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**Mental Health First Aid**

**Mental Health First Aid** Adult Course is an 8-hour certification course that can make a difference in the lives of the **one in four** Americans struggling with mental illnesses and addictions, including those experiencing suicidal thinking. Just like CPR and Standard First Aid teach how to recognize and respond to physical crises, eight hour in-person training teaches people how to help people developing a mental illness, experiencing a mental health or substance disorder crisis, and teaches best practice suicide prevention.

Mental health problems – such as depression, anxiety, impulse control and misuse of alcohol and other drugs – are shockingly common in our Alaskan communities. How can we *“see something, do something”* if we don’t know what we are seeing or what to do about it? Mental Health First Aid is a course available to the public and teaches skills to help individuals who are developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis. The clinical and qualitative evidence behind the program demonstrates that it helps the public better identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illness, thus improving outcomes for individuals experiencing these illnesses.

**The Alaska Training Cooperative** (in UAA’s Center for Human Development-College of Health) has been leading the way in offering this training in Alaska since 2011, having trained over 12,000 Alaskans in 35 communities. MHFA Adult course is offered for $85 per person or at a group rate of $1500 for up to 30 participants. To set up a training or receive more information, contact Jill Ramsey at jill@alaskachd.org or (907) 264-6228.

Individuals trained in Mental Health First Aid can help to:

* Break down the bias against people living with mental illnesses, addictions and suicidal thinking.
* Reach out to those who suffer in silence, reluctant to seek help.
* Let individuals struggling with mental illnesses and addictions know that support is available in their community.
* Provide community resources.
* Make behavioral health care and treatment accessible to thousands in need.

**THE MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID ACTION PLAN: ALGEE**

Mental Health First Aid trainings teach ALGEE: a five-step action plan to recognize and help people struggling with a mental illness and/or an addiction or experiencing a crisis.

* **A**ssess for risk of suicide or harm
* **L**isten non-judgmentally
* **G**ive reassurance and information
* **E**ncourage appropriate professional help
* **E**ncourage self-help and other support strategies

Individuals who have taken the Mental Health First Aid course have a positive response to the training:

* *“I’ve taken standard first aid, and I’ve used both, but certainly the opportunities to use Mental Health First Aid are much more abundant.”*
* *“This training is essential for Alaskan communities with so few resources. I now know what I can do to help someone”.*