUT SUICIDE WITH COMPASSION

How compassionate conversations
and language can save lives

We are honored to welcome **Brooke Ghize, a Caseworker with the St. Lawrence County Department of Social Services**, as one of the newest members of the Suicide Awareness Coalition. Brooke's decision to join is deeply rooted in lived experience and a heartfelt desire to be part of the solution.

"I joined the St. Lawrence County Suicide Awareness Coalition because I've felt the impact of suicide on a deeply personal level," Brooke shared. "I've lost loved ones to suicide and have spent years navigating my own struggles with suicidal ideation. These experiences have shown me just how critical it is to talk about suicide openly and without shame."

Even now, Brooke admits that sharing her truth brings up feelings of self-stigma and fear of judgment. But through that vulnerability, she has discovered that openness is a powerful tool, not only for her own healing, but to help others know they're not alone.

She was drawn to the Coalition's mission of education, awareness, and empathy, recognizing how vital it is to break down the stigma that surrounds mental health.

"Understanding is the first step toward empathy, and empathy is what breaks down stigma," she says.

With courage and compassion, Brooke is helping spark the conversations that save lives and we are so grateful she's chosen to be part of this work.

We invite you to read Brooke's article which is a powerful reminder that honest conversations and compassionate action can truly make a difference:



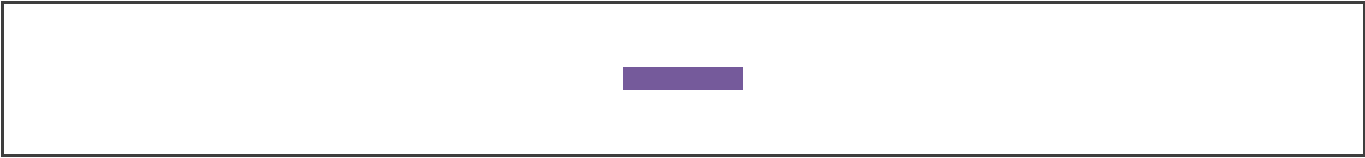
It's not that people don't care, at least, not most of us. But many still feel uncomfortable, fearful, or uncertain when it comes to talking about suicide. That discomfort, while human, is also dangerous. It fuels stigma, which is (in my opinion) the biggest obstacle to suicide prevention.

Stigma silences conversations and stops people from asking questions or offering support at critical moments. Sometimes it's not about wanting to die—it's about wanting the pain to end. I can say that from experience. But when stigma keeps us from recognizing or addressing warning signs, tragedies happen. In 2022, nearly 1,765 people died by suicide in New York State alone. That's nearly five preventable deaths every day.

We all encounter warning signs in both our professional and personal lives—statements of feeling trapped or hopeless, withdrawal, mood swings, or reckless behavior. While not always signs of suicidal ideation, these behaviors should never be ignored. Still, stigma keeps many from speaking up, whether due to fear of saying the wrong thing or being judged.

Talking about suicide isn't easy. It makes many uncomfortable because of misinformation, lack of education, cultural taboos, or deeply rooted beliefs. But that's exactly why we need to talk about it. Understanding the why and how behind suicide helps prevent it.

Reducing stigma starts with how we speak. Say "died by suicide" instead of "committed suicide." Check in on someone's mental health as routinely as you would their physical health. If you struggle with bias or discomfort, reach out to a colleague or seek training from our Staff Development Coordinator. Remember: communication is more than just words—your tone and body language matter, too.



