



NEW YORK: Depressed? Here's a Bench. Talk to Me.

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[The New York Times](#) [1]

A New York City program is using peer support to increase access to mental health services. The program is modeled after the [Friendship Bench](#) [2] intervention in Zimbabwe, where lay health workers provide problem-solving therapy on wooden benches outside of health clinics. New York City friendship benches are located next to community health centers and staffed by people in recovery from substance use or mental health issues. The peer workers offer mental health coaching to people who are struggling and help connect them to services and supports. "These are nontraditional safe spaces in plain view—no strings attached," said Takeesha White, acting assistant commissioner for the Bureau of Systems Partnership in the city's Center for Health Equity. "You can work with someone who has a heart and understands and has been through the system."

Spark Extra! Learn more about [enhancing life skills and resilience](#) [3].

Strategies: Effective Care/Treatment, Life Skills and Resilience

Links within this resource

[1] <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/22/opinion/depressed-heres-a-bench-talk-to-me.html>

[2] <http://www.sprc.org/news/%E2%80%98friendship-bench%E2%80%99-program-proves-effective-alleviating-mental-illness-symptoms>

[3] <http://www.sprc.org/comprehensive-approach/life-skills>

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