



JB Pritzker, Governor

Grace B. Hou, Secretary

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT

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5-5-2020 A REMINDER OF ILLINOIS' TEXT LINE (55-2020), PROVIDING SUPPORT DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Illinois Helpline Provides Quick Answers to Questions about Available Resources to Illinois Residents During COVID-19 Pandemic

Call4Calm Service Available to Residents Experiencing Stress and Other Hardships

CHICAGO – Today, May 5, 2020 (5-5-2020), the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) is reminding Illinois residents about the Illinois Helpline, a resource for residents who need emotional support or quick answers to questions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Illinoisans can text “TALK” to 55-2020 (or “HABLAR” for Spanish) for the Call4Calm service, or text their questions about services provided by IDHS in communities across the state.

The text line is free of charge and designed to support residents who have questions about services or who are experiencing stress. In addition to the Call4Calm service, the text number can help Illinoisans find help and guidance on other critical issues during the pandemic. Residents can text keywords like “UNEMPLOYMENT,” “FOOD,” or “SHELTER,” to 55-2020 to receive additional information in response.

“With today being 5-5-2020, we wanted to remind Illinoisans they can text 55-2020 for a listening ear and support for hardships they may currently be experiencing,” said Grace Hou, Secretary of IDHS. “People who need help are not alone during this unprecedented challenge. We are here for you and can answer many questions you may have about available services.”



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Once a resident texts “TALK” to the helpline, within 24 hours they will receive a call from a counselor employed by a local community mental health center to provide support. Calls are anonymous. Since Governor Pritzker announced Call4Calm on April 11, 2020, nearly 2,000 individuals have texted the helpline. There are 62 Community Mental Health Centers supporting the Call4Calm service.

In addition to their training as mental health professionals, every counselor has received additional resources, including tips for parenting during the Stay at Home Order, materials for individuals experiencing or at risk of violence at home, and other suggestions for reducing stress and coping with social isolation, loneliness, fear, and other emotions related to the current situation.

The Division of Mental Health at IDHS continues to monitor potential sources of information and further training for counselors and will share updated resources and guidance for everyone who provides emotional support calls in order to offer the best service possible.

The Illinois Helpline also includes direct links to suicide prevention phone and text lines, as well as domestic violence phone and text lines. The Illinois Helpline is not a crisis line. If you or someone else needs immediate assistance, please call 9-1-1.

Illinoisans can always visit www.dhs.illinois.gov/HelpIsHere or call 1-833-2-FIND-HELP (1-833-234-6343) for access to IDHS benefits, services and supports.

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