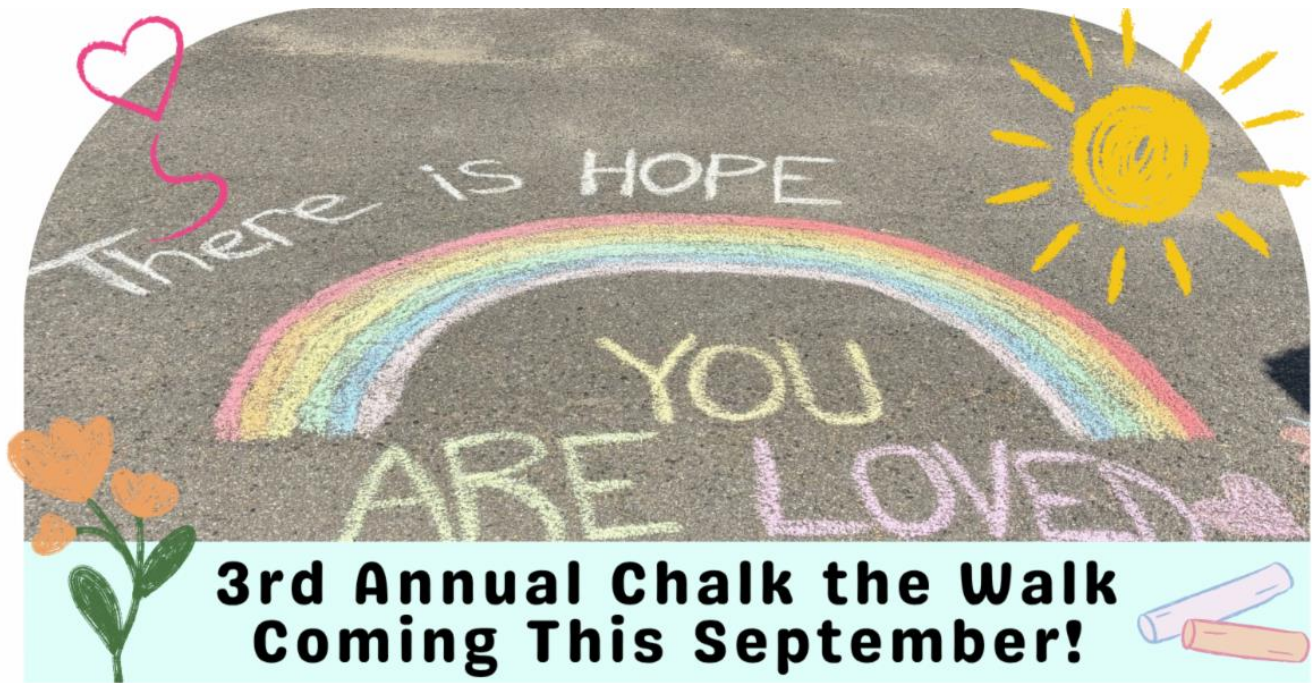
Education, compassion, and open dialogue save lives. When offering support, do so without judgment. Share resources like the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (call/text 988), Crisis Text Line (text HOME to 741741), or local options like the St. Lawrence County Crisis Line (315-265-2422 or 315-713-9090). Veterans can text 838255.

The good news? We are making progress. Suicide prevention is now being integrated into schools, police departments, and healthcare systems across New York State. Additional psychiatric beds, multi-million-dollar awareness campaigns and the passing of a state trooper who died by suicide, which created the Lieutenant Joseph Banish Mental Health Act, all show a growing commitment to this cause.

But real change starts with us—with how you and I talk about and respond to mental health struggles. The bottom line is: it's okay to not be okay, and we all need to get more comfortable talking about suicide if we want to prevent it.

Life doesn't always have a fairytale ending—but with open hearts and open conversations, we can reduce the number of endings that come too soon.





The St. Lawrence County Suicide Awareness Coalition invites youth, families, schools, and organizations to participate in the **3rd Annual "Chalk the Walk and Have the Talk"** event happening **September 13-20, 2025**. This creative community-wide initiative encourages everyone to use sidewalk chalk to spread messages of hope, resilience, and mental health awareness.

Whether you chalk outside your home, business, school, or place of worship, your words and drawings can help start meaningful conversations about mental wellness, reduce stigma, and support suicide prevention.

This year's goal is to see even more participation across the county and we know our incredible youth programs and partners can make that happen! Let's cover our sidewalks with color, encouragement, and support for one another.



How to Get Involved:

- Chalk a positive message between September 13th-20th
- Take a photo and post it on Facebook
- Tag @St. Lawrence County Suicide Awareness Coalition
- Use the hashtag **#stlcyouarenotalone**

By tagging the Coalition, you'll be automatically entered into the Chalk the Walk contest, and your photo may be shared to help spread awareness. Winners will be announced by October 17, 2025!+

Need chalk? No problem! Email **stlcSAC@stlawco.gov** to request supplies.

Let's work together to fill St. Lawrence County's sidewalks with messages that matter. Show your support, inspire hope, and remind others they are not alone.

For questions, or chalk requests, please contact the **St. Lawrence County Suicide Awareness Coalition** at **stlcSAC@stlawco.gov**.



3rd
Annual

2025 St. Lawrence County
Chalk the Walk
and Have the Talk
September 13th–20th

Spread Awareness

- *Chalk messages of hope & resilience outside your home, business, school, or church
- *Help promote suicide prevention, mental wellness, and stigma reduction & start conversations around mental health

Need Chalk?

