



Mental Health First Aid for Rural Communities

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AgrAbility Virtual National Training Workshop
Tuesday, January 23, 2018
3:00 p.m. ET

Basic Webinar Instructions

- Audio available through computer or phone.
- Check sound via Communicate menu at top left
- Closed captions: use arrow to expand or contact the Media Viewer window. You may have to enter some log-in information.
- Expand/contract any of the windows in the right-hand column with the arrows. May need to do this to see video of presenter.
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Basic Webinar Instructions

Questions and comments

- Click Chat icon at top right of screen (it should turn blue). Enter message in box, choose who to send it to, and click send. You may enter questions about the presentation at any time. Please send to “All Panelists”.
- In addition, during the Q & A period, if you have a web microphone, click the “Raise Hand” icon to indicate that you have a question. We will enable your microphone or phone connection.

Basic Webinar Instructions

- 4 quick survey questions + opportunity to share comments
- Session recorded and archived with PowerPoint files at www.agrability.org/Online-Training
- Problems: use chat window or email jonesp@purdue.edu



- **AgrAbility:** USDA–sponsored program that assists farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural workers with disabilities.
 - Partners land–grant universities with disability services organizations. Currently 20 state projects
 - National AgrAbility Project: Led by Purdue’s Breaking New Ground Resource Center.
 - Partners include:
 - Goodwill of the Finger Lakes
 - APRIL (Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living)
 - Colorado State University
 - Washington State University
 - More information available at www.agrability.org

Mental Health First Aid for Rural Communities

Promoting mental
health and wellness
through rural
community support

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Mental Health in Rural Communities

- Farming/Ranching ranks in top 10 most stressful occupations in US (NIOSH survey)
- Farmer/Rancher specific stressors – lack of control
 - Rising expenses – lower prices; farm finances & debts
 - Machinery breakdown
 - Weather – disasters; variability; crop loss
 - Time pressure; long work hours
 - Dangerous chemicals
 - Farm viability
 - Pain from injuries; illness; hard labor

Living with Stress Overload

- Can result in “stress response”
 - Physical; emotional; cognitive or behavioral changes
- If ignored or not dealt with may lead to signs/symptoms of stress overload
 - Anxiety; depression; substance use; suicidal thoughts; other mental disorders
- Farmers/ranchers less likely to reach out for help – strong; independent
- Limited mental health professional resources nearby

Current Opioid Epidemic

- More deaths from drug OD than ever before – 6 of 10 from opioids in 2014
- Opioid OD deaths have quadrupled since 1999 (165,000)
- Opioids block pain – oxycodone, morphine, codeine, heroine, fentanyl, methadone, opium (Rx/nonRx)
- Prescriptions used for pain control; addicting; unhealthy coping choice for relaxation & euphoria

Rural Mental Health Care

- Lack of rural mental health support due to unique challenges
 - Accessibility
 - Insurance; travel distances; recognition of mental illnesses
 - Availability
 - >60% of rural Americans live in mental health professional shortage areas; psych. professionals have urban practices
 - Acceptability
 - Few professionals trained to work in rural areas; stigma is barrier to receiving help

Connecting Rural Americans to MHFA

- Acknowledge rural Americans' strengths
 - Close-knit families; strong sense of community
- Rural MHFA builds on these strengths
 - Increases knowledge about mental illness & substance abuse issues; decreases negative perceptions
 - Supports those in rural communities to do what they do best - helping their family members & friends - by providing information; offering support; linking them to professional resources

What Is Mental Health First Aid?

Mental Health First Aid

The help (First Aid) offered to a person developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis.

This “First Aid” is given until the person receives appropriate treatment and support, or until the crisis resolves.



Why Mental Health First Aid?

