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Comprehensive Healthcare Offers Mental Health First Aid Training in Central Washington

Yakima and Beyond Part of National Initiative to Increase Mental Health Literacy

On May 31, Comprehensive Healthcare will be offering Youth Mental Health First Aid training in Yakima. This groundbreaking 8-hour training course gives people the tools to identify when a young person they know might be struggling with a mental health or substance use problem and to connect them with appropriate support and resources when necessary.

1 in 5 Americans has a mental illness, but many are reluctant to seek help or might not know where to turn for care. Unlike physical conditions, symptoms of mental health and substance use problems can be difficult to detect. For friends and family members, it can be hard to know when and how to step in. As a result, those in need of mental health services often do not get them until it is too late.

Just as CPR helps even those without clinical training assist an individual having a heart attack, Mental Health First Aid prepares participants to interact with a person experiencing a mental health crisis. Mental Health First Aiders learn a 5-step action plan that guides them through the process of reaching out and offering appropriate support.

“Through this program, we hope to take the fear and hesitation out of starting conversations about mental health and substance use problems,” says Linda Rosenberg President and CEO of the [National Council for Behavioral Health](http://www.nationalcouncilonbehavioralhealth.org), which helped bring Mental Health First Aid to the U.S. in 2008. “When more people are equipped with the tools they need to start a dialogue, more people can get the help they may need.”

In just ten years, Mental Health First Aid has become a full-blown movement in the United States—more than 800,000 people are certified Mental Health First Aiders, and that number is growing every day.

“We are excited to be the recipient of a new grant from Providence St. Joseph Health that will allow us to teach ten Mental Health First Aid courses across the region in 2017,” said Leah Shelton, community education and communications specialist at Comprehensive Healthcare. “Our first course was in Ellensburg at CWU on May 23. All courses are free and available for registration at our website. We invite all community members to join us.”

The second training is on May 31 in Yakima and the third course is scheduled for June 9 at Comprehensive Healthcare’s Walla Walla office. Seven more courses will be scheduled through December 2017 across Comprehensive’s large service area.

For more information or to participate in a Mental Health First Aid training in Central Washington, visit www.comphc.org or contact Leah Shelton at 509-575-4084 or leah.shelton@comphc.org.

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To learn more about Mental Health First Aid USA, visit www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org.

The National Council for Behavioral Health was instrumental in bringing Mental Health First Aid to the USA and more than 800,000 individuals have been trained.