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The United Federation of Teachers Partners with Vibrant Emotional Health to Launch Groundbreaking Mental Health Helpline for Nearly 200,000 Educators

Supporting the mental health of New York City educators is crucial if they are to be at their best to meet the needs of more than 900,000 public school students every day

New York, NY – March 12, 2024—[Vibrant Emotional Health \(Vibrant\)](#), one of the nation’s leading mental health organizations, announces a new partnership with the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) to introduce transformative mental health and emotional well-being helpline 1-800-UFT-FOR-U designed for nearly 200,000 union members. This partnership, backed by a three-year contract, represents a significant advancement in providing immediate crisis intervention, mental health resources, and general emotional support services to union members in need.

With the initial launch on March 12, 2024, followed by several phases throughout the coming weeks, the helpline will roll out support services for its members through call, text and chat options. The new helpline will offer 24/7/365 expanded emotional and crisis support to address the diverse mental health needs of New York City non-supervisor educators and school workers, including teachers, classroom aides, school administrative workers, counselors, and school nurses. With this partnership, Vibrant and the UFT aim to bolster mental health resources and promote emotional well-being throughout the education system in New York City.

“At Vibrant Emotional Health, we are committed to breaking down barriers to mental health care and ensuring that support is readily available to those who need it most,” **said Lisa Furst, Chief Programs Officer at Vibrant Emotional Health**. “We are proud to join forces with the United Federation of Teachers to launch this innovative helpline, which will serve as a lifeline for educators and front-line workers, offering compassionate assistance during times of crisis and beyond.”

The new 24/7/365 helpline is the brainchild of the UFT’s Member Assistance Program (MAP), which provides free, confidential, voluntary counseling to UFT members and their families. MAP has seen a 50% increase in calls for assistance in the last eight months alone. While MAP expanded to meet post-pandemic needs, MAP leaders recognized union members needed



access to support on holidays, after hours, and seven days a week. With the support of Vibrant, a leader in the field, MAP launched this dedicated helpline for UFT members and their families, staffed by counselors specifically trained to handle the needs of this population.

“UFT members are under stress like never before. Our members know they can come to MAP for confidential expert support. The partnership between UFT/MAP and Vibrant creates more opportunities and a new way to provide vital support whenever a member is in need,” **said Michael Mulgrew, President of the United Federation of Teachers.**

According to a survey sponsored by the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers in 2023, teachers reported better well-being in January 2023 than in prior years, and rates of job-related stress have returned to pre-pandemic levels. However, teachers continue to report worse well-being than the general population of working adults. By investing in comprehensive support systems and promoting a culture of well-being for teachers, we can create healthier, more sustainable educational environments that benefit them and students alike. Vibrant is committed to working with other cities nationwide to prioritize educators' mental health needs.

“To meet the needs of our membership, we needed to be able to provide quality, experienced support outside the traditional workday. By providing a cadre of Vibrant counselors specially trained to support the needs and experiences of UFT members, we can provide crisis support in multiple languages, 24/7, seven days a week,” **said Tina Puccio, LCSW, Director of the UFT Member Assistance Program.**

The helpline will provide confidential crisis intervention, emotional support, and information referral services, catering to the unique needs of the education community. Trained professionals will be available around the clock, in multiple languages, to offer guidance, resources, and a listening ear to individuals experiencing mental health challenges or emotional distress.

By prioritizing educators' mental health and providing them with the necessary support and resources, all these professional settings can create a more positive and conducive working environment for all staff members. This will ultimately benefit educators and students by promoting mental health awareness, reducing stigma, and ensuring all education community members have the support they need to thrive.

For more information about Vibrant Emotional Health, please visit www.vibrant.org.

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About Vibrant Emotional Health

Vibrant Emotional Health is a non-profit organization that helps individuals and families achieve emotional wellbeing. For over 50 years, our groundbreaking solutions have delivered high-quality services and support when, where and how people need it. We offer confidential emotional support through our state-of-the-art contact center and crisis hotline services that use leading-edge telephone, text and web-based technologies, including the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, Disaster Distress Helpline, Veterans Crisis Line, and NFL Life Line. Through our community wellness programs, individuals and families obtain the support and skills they need to thrive. Our advocacy and education initiatives promote mental wellbeing as a social responsibility. We help nearly 5 million people live healthier and more vibrant lives yearly. We're advancing access, dignity and respect for all and revolutionizing the system for good. Visit vibrant.org. Follow Vibrant on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#).

About The United Federation of Teachers

The United Federation of Teachers represents nearly 200,000 public and private sector union members in New York City and is committed to strengthening our communities, our professions, and the lives of our members and students. In 2009, the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) started the Member Assistance Program (MAP). UFT provides a range of mental health support services to nearly 200,000 in-service UFT members and their families. Most UFT services are free, and all are confidential, professional, and voluntary. The staff at UFT are uniquely qualified and trained mental health professionals to serve New York City's school communities and are clinically trained to specifically support and advocate for the emotional, mental, and physical wellbeing of all union members. These include most school staff, NYC Public School Teachers, Paraprofessionals, School Psychologists & Social Workers, Guidance counselors, Childcare Providers, Nurses, Occupational, Physical & Speech therapists, School Secretaries, Home instructors, UFT Retirees, and UFT Employees.