

# *The Samaritans ...because we all need someone to lean on*

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**For immediate release**

**Sunday, September 9, 2018**

Suicide causes more deaths worldwide than warfare, according to the World Health Organization, which is why *Samaritans Suicide Prevention Center* and the *Coalition for Behavioral Health* are sponsoring a rally on the steps of City Hall in honor of **World Suicide Prevention Day, Monday, September 10, 1 pm.**

Emphasizing the necessity of “Working Together to Prevent Suicide,” the theme of *the International Association of Suicide Prevention (IASP)* in promoting the day, organizations that advocate for and provide services to some of NYC’s highest risk populations will stand together to highlight *a public health problem that continues to rise and leads to more fatalities in the US annually than automobile accidents.*

“Suicide proves the universality of men and women,” says *Samaritans* Executive Director, Alan Ross, “it proves that no matter our age, race, sexual identity, culture, socioeconomics, religious, spiritual beliefs or political affiliation, we have more in common than what sets us apart.” Adds Jason Lippman, Executive Director of *the Coalition*, “This day is significant for raising awareness and combatting stigma. Suicide prevention needs to be ubiquitous, as suicide affects us all. That is why all our member organizations focus on helping culturally competent community services and providing them with care.”

Believing “Suicide Prevention Is Everybody’s Business,” *Samaritans* and the *Coalition* will be joined by NYC *Council Member Stephen Levin* (the City Council member behind *Suicide Prevention Month in NYC*) and representatives from the *National Association of Mental Illness*, *Gay Men’s Health Crisis*, *Hamilton Madison House* (Asian community), *Comunilife* (young Hispanics), *STOMP Out Bullying*, the *United Federation of Teachers* (students) and others that focus on preventing suicide that will also speak.

Participants are united in the belief that this is an important message to be delivered today when there are so many forces that divide us, so many voices filled with anger and distrust, so many myths and misconceptions tied to mental health that only enhance stigma and present obstacles to care and treatment for individuals in distress, who are depressed or suicidal, *which encompasses 1 in 5 Americans*, according to SAMHSA.

Addressing the significance of World Suicide Prevention Day, *City Council Speaker Corey Johnson* said, “Far too many New Yorkers struggle with depression, anxiety and other forms of mental illness, and we need to eradicate the stigma associated with mental health once and for all. This year alone, we have seen too many high-profile tragedies after these individuals took their own lives. Suicide unfortunately does not discriminate and affects New Yorkers of all ages, sexual orientations, races and religions.”

“As Chair of the *City Council Committee on Mental Health*, I believe reducing the number of New Yorkers who fail to receive the care they need is of great importance, as is the pervasive stigma tied to mental health, which often prevents people from seeking help in the first place. World Suicide Prevention Day focuses attention on this issue and I thank *Samaritans* and the *Coalition for Behavioral Health* for reminding us that *Suicide Prevention Is Everybody’s Business*, said Diana Ayala, Council Member, NYC’s 8<sup>th</sup> District.

*Speakers available for interviews*

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