- *Chalk is available through the St. Lawrence County Suicide Awareness Coalition. Email stlcSAC@stlawco.gov

To Participate & Enter the Contest:

Chalk your message of hope anytime between **September 13–20** and share a photo on Facebook by tagging **@St. Lawrence County Suicide Awareness Coalition**. By tagging us, you'll be automatically entered and are granting us permission to share your photo to help spread awareness. *Winners will be announced by 10/17/2025.*

Remember:

Please use hashtag **#stlcyouarenotalone**

stlcyouarenotalone

SUICIDE
AWARENESS
COALITION

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT:

Brookfield Renewable Hosts Annual Benefit Golf Tournament in Support of Suicide Prevention

On Saturday, August 9th, Brookfield Renewable hosted its Annual Brookfield Employee Benefit Golf Tournament at the Raquette River Golf and Country Club in Norfolk, NY with all proceeds generously donated to the St. Lawrence County Suicide Awareness Coalition.

With perfect weather, a beautiful course, and strong community spirit, the tournament brought together employees, partners, and local advocates united around one shared goal: **to help prevent suicide and promote hope and healing across St. Lawrence County.**

As part of the event, Coalition Co-Chair Alexa Chase offered some opening remarks, thanking Brookfield for their commitment to mental health and emphasizing the urgent need for awareness and action.

"Right (here) in St. Lawrence County, we lost 26 lives to suicide in 2024 marking the highest number ever recorded in a single year. These aren't just statistics, they are our family members, our neighbors, our friends."

Chase spoke about the role stigma plays in preventing people from seeking help, noting that research shows individuals wait an average of seven years before accessing mental health support due to fear, shame, or silence.

"That's why events like this matter so deeply. Every conversation, every act of support, every kind question like 'Are you okay?' can open a door and potentially save a life."

Todd Mullin also spoke, encouraging everyone to keep the conversation going year-round and to take every opportunity to check in with those around them.

He invited golfers to participate in the upcoming Iron Mind "Keep Going for Those Who Can't" Walk on Saturday, October 18, 2025, starting at 9:00 AM at Sacred Heart Church. The walk will be followed by Pumpkin Palooza, and participation is free.

The tournament was more than just a fundraiser, **it was a powerful reminder that community connection is at the heart of suicide prevention.** Funds raised during the event will go directly toward supporting local trainings, public awareness campaigns, and programming aimed at reducing stigma and increasing access to help.

The Coalition is deeply grateful to Brookfield Renewable for their partnership, and to Todd and Jo-Ann Mullin and Iron Mind for their continued support and advocacy. **As we continue our mission to build a stronger, more supportive community, we invite anyone who feels called to this work to join us.**





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with the Massena School District



BENEFITTING

SUICIDE
AWARENESS
COALITION

COLOR WALK FOR AWARENESS

**SATURDAY
SEPTEMBER 20**



**9:15 AM REGISTRATION
10:00 AM EVENT START**

FREE

T-Shirt to first
20 Registrants

\$20 ADULTS

\$10 (12 and Under)



**John Story
Trail at MCHS
Starting at the
front of the
school, near
the main
parking lot**

TO REGISTER:

- ✓ **Stay and Chalk the Walk**
- ✓ **Event benefits the
St. Lawrence County Suicide
Awareness Coalition**
- ✓ **Order your white t-shirt (or
wear your own)**

SUICIDE
AWARENESS
COALITION

SCAN



Walking Together for Mental Health

"WALK WITH A DOC" BRINGS HOPE TO A RAINY MAY MORNING

On Saturday, May 17, 2025, the St. Lawrence County Suicide Awareness Coalition proudly sponsored "Walk with a Doc" in recognition of May as Mental Health Awareness Month. Despite a chilly, rainy morning, a dedicated group of community members gathered at the Abbe Picquet Walking Trail in Ogdensburg to walk together in solidarity, raise awareness, and promote mental wellness.

The event began at 10:00 a.m. with opening remarks from Dr. Dhruv Modi, psychiatrist at Claxton Hepburn Medical Center. In a powerful and compassionate address, Dr. Modi acknowledged the collective commitment of those present:

"Thank you for joining us today for this special 'Walk with a Doc' focused on mental health awareness and suicide prevention. We all are here and that shows our commitment to do something about our community mental health."



Dr. Modi's words served as a sobering reminder of the local impact of suicide in our county:

"In 2024, our county faced significant losses. Twenty-six individuals lost their lives to suicide, a number that has doubled from the previous years. Middle-aged men, in particular, have been disproportionately affected. These aren't just numbers; they are neighbors, friends, and family. This tells us how urgent our mission is."

Participants walked in silence and in conversation, holding space for those lost, those still struggling, and those working tirelessly to create change. The walk underscored the message that mental health affects everyone, regardless of age, gender, or background, and that no one should suffer in silence.

"By walking together, we are saying, 'It's okay to not be okay,'" Dr. Modi emphasized. "We are breaking the silence, confronting stigma, making mental wellness a community priority, and promoting open conversations about mental health."

