

COVID-19: Mental Health Issues Continue, But Vaccine Gives Hope

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By **Kimberly Kravitz**



Covid-19: Vaccine Offers Hope for Mental Health Struggles

FREEHOLD, N.J. - A poll from the nonprofit, Kaiser Family Foundation, reported that one in every two people, say their mental health has deteriorated since Covid-19.

Now, there's been a renewed hope, as the first Americans in the country are getting vaccinated.

"This vaccine is going to be critical to our approach with Covid-19. We know that individuals with mental health disorders are at higher risk for Covid-19," said Amanda Stylinou, Vice President of Population Health of Easterseals NJ.

Easterseals NJ is an organization that helps individuals with disabilities learn how to live, learn, work and play in their communities. They've recently launched a new telehealth program ensuring that those struggling are not alone.

"Since the start of Covid-19 we have seen an increase in depression, anxiety, substance use, suicidal thinking so its critical to us to provide telehealth services to ensure that anyone struggling is not alone," said Stylinou.

Steve Simpson, an author and mental health advocate, has struggled with mental health and suicide since he was 11 years old.

"The problem is that we're quarantined and being stuck together. So the vaccine were praying that opens doors, going back to school, back to work who haven't already," said Simpson.

Another major issue has been meetings and 12-step programs that have been canceled due to Covid.

"When there are issues like this, alcoholism increases, substance abuse increases, many people in 12 step programs were cut off or couldn't see their therapists right away," said Simpson.

"I've always said if you're depressed don't self isolate, don't stay home, but people have to stay home they didn't choose to. So the vaccine will hopefully bring back some norm," said Simpson.

The key here, Simpson says, is to not make a permanent decision based on a temporary situation.

"I think now the hope is this is not forever , we can see this isn't forever, the vaccines are here you're not going to be trapped so I say don't make a permanent decision on a temporary situation," said Simpson.

There are resources available to rely on, if you're someone seeking help, you can call the hotline 1844-549-4266.

<https://www.newjerseynewsnetwork.com/story/43088373/covid19-mental-health-issues-continue-in-second-wave-but-vaccine-can-offer-hope>