Mental Health First Aid USA

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

One in four Americans lives with a mental health problem each year. Yet, far too many – up to two-thirds – go without treatment. Just as CPR training helps a lay-person without medical training assist an individual following a heart attack, Mental Health First Aid training helps a layperson assist someone experiencing a mental health crisis.

About the Course

The Mental Health First Aid program is an interactive session which introduces participants to risk factors and warning signs of mental health problems, builds understanding of their impact and overviews common treatments. Participants also learn a 5-step action plan encompassing the skills, resources and knowledge to help an individual in crisis connect with appropriate professional, peer, social and self-help care. The course also provides participants with an understanding of the prevalence of various mental health disorders in the U.S. and the need for reduced stigma in their communities.

The 12-hour course has been offered to a variety of audiences and key professions, including hospitals, employers and business leaders, faith communities, school personnel, state police and corrections staff, nursing homes, mental health authorities, state policymakers, young people, families and the general public.

Background

Mental Health First Aid was created in 2001 by Professor Tony Jorm, a respected mental health literacy professor, and Betty Kitchener, a nurse specializing in health education and is auspiced at the University of Melbourne. Five published studies in Australia show that the program saves lives, expands knowledge of mental illnesses and their treatments, increases the services provided and reduces overall stigma by improving mental health literacy.

How to Get Involved

The National Council certifies community organizations to implement Mental Health First Aid in communities throughout the United Sates. Each Mental Health First Aid site develops individualized plans to reach their communities, but all deliver the core 12-hour program and each participating site undergoes tight credentialing to guarantee fidelity to the original, tested model, while also maintaining the flexibility necessary to reach its unique citizens' needs and demographics.

To find a Mental Health First Aid training near you, our website features a searchable map of all of our active training locations. The map is available at: www.MentalHealthFirstAid.org/cs/in_your_community.

To become certified as a training location in your community, consider sending individuals to one of our National Instructor Certification Trainings. You may also work with the National Council to host an Instructor Certification Training within your area, to offer the program extensively throughout your area or in partnering with other interested entities within your state.

For more information about the program or to request the instructor training, visit www.MentalHealthFirstAid.org or contact Susan Partain at (202) 684-7457 ext. 232 or susanp@thenationalcouncil.org.

Mental Health First Aid USA is a collaboration between the National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare, the Maryland State Department of Mental Hygiene, and the Missouri Department of Mental Health.

Our Pilot Year, By the Numbers:

200 Instructors Certified;

80+ Community Trainings Conducted;

31 states running the program

1,500+ Individuals trained

1,000,000+ Impressions in mental health, health and online media