He reminded participants that support is always available through local resources like Claxton Hepburn's Adult & Children Inpatient Wellness Center and Citizen Advocates.

The event closed with a message of resilience and unity:

"So today, let's walk together, step by step, side by side. Walk with courage, walk with compassion, and above all, walk with hope."

The Coalition thanks all those who participated, volunteered, and supported this event. Even in the rain, the spirit of community and healing shone brightly.





GUN SUICIDE IN AMERICA: A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS WORSENING IN SILENCE



In 2023, nearly 46,728 people died from gun violence in the United States representing an average of one death every 11 minutes. Disturbingly, gun suicides reached an all-time high, accounting for almost six in ten of these deaths. That's 27,300 lives lost to firearm suicide representing one every 19 minutes and this number continues to rise.

According to the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions and the Center for Suicide Prevention, the lethality of firearms makes them the deadliest method of suicide. Although guns are used in only 5–6% of suicide attempts, they account for over 50% of all suicide deaths due to their high fatality rate—approximately 90% when used in an attempt.

Who is Most at Risk?

The report highlights the deep disparities in gun suicide rates across demographics:

- Elderly white men (ages 70+) have the highest gun suicide rates, nearly five times greater than their Black counterparts.
- Young Black and Hispanic/Latino individuals (ages 10–19) are experiencing alarming increases in gun suicide. The rate among young Black people has tripled since 2014 and now exceeds that of white peers for the second consecutive year.
- Veterans are disproportionately affected, with 73% of veteran suicides involving a firearm. Many keep firearms loaded and unlocked, increasing risk.
- Individuals with only a high school diploma or GED had the highest firearm suicide rates among adults in 2023.

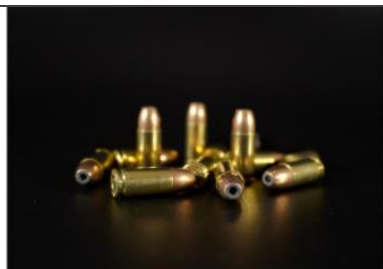
Geography and Access Matter

Gun suicide rates vary widely by location. In 2023:

- Wyoming had the highest rate—10 times higher than Massachusetts, the lowest.
- Rural areas experienced higher gun suicide rates than urban regions, partly due to limited access to mental health care and higher gun ownership.
- In states with strong gun laws and safe storage regulations, firearm suicide rates were significantly lower.



GUN LOCKS AVAILABLE FOR FREE
Email stlcSAC@stlawco.gov for details



A Call for Action: Prevention is Possible

The report offers several evidence-based policy recommendations that could save lives:

- **Safe storage laws**, especially in homes with youth, can reduce access to lethal means. An estimated 4.6 million children live in homes with a loaded and unlocked gun.
- **Firearm purchaser licensing laws** (also known as permit-to-purchase) help prevent high-risk individuals from acquiring guns.
- **Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPOs)** allow temporary removal of firearms from individuals in crisis.

Every gun suicide is a preventable tragedy. The data is clear: **access to firearms during a mental health crisis drastically increases the likelihood of death.**

We recognize that many St. Lawrence County residents are proud supporters of the Second Amendment of the United States Constitution, a right deeply rooted in personal freedom and tradition. At the same time, we believe that protecting that right and protecting lives **can** coexist. By promoting responsible firearm ownership, safe storage practices, and access to mental health resources, we can reduce preventable loss while honoring our shared commitment to safety, community, and personal liberty.

Let's work together to build a safer, more compassionate St. Lawrence County because every life matters, and every loss is one too many.

Source:

Kim, R., Wagner, E. D., Nestadt, P. S., Somayaji, N., Horwitz, J., & Crifasi, C. K. (2025). **Gun Violence in the United States 2023: Examining the Gun Suicide Epidemic.** Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions & Johns Hopkins Center for Suicide Prevention. [Read the full report](#)

GUN LOCKS AVAILABLE FOR FREE
Email stlcSAC@stlawco.gov for details



Courageous Communities Stand Together

In challenging times communities must rise with compassion and with purpose. Our strength depends on our willingness to listen with empathy recognize every individual and commit to acting with kindness. When community leaders and members choose understanding over judgment they send a powerful message of worth and belonging.

Why We Must Listen More and Judge Less

Adults who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or otherwise not cisgender, face significantly elevated risks of mental health struggles, suicidal thoughts, and self-harm:

- Studies show lesbian, gay, and bisexual adults are **three to six times more likely** than their heterosexual peers to report suicidal ideation plans and attempts
- UCL researchers found LGB adults are **more than twice as likely** as straight adults to experience suicidal thoughts and over **three times more likely** to report non-suicidal self-harm, even after accounting for depression and anxiety
- Transgender adults face particularly high rates of suicidal ideation with 44 percent reporting recent thoughts and 7 percent reporting recent attempts

These are not abstract statistics. They reflect the very real human consequences of stigma lack of recognition and minority stress.

