



Office of  
Mental Health

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The racially motivated hate crime targeting the Black community in Buffalo has devastated us all.

The tragedy in Buffalo comes at a time when New York's communities of color are already living through the effects of racism, disproportionate levels of violence, poverty and COVID-19 death and infection rates. The effects of events like this run deep and well beyond the City of Buffalo and Erie County. The threat of violence, discrimination and racist rhetoric all have a strong, negative impact on a person's emotional and mental health.

OMH is dedicated to ensuring that all New Yorkers, and especially those in underserved communities, have access to resources to mitigate mental health needs caused by racism, discrimination and hate crimes.

In addition to our [work addressing the more immediate needs of those most closely affected by this tragedy](#), we are mindful of the impact on those not in close proximity to Buffalo who are also affected because of social media and underlying historical trauma (especially in communities of color).

On May 18, OMH hosted a statewide community webinar, "Addressing Community Grief and Trauma in the Wake of the Tragedy in Buffalo." The presentation was designed to help community leaders – such as clergy, education officials, local government, public safety leads, and behavioral health providers - with understanding how to assist individuals/families/youth coping with the grief and trauma caused by this horrific event. The presentation provided general information about the mental health effects of racism and violence, crisis response, and helping others cope with grief and trauma. Specific information focused on children and youth.

While we discussed the impact of the tragic event in Buffalo, the focus was statewide. We were encouraged to see that more than 1,000 individuals who are interested in assisting with the healing process across New York State attended online.

Additionally, please take the time to share and explore these resources:

- **NY Project Hope Emotional Support Helpline** - (1-844-863-9314) can help you address the psychological stress caused by this tragedy.
- **SAMHSA's Disaster Distress Helpline** - (1-800-985-5990)
- **Mental Health Effects of Racism** - ([https://omh.ny.gov/omhweb/cultural\\_competence/the\\_mental\\_health\\_effects\\_of\\_racism.pdf](https://omh.ny.gov/omhweb/cultural_competence/the_mental_health_effects_of_racism.pdf))
- **National Child Traumatic Stress Network** - (<https://www.nctsn.org/>)

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