- Mental health problems are common in US
- Stigma is associated with mental health problems
- Many people are not well informed about mental health problems
- People often don't know how to respond
- Professional help is not always on hand
- People with mental health problems often do not seek help



Why Mental Health First Aid? (cont'd)

- Goals
 - To enhance relationships among citizens within a rural community to create a network of support – a safety net
 - To develop resources that will be available in stressful or difficult times, and can support healthy coping in community members
 - To focus on mental health promotion, illness prevention, and recovery vs the disease





Mental Health First Aid USA



NATIONAL COUNCIL
FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH



MHFA Education

- 8-hour interactive public education program
- Introduces risk factors & warning signs of major mental health problems, and their impact
- Overviews appropriate supports
- Prepares participants to interact with a person in crisis & connect the person with help
- “Mental Health First Aiders” do not diagnose or provide counseling or therapy

What Is a Mental Disorder?

A **mental disorder** or **mental illness** is a diagnosable illness that affects ability to function

- In layperson's language, a disorder -
 - Affects a person's thinking, emotional state, and behavior
 - Disrupts the person's ability to
 - Work
 - Carry out daily activities
 - Engage in satisfying relationships

MHFA Program Overview:

- What is Mental Health First Aid?
- Mental Health Problems in the United States
 - Focus on local statistics & setting
- ALGEE: Mental Health First Aid Action Plan

Mental Health First Aid Action Plan - ALGEE

Assess for risk of suicide or harm

Listen nonjudgementally

Give reassurance and information

Encourage appropriate professional help

Encourage self-help and other support strategies

Program Overview - Topics

- Understanding Depression and Anxiety
- Mental Health First Aid Action Plan for Depression and Anxiety
 - Suicidal Behavior
 - Depressive Symptoms
 - Panic Attacks
 - Traumatic Events
 - Anxiety Symptoms

Program Overview - More Topics

- Understanding Substance Use Disorders/Addiction
- Mental Health First Aid Action Plan
 - Substance Use Disorders
 - Overdose
 - Withdrawal
- Understanding Psychosis
- Mental Health First Aid Action Plan
 - Acute Psychosis
 - Disruptive or Aggressive Behavior

Program Overview - More Topics

- Building your Mental Health First Aid Training skills
 - Opportunities to learn basic skills that fit each disorder area
 - Scenarios to use as models for learning basic skills
 - Opportunities to practice basic skills in a safe environment
 - Increased confidence to use basic skills in the “real world”

Effectiveness of MHFA Program

- Four published randomized control trials and a qualitative study in Australia - findings:
 - Increases mental health literacy
 - Expands person's knowledge of how to help someone in crisis
 - Connects individuals to needed services
 - Reduces stigma

Mental Health First Aid Development

- 2001 - Created in rural Australia
 - Under the auspices of the University of Melbourne a psych-mental health RN and a psychologist
- 2008 - Piloted & replicated in US
- 2012 - Youth MHFA for trainees to help youth ages 12-18
- Special versions for
 - Veterans, Rural settings, Public Safety, Higher Education, Older Adults, and a Spanish version

MHFA Growth

- 2016 stats
 - Over 10,000 Instructors certified
 - About 1,000,000 people trained in US
 - In every state, Puerto Rico & Guam
 - 20 + countries around the world

Rural MHFA in Your Community

- Go to website to learn more about MHFA
www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org
- Share MHFA program information locally or community-wide
- Assess level of interest in offering a Rural MHFA; estimate # of possible participants (25-30/class)
- Find a local Certified MHFA Instructor on the website; locate an Instructor to travel to your community
- Explore funding and grant options
- Set up class(es) at convenient time, place, etc.
- Market – community ownership

Possible MHFA Target Audiences

- Faith communities
- Schools, Libraries
- Hospitals, Clinics, Healthcare Professionals
- Restaurants, groceries, stores, hotels, businesses
- Law enforcement, Public safety
- Veterans
- Farmers, Ranchers
- Concerned citizens, Community leaders

Mental Health First Aid Vision

- In 10 years MHFA will be as commonplace as CPR and First Aid are today

Questions?

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