The Healing Power of Respect, Kindness, and Empathy

Transformational change arises through everyday acts of kindness and empathy research confirms:

- Engaging in kindness can significantly reduce depression and anxiety symptoms in adults improve social connection and enhance overall life satisfaction
- Kindness builds wellbeing through reducing stress increasing self-esteem and fostering social bonds that guard against loneliness and despair
- Kindness is a public-health measure that is cost-free empowering and immediately accessible



Building a Community That Cares

To transform statistics into safety, we can:

- **Create spaces to be heard.** Invite adults, from all walks of life, into conversations about inclusion, mental-health support, and how we can be better neighbors.
- **Model empathy through policy and practice.** Workplace and faith-based organizations can adopt welcoming language, inclusive signage, and training that acknowledges diverse identities.
- **Celebrate acts of kindness.** Share and spotlight stories from local residents who check in on neighbors, show compassion, or champion someone's voice.

Through these concrete efforts **we replace isolation with connection and fear with belonging.**

Conclusion

Courageous communities are forged through consistent compassion. When we listen more, and judge less, we break the cycle of exclusion that drives despair. **Every kind word and thoughtful action matters. Together we build a community that saves lives and honors dignity.**





Resources-

- **NIH – National Institute of Mental Health**
 - Disparities in suicide risk among lesbian, gay, and bisexual adults
<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/news/science-news/2023/disparities-in-suicide-risk-among-lesbian-gay-and-bisexual-adults>
- **University College London (UCL) Study**
 - LGB adults are more than twice as likely to experience suicidal thoughts
<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/2022/may/lgb-adults-twice-likely-experience-suicidal-thoughts>
- **UCLA Williams Institute**
 - Transgender adults and suicide risk: 2022 data
<https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/trans-suicidality-us/>
- **American Journal of Preventive Medicine (2011)**
 - Suicide risk disparities among LGB adults in the United States
[https://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797\(11\)00213-8/fulltext](https://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797(11)00213-8/fulltext)
- **American Psychiatric Association (APA)**
 - How acts of kindness improve mental health
<https://www.psychiatry.org/news-room/apa-blogs/apa-blog/2022/11/the-benefits-of-being-kind>
- **MDPI Journal – Behavioral Sciences (2022)**
 - Kindness reduces depression: A study with Mexican adults
<https://www.mdpi.com/2076-328X/12/2/35>
- **Mental Health Foundation – UK**
 - Kindness and mental health: Research and tips
<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/explore-mental-health/a-z-topics/kindness-and-mental-health>
- **PubMed Central – Frontiers in Psychology (2021)**
 - Kindness as a public health intervention
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8592768/>

National Grief Awareness Day



*Grief is not
a sign of
weakness.
It is
evidence of
love.*



Honoring the Journey of Healing

Each year on **August 30th, National Grief Awareness Day** invites us to pause, reflect, and acknowledge the complex journey of grief, a universal experience that touches every life, yet is so often carried in silence.

Grief is not a problem to be fixed, nor a process with a clear timeline. It is a deeply human response to loss of a loved one, a friend, a dream, a sense of normalcy. Whether grief stems from suicide loss, the death of a parent, a miscarriage, or the end of a relationship, its presence demands compassion, not correction.

In our society, we often feel pressure to "move on" or "get over it." But healing from loss is not about forgetting, it's about remembering with less pain. ***Grief is not a sign of weakness. It is evidence of love.***

For survivors of suicide loss, this journey can be especially complicated. The pain is often accompanied by questions, guilt, isolation, or stigma. That's why National Grief Awareness Day is not just about remembrance, ***it's a call to open dialogue, extend grace, and create safe spaces for those navigating grief.***

What Can We Do?

- **Acknowledge the Grief of Others**
 - A simple "I'm here" or "I'm thinking of you" can offer powerful validation to someone who feels alone in their sorrow.
- **Educate Ourselves and Others**
 - Learn about the different ways grief can manifest—emotionally, physically, spiritually. Avoid assumptions. Every journey is different.
- **Support Grief-Friendly Communities**
 - Create environments in workplaces, schools, churches, and homes where people feel safe talking about loss without judgment or shame.
- **Honor Your Own Losses**
 - Light a candle, write a letter, visit a special place, or join a support group. ***Healing takes time and intentional care.***

In St. Lawrence County, we are committed to standing with those who grieve. Our Suicide Loss Survivor's Support Group, held monthly in Gouverneur with a virtual option, offers a confidential and compassionate space to share, listen, and heal. Because no one should have to grieve alone.

