

for immediate release
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Samaritans Launches New *Wellness Support Line* for ‘Mental Health Maintenance’ During Pandemic



The community agency that has operated NYC’s 24-hour suicide prevention hotline for over 35 years has launched a new, free service to provide needed emotional support to the many New Yorkers experiencing heightened levels of anxiety, distress and isolation tied to COVID-19.

Samaritans *Mental Health Wellness Support Line* has been designed to fill the gaps and provide an alternative to *Thrive* and other city services during the pandemic. Instead of waiting until they have reached a crisis state, Samaritans support line allows individuals having trouble coping with ongoing anxiety and distress to plan ahead and *arrange to receive a wellness call in advance*.

“The *wellness line* is unique among crisis services,” says Alan Ross, Samaritans Executive Director who has run their suicide hotline for 30 years, “instead of you calling us, we’ll call you.” Making the service something people can count on as part of their ongoing mental health maintenance, “a way to stay grounded as you ride the emotional rollercoaster of COVID-19.”

But the service is also intended for those on the front lines of the pandemic who are taking care of and treating people who are ill, but aren’t getting the support they need and so richly deserve—the parents, doctors, nurses and other medical personnel, health providers, first responders, etc.

“WHILE YOU’RE HELPING OTHERS, YOU DESERVE SOME SUPPORT, TOO!” says one of the fliers promoting the support line. Stating, “No one—no matter how courageous—can keep being exposed to other people’s pain, suffering and despair without it taking a toll.”

How it works: To receive a **free Mental Health Wellness Support call**, all the person has to do is dial the request line at (212) 673-3661 and leave a message with their name and phone number and a period of time that they can be reached. They will receive a call from **a member of Samaritans staff who is trained in active listening and crisis response.**

Staff and volunteers
available for interviews

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