



News from Livingston County, NY

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Livingston County Partners with Chamber of Commerce to Address Stigma around Mental Health Issues

Geneseo, NY, November 27, 2019 – Recent studies conducted by health protection and law enforcement agencies indicate that:

- 1 in 5 U.S. adults experience mental illness each year
- 1 in 6 U.S. youth aged 6-17 experience a mental health disorder each year
- Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among people aged 10-34

The U.S. Surgeon General's Report on Mental Health identifies stigma as a public health concern that leads people to "avoid living, socializing or working with, renting to, or employing" individuals with mental illness.

According to Michele Anuskiewicz, Director of Livingston County Community Services, "Stigma can be toxic to a person's mental health because it creates an environment of shame, fear, and silence that prevents many people from seeking help and treatment. The perception of mental illness won't change unless we act to change it." Anuskiewicz added, "We can break the stigma around mental illness by having honest discussions with the people who experience it."

In an effort to raise awareness of the stigma around mental health issues, the Behavioral Health Committee, which is a committee of Livingston County Community Services, is proud to partner with the Livingston County Chamber of Commerce in giving away free, high-quality reusable grocery totes. The totes are adorned with dual messages to "shop local" and "stop stigma" in Livingston County. They will be available beginning November 30, 2019 – a Shop Local Saturday – and throughout the holiday shopping season. Additionally, a billboard campaign focusing on the stigma associated with mental illness will start in December 2019.

Local business owners are encouraged to contact the Chamber of Commerce at 585-243-2222 to find out how to receive totes for distribution. For more information on mental health issues, please contact Livingston County Community Services at 585-243- 7250.



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