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New Mental Health First Aid Training Classes Slated With Grant Money From The Women to Women Giving Circle of the Illinois Prairie Community Foundation

Mental Health First Aid: Instructor Certification Training Class Coming in April Too

BLOOMINGTON – For the second year in a row the Women to Women Giving Circle of the Illinois Prairie Community Foundation has selected the McLean County Health Department to receive a \$10,000 grant for its Mental Health First Aid Training classes. Since the McLean County Health Department and its collaborative partners first introduced Mental Health First Aid training in 2014, more than 500 people have been trained to better understand, recognize, and react to individuals experiencing mental health crises. Mental Health First Aid is a solid population-based approach to the identification and management of mental illness.

“If people are looking for a way to get involved and help improve the mental health environment in our county, attending a Mental Health First Aid training class should be at the top of their list of things to do,” explains Laura Beavers, manager of Behavioral Health Services at the McLean County Health Department. “The more people know about mental health and mental illnesses, the better equipped we become as a community to recognize and respond to individuals that may be in need of support, before their situations escalate into something potentially much more serious,” Beavers adds.

Says Sally Gambacorta, Community Health Manager at Advocate BroMenn Medical Center, “Being awarded a grant from the Illinois Prairie Foundation Women to Women’s Giving Circle has allowed us as collaborative partners to offer the Mental Health First Aid courses at a greatly reduced fee. This fits in line with our overall goal of making the training affordable and accessible for all community members to help learn about mental illness and reduce the stigma associated with mental illness.”

A complete listing of upcoming Mental Health First Aid training classes and registration information is available on the McLean County Health Department website: <http://health.mcleancountyil.gov>. There are two separate class options – Mental Health First Aid and Youth Mental Health First Aid. All training classes are \$10.00 per participant and the grant money pays for the cost of the workbook that each participant receives.

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Asserts Beavers, "My ultimate goal is to have one person on every block and 90% of the McLean County workforce, attend Mental Health First Aid training. It's a first step everyone should take to move from talking about what's lacking in the community, to actively doing something to improve our community."

Mental Health First Aid is an evidence-based, eight-hour training course developed in Australia that is 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. Training classes are offered through the collaborative efforts of the McLean County Health Department, McLean County Center for Human Services, Central Illinois Area Health Education Center, Women to Women Giving Circle of Illinois Prairie Community Foundation, Advocate BroMenn Medical Center, and OSF St. Joseph Medical Center.

If someone you know is experiencing a mental health crisis, contact the Center for Human Services at 309-827-5351 or call PATH 211.

Mental Health First Aid: Instructor Certification Training To Be Held in April

The McLean County Health Department and its partners, who collectively make up the Mental Health First Aid Collaborative, are pleased to announce a Mental Health First Aid train-the-trainer opportunity made possible by the Central Illinois Area Health Education Center at Illinois State University. Scheduled for April 11 through April 15 at the McLean County Health Department the training is expected to result in new classes being added to the Mental Health First Aid Training schedule in the near future.

Explains collaborative member Sally Gambacorta, Community Health Manager at Advocate BroMenn Medical Center, "Offering a Mental Health First Aid instructor training in Bloomington/Normal is an invaluable opportunity for our community to train more MHFA instructors and help us reach our goal of having one person on every block be a Certified Mental Health First Aider. The greater everyone's knowledge is about mental health, the healthier our community as a whole."

The instructor certification training is being taught by trainers from the National Council for Behavioral Health, managers of the program in the United States. The cost associated with bringing the trainers to McLean County are being covered by the Central Illinois Area Health Education Center. It is anticipated that McLean County will gain seven to eight new individuals who are certified to teach the Mental Health First Aid training classes to a variety of audiences as a result of the April certification training. Registration for the train-the-trainer program is limited to 30 participants and the cost to attend is \$1,800.

For more information about the MHFA Instructor Certification training , or to register contact Maureen Sollars at Maureen.Sollars@mcleancountyil.gov or 309-888-5539.

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