



NEWS

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Mental Health First Aid Introduced in Montgomery County

Mental health literacy program to certify more than 30 attendees and instructors in King of Prussia, PA

Norristown, PA (July 11, 2014) – Montgomery County’s Department of Behavioral Health will add 30 new instructors from the state of Pennsylvania to the Mental Health First Aid team during a training session on Monday, July 14 in King of Prussia.

Mental Health First Aid is an eight-hour training course designed to give members of the public key skills to help someone who is developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis. The new instructors will be certified to teach the program to a variety of audiences, including teachers, counselors, principals, administrators, para professionals, students, coaches, parents, and community members. The instructor certification training is conducted by the National Council for Behavioral Health, which manages the program.

“We are thrilled to bring Mental Health First Aid to our communities throughout the state,” said LeeAnn Moyer, deputy director at Montgomery County Behavioral Health. “Most people know how to recognize and appropriately react to medical emergencies, but there is little knowledge in the general public about what to do in a mental health crisis.”

“We are enthused to welcome Montgomery County Behavioral Health as a partner in extending mental health first aid across the county,” said Linda Rosenberg, MSW, president and CEO of the National Council. “We anticipate the new instructors will have a great impact on the mental health communities throughout Montgomery County, and will be key players in improving mental health literacy nationwide.”

The new instructors will join more than 3,700 instructors already certified by MHFA-USA as instructors in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Instructors come from a variety

of backgrounds, including behavioral healthcare, law enforcement and public safety, universities, faith communities, and primary care.

Studies show that training in Mental Health First Aid builds confidence in helping in an individual experiencing a mental health challenge, reduces negative or distancing attitudes towards individuals with mental illnesses, and increases mental health literacy including being able to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illness and substance use disorders.

The training is made possible by the Montgomery County Behavioral Health with grant support from the Pennsylvania System of Care. This office is an administrative office managing public funds committed to the establishment and oversight of drug and alcohol, mental health, and developmental disabilities services in Montgomery County. This training initiative was developed in partnership with Montgomery County School Districts, Montgomery County Health Department, Montgomery County Youth Detention Center, Montgomery County Intermediate Unit, PATTAN, and ACCESS Services. Following the certification of the 30 individuals to be instructors, they will be providing multiple training to residents in our Montgomery County communities and schools.

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

The National Council for Behavioral Health (National Council) is the unifying voice of America's community mental health and addictions treatment organizations. Together with 2,000 member organizations, it serves our nation's most vulnerable citizens – the more than eight million adults and children living with mental illnesses and addiction disorders. We are committed to ensuring all Americans have access to comprehensive, high-quality care that affords every opportunity for recovery and full participation in community life. The National Council pioneered Mental Health First Aid in the U.S. and has trained nearly 100,000 individuals to connect youth and adults in need to mental health and addiction care in their communities.