

Kim Ingles - Warsaw

As suicide rates continue to rise year after year it is with great necessity changes be made to the WNY mental health system. I think there are many issues in regard to the mental health system that need to be addressed including but not limited to Affordability, Stigma, Access to quality care, availability of continued remote appointments, better trained medical providers and improved crisis services. As a middle-class adult facing CPTSD, cost has greatly impacted my care, when you are forced to decide buying groceries for your family or paying for one therapy appointment (and that's with insurance) obviously groceries are the priority. Even at sliding scale clinics were care is often much lower quality than private practice the cost is still overwhelming when you require multiple visits a month.

There also needs to be much more educational resources provided and taught to the public. I have had many conversations were people talk about mental health and so much ignorance is spewed from their mouths and I can personally say those conversations prevent people like myself from being more open , frequently misunderstood topics that I hear spoken involve suicide and being weak or just attention seeking, the belief that mental health issues are a choice that people need to just let go of or get tougher and sadly from medical doctors and schools that meds should instantly "cure" you or your child's mental health issues and anger and frustration shown to patients and students when they do not "cure you".

As a member of WNY I have lost 3 close friends to suicide and that's 3 to many. I hope these issues are taken seriously and addressed in a timely manner. As a community we can do better, we need to do better.