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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Supporting each other during the winter and beyond

Vermont is an amazing winter wonderland, offering a variety of things to do as temperatures dip and snowflakes fall. Skiing, snowshoeing and snowmobiling activities are complimented by spending time indoors baking, crafting or simply reading by the fire. Staying active, in body and mind, provides added fuel to weather what some call, "Vermont's longest season." Winter, with its shorter days and colder temperatures, can also cause some of us to feel a little blue. It's important to know that it's OK to reach out for support.

"In our culture, people are more resistant to engage in therapy than they are to see a dentist or a family doctor," said Matthew Sadowsky, Director of Clinical Services at Laraway Youth & Family Services in Johnson. Sadowsky oversees Laraway's clinical services to agency clients and community members.

When someone catches a cold or sprains their ankle, we urge them to see a doctor. When someone experiences depression or anxiety, encouragement to seek treatment is less likely to materialize.

"My hope is that, as a community, we can strive to do the same for our neighbors when it comes to mental health," Sadowsky said.

Can we commit to being our brother's keeper? What if--the next time we're having a conversation with a friend, a family member, a co-worker or neighbor who is feeling stressed or down--we consider asking these very simple questions: How can I help? What do you need right now? Have you considered meeting with a therapist or psychiatrist about this?

With this simple act, we can remove the stigma so often associated with mental illness. Why shouldn't seeing a therapist be like going to the dentist for a filling? It absolutely should be.

Lamoille County is a vibrant community offering a variety of resources to meet mental health needs. Local resources include Lamoille County Mental Health Services (888-5026 and 888-8888 after hours), Behavioral Health & Wellness (888-8320), Laraway Youth & Family Services (635-2805) and private therapists.

Winter can sometimes prompt an increase in stress, anxiety and depressed moods. It's important to be patient with ourselves and others as we navigate this chilly time together.

Empowering Youth, Strengthening Families, Building Community

Laraway Youth and Family Services is a 501(c)(3) organization

And, remember, don't be afraid to ask the question.

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