



City of Olean Fire Department Release

Supporting World Suicide Prevention Day

September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month - a time to raise awareness of this stigmatized and often taboo topic. On Friday, September 9th, you may notice that your City of Olean Firefighters are wearing yellow uniform shirts, and our fire stations are decorated with yellow bows. We use this day to shift public perception, spread hope and share vital information with people affected by suicide. In addition, we aim to ensure that individuals, friends and families have access to the resources they need to discuss suicide prevention and seek help.

We know that first responders witness the horrible things happening in our communities daily. The long hours, uncontrollable conditions, and witnessing repetitive trauma has long-lasting impacts on the mental health of first responders. The struggles with PTSD, substance abuse, and not decompressing this stress are taking the lives of our brother and sister first responders.

After years of advocacy and preparation, 988 is now available nationwide as the new number to contact for mental health, substance use, and suicide crises - a simple, easy-to-remember way for people to get help. This new number will allow people to quickly connect with support during a crisis, 24/7, no matter where they live. It's okay to talk about suicide. Thoughts of suicide can be frightening. But we can avoid devastating outcomes by reaching for help or checking in with friends and family.

Our shirts also have a key phrase we want all our community members to remember, "Tomorrow Needs You." Chief Tim Richardson wants to remind everyone, "While you are in crisis and it seems that suicide is the only answer, remember that tomorrow will be a better day." If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, help is available. Call or text 988 or chat 988lifeline.org to reach the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.