

## Lewiston Tragedy



By Kiley Wilkens-O'Brien, D7780 RAG for Mental Health Initiatives, South Portland/Cape Elizabeth RC

Maine is known for being wholesome, quaint, and community focused. We are proud, hearty people who look out for each other. This recent act of domestic terrorism goes against the very spirit of Maine. As a small state, every life lost and person harmed is noticed. Rotarians and Mainers, now more than ever we must support each other as we collectively grieve.

We also must be careful not to conflate mental illness with acts of violence. Most folks with mental health struggles never resort to violence. Only 3-4% of violent crimes are related to mental health. Someone with a serious mental illness is 11x more likely to be the victim of a crime than perpetrate a crime.

That being said, the Maine mental health system of care is in desperate need of reform. We need to reduce barriers to access and increase service availability. I've been advocating for these necessary changes for a decade, and they're needed now more than ever as we recover from this tragedy. Stay tuned for more immediate actions the RAG and clubs can take to support the cause.

Click the link below for the National Alliance on Mental Illness Handout for Critical Incident Stress Management

### [CISM Handout](#)

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