As August 30th approaches, let us remember: ***grief is love with nowhere to go. Together, we can make sure it has a place within our hearts, our communities, and our conversations.***

MYTH VS. FACT

In honor of National Grief Awareness Day—
August 30th



Myth:

Grief follows fixed stages and everyone experiences them in the same order.

Time alone heals grief.

If you don't cry, you're not really grieving.

Moving on means forgetting the person or forgetting the love shared.

Keeping busy speeds healing.

Only death brings grief.

Fact:

There is no universal or linear "five-stage" grief path. People move in and out of emotions at their own pace and in their own way.

Grief doesn't resolve just with time, it changes in intensity. Healing often requires active support, coping strategies, and community.

Crying is only one expression. People may grieve through silence, activity, or physical symptoms and emotion still runs deep.

"Moving on" means integrating your grief into life, not erasing memory. You honor what was lost by carrying it differently.

Filling your time can numb pain, but avoiding grief may delay emotional processing. Intentional reflection is essential.

Grief arises from many losses such as death, divorce, job loss, identity shifts, unmet hope. Grief is broader than you might assume.

Sources: www.therecoveryvillage.com/mental-health/grief/grief-myths
good-grief.org/common-grief-myths-the-grief-experts-list

SUICIDE LOSS SURVIVOR'S SUPPORT GROUP



Now offering a VIRTUAL option
to attend! Please email
mary.dousharm@rochesterregional.org
for LINK

— “
*Loss from Suicide is
like no other loss-*

There's no time limit for
grieving. Allow yourself
that time to process. And
then talk to someone.

-Deenie Bagley



Sponsored by:



**ROCHESTER
REGIONAL HEALTH**

WESTERN NY | FINGER LAKES | ST. LAWRENCE

WHEN

1st Wednesday of each month

WHERE

The Gouverneur Community Center
4673 NY-58, Gouverneur, NY 13642

TIME

5:30 pm

Why Participate?

Suicide leaves those who are touched
by it with a distinctive grief, filled with
unanswered questions, stigma from
those who don't understand, and
sometimes unbearable guilt. This group
offers a safe space to be heard,
understood, and supported.

**For more information and to
register contact group
facilitator:**

Mary B. Dousharm, LCSW-R
Clinical Social Worker
St. Lawrence Region

 (315) 261-5415 Ext. 5638



mary.dousharm@rochesterregional.org

IRONMIND

• EVENTS •

LOVE **KEEP
GOING**
FOR THOSE WHO CAN'T





24/7 CRISIS HOTLINE AND MOBILE RESPONSE SERVICES NOW AVAILABLE

CRISIS DOESN'T WAIT

Neither do we.



CALL 315-265-2422



**CITIZEN
ADVOCATES**

**24/7/365 CRISIS HOTLINE
& MOBILE RESPONSE
SERVING ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY**

Mental health and addiction crises rarely happen on a schedule and when they strike, fast, compassionate support can save lives. That's why Citizen Advocates offers a 24/7/365 Crisis Hotline and Mobile Response Team, including immediate access to trained professionals ready to respond day or night.

If you (or someone you care about) is experiencing a mental health or substance use emergency, call **315-265-2422** anytime. During business hours, you'll speak directly with a licensed therapist who can help you identify next steps. After hours, calls are routed through a service that will quickly connect you to a clinician.

Support may include:

- Suicide prevention strategies
- Relaxation techniques to reduce panic and stress
- Parenting support for families in distress
- In-person response from the mobile crisis team at your home or a safe location

The mobile response unit helps avoid unnecessary emergency room visits while ensuring personal safety and stability. This team works in partnership with the hotline to provide compassionate, on-the-ground support when it's needed most.

Please save this number and share it with others:

St. Lawrence County Crisis Hotline: 315-265-2422

Additional Hotlines:

- Franklin County: 518-483-3261
- Jefferson County: 315-755-1251

For more information about services, visit: <https://citizenadvocates.net>

Image courtesy of Citizen Advocates

2ND TUESDAY OF EVERY MONTH 10AM-12PM

A SAFE PLACE

**FOR FEMALE VETERANS,
SPOUSES AND DEPENDENTS
TO SHARE AND SUPPORT
EACH OTHER**



**701 CANTON ST SUITE 3 OGDENSBURG NY
(315) 401-6575**



Joseph P. Dwyer Veteran Peer Support Project

Jefferson County (JC)

247 State St
Watertown, NY 13601
(315) 681-6772

St. Lawrence County (SLC)

230 Ford Street
Ogdensburg, NY 13669
(315) 401-6575

The Joseph P. Dwyer Peer Support Program offers free, confidential, non-clinical support to veterans, active-duty service members, and their families across New York State. Locally, the program provides tailored services in Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties, connecting the military community to vital resources such as food assistance, housing support, and help with benefits like SSI, SSD, and service-connected claims.

