



WELLSPRING

Ending relationship and sexual abuse in our community

480 Broadway, LL-20 • Saratoga Springs • New York, 12866
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Notice to People Seeking the Services of Wellspring

Released March 16, 2020 and will be updated as needed.

Wellspring is following the guidance of health professionals and Government officials and implementing steps aimed at reducing person to person contact during the health crisis caused by the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19).

As a provider of victim services, we recognize that relationship and sexual abuse do not stop during a crisis such as the one that our Nation and the World is experiencing right now. To all those that are having to deal with the implications of this health crisis but are also scared or feel unsafe due to relationship and/or sexual abuse, please know that Wellspring cares and we are here to help even as we put policies in place that reduce the person to person contact our staff and clients may have.

Status on the Availability of our Services

- 1) **24/7 Hotline OPEN:** As always, Wellspring advocates are available by phone 24-hours a day, 7 days a week via our hotline (518-584-8188). Our hotline is answered by advocates who are our full-time staff and highly trained to be able to provide information about rights and options and help people access any options they choose.
 - a. **Chat Hotline OPEN:** Wellspring is expanding its efforts to support survivors of relationship and sexual abuse by offering an internet based chat hotline, effective Monday, March 16, 2020. The chat hotline is accessible through our website and available mainly during business hours. Available days and times will be posted on our website.
- 2) **Emergency Domestic Violence Shelter OPEN:** Our shelter remains in operation and we will continue to assist our current residents as well as accept victims of domestic violence into our shelter when space is available.
- 3) **Sexual Assault Forensic Exams (SAFE) OPEN:** Wellspring advocate will continue to accompany victims of sexual assault through the SAFE process at both Saratoga Hospital and Glens Falls Hospital.
- 4) **Assistance in Petitioning Family Court for Orders of Protection OPEN:** Wellspring advocates will continue to assist victims of domestic violence in petitioning family court for orders of protection. This may be done in person or by phone. Each request will be assessed to determine the modality in which this service will be offered.
- 5) **Accompaniment to Family Court Proceedings MODIFIED:** The need for this will be assessed on a case by case basis and will also be subject to policies that the courts enact.
- 6) **Accompaniment Through the Police Report/Investigation Process OPEN:** Wellspring advocates will continue to accompany victims of domestic violence or sexual assault through police reporting and investigation processes. We defer to the police agencies for any policies that they may enact related to COVID-19 and will follow those accordingly.
- 7) **Victim Services Offered Outside of Business Hours OPEN:** Outside of business hours, we will offer all the same services we currently offer with review by a supervisor for modifications when person to person contact is requested (SAFE, police response, shelter response).

- 8) **Legal Clinic SUSPENDED**: Legal clinic will be canceled until further notice. We will assess everyone's legal needs on a case by case basis and create an appropriate linkage to ensure that people continue to have access to legal advice.
- 9) **Walk-In Services at our Office (480 Broadway, LL-20, Saratoga Springs) MODIFIED**: While we do recommend that anyone seeking our services do so by phone during this time, our office will be open during regular business hours. Our process for assisting people who come to our office has changed.
 - a. All people who enter our lobby will be asked the three questions recommended by the CDC and NYS Department of Health. Anyone answering "yes" to any of these questions will not be denied services but we will have to modify how the services are provided, which will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
 - b. Our food pantry items will still be available but only to existing, active clients. Instead of the items being available for people to take for themselves, Wellspring staff will pack the food items and provide it to the person seeking assistance. Clients can call ahead to request food pantry items.
 - c. We will allow only three people in our waiting room at any time.
 - d. All areas used by staff or clients will be frequently sanitized to reduce exposure to illness.
- 10) **New View Housing Program OPEN**: Anyone interested in housing should contact our hotline to be assessed and appropriate options, including New View, be identified and accessed. Wellspring staff will deliver food pantry items to program participants as needed.
- 11) **Hope & Power SUSPENDED**: Wellspring's 8-week financial literacy program scheduled to begin on March 31, 2020 has been canceled. Anyone already registered for this or interested in this program, please remain in touch with us for information about future programs.
- 12) **Counseling MODIFIED**: Issue oriented counseling and emotional support will continue to be offered by phone either through a scheduled appointment or anytime via our hotline to any new people seeking the services of Wellspring and any existing clients.
- 13) **Case Management/Advocacy MODIFIED**: People's needs will be assessed and information about rights and options will be provided. Any action that needs to be taken to assist the person in accessing any of those options will be determined on a case by case basis and a plan will be identified in a manner that reduces person to person contact as much as possible.
- 14) **Community Engagement SUSPENDED**: All community engagement activities will be suspended until further notice. Staff attendance at in-person, large group gatherings, such as meetings or conferences, will be suspended until further notice.
- 15) **Donations MODIFIED**:
 - a. Wellspring will continue to accept food, toiletry, cleaning supply, and financial donations (money or gift cards) so that we can help our clients meet their basic needs and support the operation of Wellspring.
 - b. Wellspring will continue to receive any items on our Amazon Wish List.
 - c. Wellspring will discontinue receiving any donations such as clothing or cell phones at this time (items declined or accepted will be determined on a case by case basis).

About Wellspring

Wellspring is a non-profit organization providing domestic violence and sexual assault services in Saratoga County and sexual assault services in Washington County. Our mission is to support survivors and engage the community to end relationship and sexual abuse. Wellspring's operations are funded by local, state, and federal grant funding as well as philanthropic contributions given to us by our generous and caring community. To support Wellspring's mission, please visit our website <https://www.wellspringcares.org/make-a-change/donate/> or call 518-583-0280.