



## Athens-Hocking-Vinton Alcohol, Drug Addiction & Mental Health Services Board



### CPR For the Mind

#### *a 317 Board Update*

If you saw someone in need of medical attention you would most likely try to get them the help they needed. But what about someone in need of mental health care, would you try to help? There's medical first aid, and now, in Athens, Hocking, and Vinton Counties, there's Mental Health First Aid (MHFA). Think of it as CPR for the mind. Just as CPR helps those without clinical training assist an individual having a heart attack, MHFA prepares participants to interact with a person experiencing a mental health crisis.

Cindy Boyd, Compliance Review Specialist with Public Consulting Group and Steve Noftz, safety and security manager at OhioHealth O'Bleness Hospital co-teach the eight-hour training, designed to help people identify signs of mental illness and addiction in order to offer appropriate support and resources. The training is a guide to the risk factors and warning signs of mental health problems.

"If someone saw a person who seemed out of sorts, be it crying, or possibly talking to someone who wasn't there, or anything that might make them think that this person might need some help, MHFA gives them tools to feel more comfortable approaching somebody who's either in crisis or having other mental health issues," said Noftz.

The training includes a detailed "action plan" that first aiders use to assess if the situation is an emergency and how to respond. It also rejects the stigma and stereotypes commonly associated with mental illness. Instead, the training gives participants the nonjudgmental language to ask about signs of distress, and the know-how to follow up with support and resources.

According to Boyd, "We've had grandparents, retired people, family members of loved ones with mental illness and even people with mental health problems who say, "I want to be able to help people like me more," so it's quite a variety."

First aiders are never supposed to act like a clinician and diagnose someone, nor are they meant to think of themselves as heroes who try to solve every crisis they perceive. "Mental Health First Aid is just the skills to give help until you can connect that person to other resources," said Boyd.

Noftz says that MHFA is important in any community, but especially here in southeastern Ohio. "(The area) tends to draw people who are in need of mental health services so I think in particular there was a desire to train everyone that we could, which is why MHFA was started here," he said.

"One of the takeaways from this is that people who are trained in MHFA tend to take better care of their own mental health. It gives them confidence to interact, which gets people to treatment sooner. People don't suffer as long and that's important." Boyd added.

**The Athens-Hocking-Vinton 317 Board is sponsoring a free public Mental Health First Aid training on Friday, October 6, 2017 at the Richland United Methodist Church, 60 Pomeroy Rd., Athens. Registration begins at 7:30am-the training begins at 8:00am and ends at 5:00pm. There are no CEU's for this training. Space is limited to 25 participants, please register early. Lunch and snacks are provided. Children cannot attend the training and childcare is not provided. You must be present for the entire training to be certified in Mental Health First Aid.**

To register for this training send an email to [AthensMHFA@gmail.com](mailto:AthensMHFA@gmail.com)

For more information contact Cindy Boyd at 740-274-6380 or Steve Noftz at 740-592-9459.

**The Mental Health First Aid training is provided as part of the Athens-Hocking-Vinton 317 Board Network of Care - Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services**