Whether you're looking for advocacy or simply hoping to connect with fellow veterans, Dwyer offers a safe space and meaningful support. This August, the Dwyer team has a full calendar of events aimed at building connection and resilience. Visit their website or follow them on Facebook to learn more and get involved.



Hours of operation
Monday-Friday
8:30am-4:00pm

8:30-9:30 Coffee Hour

2025

August

Joseph P. Dwyer Veteran Peer Support Project of the Tri-County Area

Contact us (JC)
Tel: (315) 681-6772
Email: jward@mhajc.org

Contact us (LC)
Tel: (315) 767-0908
Email: vetsp2p5@mhajc.org

Contact us (SLC)
Tel: (315) 401-6575
Email: vetsp2p3@mhajc.org

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 8:30-9:30 Coffee Hour	2
3	4 8:30-9:30 Coffee Hour	5 9-11 am Vet Breakfast 2PM-3PM Recovery Support Group(JC)	6 8:30-9:30 Coffee Hour 10-12 Fishing (JC & SLC)	7 8:30-9:30 Coffee Hour	8 8:30-9:30 Coffee Hour 9-11 am Male Vet Group (SLC)	9
10	11 8:30-9:30 Coffee Hour	12 8:30-9:30 Coffee Hour 10-12 am Female Vet Group (SLC)	13 9:30 BrunchCarthage VFW (JC & SLC) 4-7 Car Show (SLC)	14 8:30-9:30 Coffee Hour	15 8:30-9:30 Coffee Hour	16
17	18 8:30-9:30 Coffee Hour	19 9-11 am Vet Breakfast 2PM-3PM Recovery Support Group(JC)	20 8:30-9:30 Coffee Hour 10-12 Fishing (JC & SLC)	21 8:30-9:30 Coffee Hour	22 8:30-9:30 Coffee Hour 9-11 am Male Vet Group (SLC)	23 Feed our Vets
24 31	25 8:30-9:30 Coffee Hour	26 8:30-9:30 Coffee Hour	27 9:30 BrunchCarthage VFW (JC & SLC) 4-7 Car Show (SLC)	28 8:30-9:30 Coffee Hour	29 8:30-9:30 Coffee Hour	30

Join OUR OUT OF THE DARKNESS COMMUNITY



North Country Walk



Saturday, September 20th 2025



Check-In: 11:00 am

Event Starts: 12:00 pm



Olympic Oval

Lake Placid, New York



For more information contact:

Tina Preston tltpreston@gmail.com (518) 637-7900



**American
Foundation
for Suicide
Prevention**



**OUT OF THE
DARKNESS**
Community Walks



Native American Flute, Frame Drum, and Cello **Sacred Sound Healing**

**Sunday,
October 5th
4:00 pm**

Join us for an extraordinary sound healing and musical exploration, featuring the transformative sounds of the Native American flute, cello and frame drum. This immersive experience blends ancient traditions and innovative approaches to music, designed to soothe the mind, body, and spirit.

Begin your journey with a calming meditation accompanied by the tranquil tones of the Native American flute. Let the gentle sounds of the rain stick wash over you, guiding you into a state of deep relaxation.

Following this, immerse yourself in a restorative cello sound healing experience, reminiscent of a sound bath, enriched with soothing percussion on the frame drum and other gentle instruments.

Participants are encouraged to find comfort, whether reclining with eyes closed on provided yoga mats, blankets, and bolsters, or seated in a relaxed position. You are also welcome to bring your own favorite equipment to enhance your experience.

Discover peace, balance, and restoration in this uniquely harmonizing event. Caron Collins, is Professor Emerita at The Crane School of Music at the State University of New York at Potsdam. With 40 years of teaching experience in K-12 and higher education, she continues to teach her online graduate music course, "Peace Building through Music Education".

Alisa Woods is the owner of Alisa G. Woods, Ph.D., LHMC, Mental Health Counseling, in Potsdam. She has recently been honored with grant support from the Maxine M. Quigg Women in Business Fund of the Northern New York Community Foundation. Thanks to this grant, Alisa immersed herself in transformative training with Elizabeth Byrd, a celebrated cellist and pioneer in sound therapy. Alisa holds a Ph.D. in behavioral neuroscience and a master's in mental health counseling. Her journey with the cello began at the age of seven. She currently studies classical cello with Christian Hosmer and is a member of the Northern Lights Orchestra, the St. Lawrence University String Orchestra, the North Country Connections Orchestra, and the Potsdam Trio.

