



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 17, 2015

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Mental Health First Aid Can Save Lives Too

Training of “Mental Health First Aiders” to be held in Rochelle.

(Rochelle, IL)

Imagine you are at work and a co-worker is having shortness of breath and chest pains that rapidly worsen. You are trained in first aid and CPR and you quickly determine it’s a heart attack. You call 911 and perform CPR during the short time it takes for paramedics to arrive. Because of your training and quick action you helped save a life.

Now imagine instead of a heart attack, your co-worker has a different disease: Like severe depression, and they are having suicidal thoughts. They are in need of a different kind of first aid, what now? Can you help?

The answer to that question is, **YES**. Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) trainers from Sinnissippi Centers will be offering a one day training to residents of Rochelle and the surrounding area. The training will take place on **Friday, April 17, 2015 from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church, 1100 Calvin Road, Rochelle, IL**. The cost will be **\$25 a person and lunch is provided**. The cost for this training has been reduced thanks to funding from the Rochelle Area Community Foundation.

First aiders will learn how to respond to individuals who are experiencing one or more acute mental health crises (i.e., suicidal thoughts and/or behavior, acute stress reaction, panic attacks, and/or acute psychotic behavior) or are in the early stages of one or more chronic mental health problems (i.e., depressive, anxiety, and/or psychotic disorders, which may occur with substance abuse). After completing the course and passing an examination, participants are certified for 3 years as a Mental Health First Aider.

“It’s an important training that will make a huge difference in getting individuals with diseases like depression, bipolar disorder, and other mental illnesses the treatment and support they need,” adds Patrick Phelan, President/CEO of Sinnissippi Centers. “At the same time Mental Health First Aid efforts will go a long way to showing how all chronic illnesses, like heart disease or depression, need to be treated in virtually the same way by identifying the problem and properly treating it.”

The course also provides an overview of common support and treatment resources that are available in the community for those with a mental health problem so these individuals can seek help following provision of the first aid. Participants also are taught a **five-step action plan**, known as **ALGEE**, for use when providing Mental Health First Aid to an individual in crisis:

- A** Assess for risk of suicide or harm
- L** Listen nonjudgmentally
- G** Give reassurance and information
- E** Encourage appropriate professional help
- E** Encourage self-help and other support strategies

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“These individuals will serve as lifeguards, alert to the signs of mental illness and crisis and able to act quickly to get the person to the services they need,” says Phelan. “The interaction can often be brief, but profound in the impact it can have on the individual in need of treatment. It can be life changing.”

For more information about the Rochelle Adult Mental Health First Aid training, or to register, contact Carrie Murphy at 815-562-3801 or at carriemurphy@sinnissippi.com.

Sinnissippi Centers is a behavioral healthcare agency serving Carroll, Lee, Ogle and Whiteside Counties and provides substance abuse screening and treatment services.

For more information about programs and services, call Sinnissippi toll-free at 1-800-242-7642. Sinnissippi has office locations in Dixon, Mt. Carroll, Oregon, Rochelle and Sterling.

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