

State launches Washington Listens program to support people affected by the stress of COVID-19

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The program includes a phone line to speak with support specialists and connect to community resources

OLYMPIA – In response to COVID-19, Washington has launched Washington Listens, a support program and phone line to help people manage elevated levels of stress due to the pandemic.

People who call the Washington Listens support line will speak with a support specialist and get connected to community resources in their area. The program is anonymous.

“Washington Listens helps people cope and strengthen their resiliency in these uncertain times,” said Sue Birch, director of the Washington State Health Care Authority, the agency managing the program. “It complements the state’s behavioral health response services by providing an outlet for people who are not in crisis but need an outlet to manage stress.”

“This pandemic has had far-reaching effects that extend beyond our physical health. We are still in this fight against this virus, and this assistance will help Washingtonians recover during this uniquely stressful time,” said Mike O’Hare, FEMA Region 10 administrator.

The Washington Listens support line is 1-833-681-0211. It is available from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays. TTY and language access services are available by using 7-1-1 or their preferred method.

Providers and tribes that have partnered with Washington Listens include American Indian Community Center, Colville Tribe, Community Integrated Health



FEMA

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Services, Crisis Connections, Frontier Behavioral Health, Okanogan Behavioral Healthcare, and Swinomish Tribe.

The Washington Listens support line is made available by a \$2.2 million Crisis Counseling Assistance and Training Program (CCP) grant funded by Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and supported by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). This program supports short-term interventions to mitigate stress, promote the use or development of coping strategies, and provide emotional support to help Washingtonians understand and process their stress.

Resources and self-help tips are available on walistens.org.

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