

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Distress and Crisis Ontario is pleased to announce that suicide prevention, crisis intervention, emotional support and community referrals will be just a short text away for Ontarians, with a new code to text.

ONTARIO – As a collaborative, including service delivery organizations in Durham, Niagara and Windsor as well as admin and technical support from Distress and Crisis Ontario (DCO), we have been providing our online crisis text and chat program, ONTX to thousands of Ontario residents since June 2015. At this time, we are transitioning the text code 741741 to 258258. In the meantime if you are in need of suicide prevention, emotional support, crisis intervention or community referrals to help you through a difficult time, please visit our website <http://www.dcontario.org> to chat or find a list of services to assist you.

With the hope of taking this number to more communities across the province, Distress and Crisis Ontario is working with its ONTX Member Centres to ensure current trained Responders continue offering support to those who are reaching out through our Chat/Instant Messaging platform which Service Users access through their local Distress Centre website or the Distress and Crisis Ontario website, [www.dcontario.org](http://www.dcontario.org).

The text/chat service, ONTX, was introduced by DCO to Ontario communities with participating DCO Member Centres in June 2015 as a pilot project to help support individuals needing help who were uncomfortable or unable to reach out by phone to their local Distress lines. In that first year, 156 trained Responders provided 5,732 hours of support to 6,301 individuals who reached out through text or chat for help. These numbers have grown consistently over the years to our last year's numbers of 246 Responders providing 10,115 hours of support to 20,467 Service Users across the province.

Neta Gear, Executive Director of Distress and Crisis Ontario states, "We feel this service is a vital one in all communities and the Boards, Staff and Volunteers across our network are committed to increasing our efforts to support the growing numbers of individuals reaching out to our Centres through the ONTX services. We only expect these numbers to grow and DCO is committed to being there to help those who reach out!"

### **How to reach a local Distress Centre:**

Find a listing of Ontario's Distress Centres at [www.dcontario.org](http://www.dcontario.org) at the GET HELP link (upper left corner). Find a local Distress Centre in most telephone books on the inside cover or emergency contact pages.

### **Distress and Crisis Ontario:**

Distress and Crisis Ontario is an association that is the recognized leader in promoting collaboration and building capacity in organizations that provide distress and crisis response.

### **To learn more about the ONTX Service or DCO services and statistics, please contact:**

Neta Gear, Executive Director

Distress and Crisis Ontario/Détresse et Crise Ontario

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