

# COUNSELING DEPARTMENT

## Helping the Family Stay Mentally Healthy Over the Summer



For school-aged children, summertime is associated with time away from school and the positive emotions linked to warmer weather and more family time. However, summer can also be a time where certain mental health issues need to be tended to. Being out of school can be a large adjustment for adults caring for children over the summer without the break that school can bring. An increase in anxiety can occur due in part to the lack of structure that summer entails. Being out of school can also impact children's dependence on a routine and predictable events throughout the day. Though most young people claim this is the time of year they most look forward to, many become restless and irritable because of a lack of structured activity. Many children also complain of boredom early on into their summer vacation.

**The key to staying mentally healthy over the summer is to be preventative. Here are some tips for each age group:**

**Children:** Setting play dates with other kids or sending them to an enrichment camp program where they participate in outside activities can keep their minds occupied and also help with socialization. This is key to preventing isolating behaviors.

**Teens:** Encourage teens to get off their technology and participate in healthy activities like sports, camping, going for walks, and hanging out with their social groups. Getting a part time job may also provide the needed structure and interaction that teens need while teaching them valuable skills like managing money and building good work ethic.

# Start the Conversation

As one in four people experience a mental health problem each year, talking openly about mental health can make life better for the whole family. Though the stigma surrounding mental illness can sometimes make talking about it seem difficult – it doesn't have to be! Here are some ways to get the conversation started...

## Get some fresh air with someone

Talking doesn't have to start with words. Sometimes it can start with simply going for a walk and being present with someone. Ask someone if they'd like to get some fresh air and see where the conversation leads.

## REALLY ask a friend "How are you?"

It can be difficult to keep count how many times you're asked "how are you?" in one day. But for many of us it can be much easier to count just how many times you give the real answer. Pick up your phone and catch up with someone you haven't spoken to recently. The key is to really listen to what they say and be ready to provide support if needed.

## Tell someone how you're feeling today

Revealing how you're feeling can be challenging. But if it's someone you trust, confiding in them can often inspire an open response and an honest conversation. Remember, you are not alone and shutting loved ones out can make tough feelings even more difficult to manage.

## Thank someone for something they've done for you

We don't always realize the impact of the small things we naturally do for others on a daily basis. An unprompted "thank you" is a nice way to show someone how much you value them and open up a conversation in ways you may not expect.

## Find out what someone else does to unwind on a tough day

Sharing ideas on how to relax is a helpful way to start a dialogue about mental health for all involved. Not only could it prompt someone to take a look at how they manage their well-being, you may also pick up a few self-care ideas for you to share with your family.



## Seek help

If you or someone you love is dealing with a mental health issue, help is available. There are a variety of organizations and programs across Western New York standing by to assist children, adolescents, adults and families with prevention, treatment and recovery. You are not alone in your mental health journey. Reaching out to a trusted resource is the first step to getting the support you need. During the school year, students have access to school counselors and other mental health supports. If you feel your child would benefit from counseling support throughout the summer, please refer to the list below.

### Pine Valley Central School

#### Community Based Mental Health Providers & Crisis Contacts

<b>Cattaraugus County OGH 24 Hour Crisis Hotline</b>	1-800-339-5209
<b>Chautauqua County Suicide Prevention and Crisis Hotline</b>	1-800-724-0461
<b>Chautauqua County Mental Hygiene</b> 200 E. Third St., Fifth Floor, Jamestown 319 Central Ave., Dunkirk	Jamestown: (716) 661-8330 Dunkirk: (716) 363-3550
<b>The Chautauqua Center</b> 107 Institute St., Jamestown 319 Central Ave., Dunkirk	Jamestown: (716) 484-4334 Dunkirk: (716) 363-6050
<b>The Resource Center</b> 890 East Second St., Jamestown 186 Lake Shore Drive, West, Dunkirk	Jamestown: (716) 661-1590 Dunkirk: (716) 366-7660
<b>UPMC Chautauqua Outpatient Mental Health Program</b> 207 Foote Ave., Jamestown 306 Central Ave., Dunkirk	Jamestown: (716) 664-8641 Dunkirk: (716) 363-0018
<b>Best Self Behavioral Health</b> 2101 Spruce St., North Collins 625 Delaware Ave. #204, Buffalo 140 Pine St., Hamburg	North Collins: (716) 337-3706 Buffalo: (716) 882-3151 Hamburg: (716) 646-4991
<b>Olean Counseling Center</b> 1 Leo Moss Dr. #4308, Olean	(716) 373-8040
<b>Salamanca Counseling Center</b> 117 ½ Main St., Salamanca	(716) 945-5211
<b>Catholic Charities</b> 42 Dunham Ave., Jamestown 425 Main St., Dunkirk	Jamestown: (716) 484-9188 Dunkirk: (716) 366-3533
<b>Zoar Valley Mental Health Center</b> 49 South Water St., Gowanda	(716) 532-2231
<b>National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (24-hour help)</b>	1-800-273-8255
<b>24-Hour Crisis Services</b>	1-800-724-0461