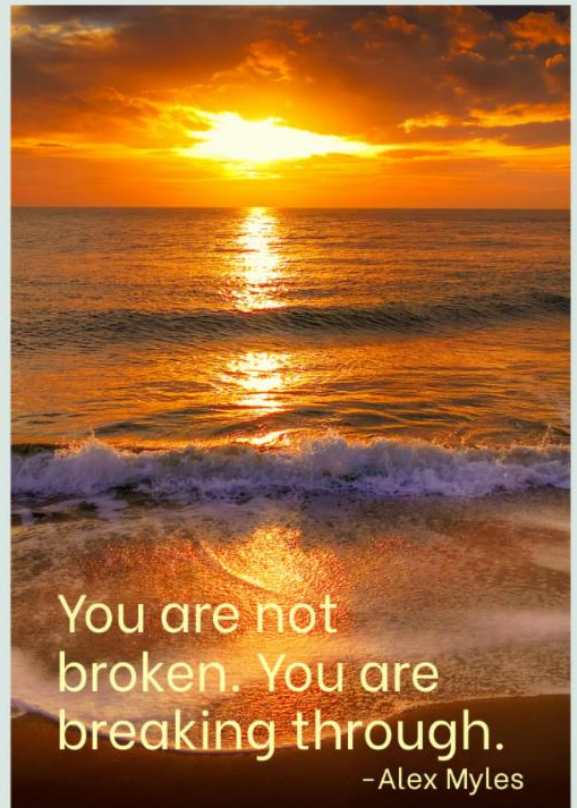
Beyond her private psychotherapy practice, Alisa leads Melodic Minds: Celebrating Neurodiversity with Music, a NYSCA-funded program that employs and teaches neurodivergent musicians.

Suggested Donation for this event is \$20 or whatever you are able to afford. The cost is waived for those with financial hardship, no explanations needed.

Contact dralisawoods@gmail.com for pre-registration

Just when the
caterpillar
thought
the world was
over,
it became a
butterfly.

-Proverb



You are not
broken. You are
breaking through.

-Alex Myles



*Every storm runs out of
rain, just like every dark
night turns into day.*

-Gary Allen



Healing doesn't
mean the
damage never
existed. It means
the damage no
longer controls
your life.

-Akshay Dubey



Inspiration





Compassionate Help. Anytime. Anywhere.

988 Day September 8th 2025

On 988 Day, observed annually on September 8th, we unite to shine a light on the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline which is a free, confidential, and judgment-free resource available nationwide via call, text, and chat, 24/7.



This year's theme, **“Compassionate Help. Anytime. Anywhere.”**, embodies the Lifeline's mission: *to provide empathetic support that's accessible when and where it's needed most.*

Through creative community-driven initiatives like leveraging resources such as the 988 Day toolkit and using the hashtag #988Day, *we can all play a part in reducing stigma, promoting mental health, and reminding everyone that there's always someone ready to listen.*

CRISIS DOESN'T WAIT

Neither do we.



CALL 315-265-2422



**24/7/365 CRISIS HOTLINE
& MOBILE RESPONSE
SERVING ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY**

Local Resources

Mental Health Outpatient Services :

St. Lawrence Health Systems

315-261-5420 (Potsdam)
315-261-5405 (Potsdam)
315-261-5415 (Gouverneur)
315-261-5680 (Massena)
315-261-5395 Emotional Support Line 24/7

St. Lawrence County Mental Health

315-386-2048 (Canton)

St. Lawrence Psychiatric Center

315-541-2001 (Ogdensburg)

United Helpers Mosaic

315-386-0264 (Canton)
315-541-3042 (Ogdensburg)

Community Health Center of the North Country

315-379-8130

Massena Wellness Center

315-769-8441

Gouverneur Wellness Center

315-287-2811

Ogdensburg Wellness Center

315-394-0101

Scan the QR
Code for this list
of life-saving
numbers



SCAN ME!

Citizens Advocates

315-713-9090 (Ogdensburg)
315-764-0876 (Massena)
518-483-3261 (Malone)

Claxton Hepburn Medical Center

315-713-5720

Mental Health Counseling Services

315-268-0264 (Potsdam)

Additional Resources :

Seaway Valley Prevention Council

315-713-4861

Domestic Violence Hotline

1-800-942-6906

St. Lawrence Valley Renewal House

Domestic Violence Resources

315-379-9845

St. Lawrence County Sheriff's Office

315-379-2222

St. Lawrence County Addiction Services

315-386-2189



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