Mental Health First Aid
By Kathie Chaffee, PCC-S, Executive Director

Anyone who has ever been present when someone is injured or becomes suddenly ill is thankful if he has had first aid training. This training prepares us to do simple, helpful things while quickly summoning expert help for needed treatment.

Have you ever been in the presence of someone who is experiencing symptoms of mental illness or is in a mental health crisis, and felt anxious or helpless because you weren’t sure how to respond? Does your work or your personal life put you in contact with people who have mental illnesses? If so, Mental Health First Aid may be for you.

Mental Health First Aid is an interactive 8-hour course designed to teach people how to recognize signs and symptoms of mental health problems, how to offer and provide initial help, and how to guide a person to appropriate treatments and supports. The course includes many opportunities to practice — through role plays and activities — which makes it easier to apply these skills in a real-life situation. The course is taught by certified instructors who have completed a 40 hour course. An evidence-based program, Mental Health First Aid is overseen by the National Council for Behavioral Health.

Mental Health First Aid instills confidence in people to respond helpfully in a mental health crisis and to direct people to needed care. Trained mental health first aiders are able to assess situations, listen, provide reassurance, and give information to persons in crisis. They are knowledgeable about local resources, including professional help, self-help, and peer support.

Linda Eells, President of NAMI of Columbiana County, and Nila McKinley, Program Coordinator at Shining Reflections, are certified mental health first aid trainers. The MHRS Board is in the process of planning trainings, which will be offered at no cost.

If you are interested in taking a mental health first aid course, or would like to schedule the course for your employees, please contact Pat Ross in the MHRS Board office at 330-424-0195 or pross@ccmhrsb.org.

Mental Health First Aid is another way for our community to continue the caring.
LOSS TEAM LAUNCH

The Board has organized a LOSS (Local Outreach to Survivors of Suicide) Team to assist loved ones of people who commit suicide. The Columbiana County Coroner's Office, Help Hotline Crisis Center, Columbiana County Job and Family Services, Ozer Ministries, and Dawson Funeral Home are partners in this effort. LOSS teams are comprised of trained volunteers who provide outreach, support and direction to the significant others of people in the immediate aftermath of suicide. Staff of the Coroner's Office inform people of this team's purpose and availability, and if there is interest, team members reach out to the newly bereaved. Time, place and location of the meeting with volunteers is determined by the newly bereaved, and volunteers go to the home immediately if that is desired.

A timely response from a LOSS Team allows the newly bereaved the opportunity to begin the healing process immediately by giving families and loved ones permission to talk about their experience. The LOSS Teams includes volunteers who have survived the suicide of a loved one. They engender hope and link people to the local Survivors of Suicide Support Group. The team provides information about dealing with loss and community resources that can be helpful immediately and in the future. The primary goal is to let survivors know that resources exist as soon as possible following the death.

The LOSS team has twenty-three volunteers which include university students, educators, social workers, faith community members, nurses, mental health professionals, survivors of suicide, and funeral home staff.

Featured in this photo are LOSS team members Judy Kidder, Jaime Jones, Georgia Smith, and Cathy Grizinski

If you are a member of Facebook, please "like" the Board’s Facebook Fan Page. The page name is Columbiana County MHRS Board. We post photos and information related to Board priorities and Board sponsored events and ask that you consider “sharing” our posts with Facebook friends in your network.
Meet Our New Board Members

Seth Francis

Seth lives in Rogers. He attended Ohio Northern University, Kent State, the Police Academy, JCC Corrections Academy. He is employed at the Columbiana County Jail in Lisbon. In dealing with inmates on a daily basis, Seth would like to ensure that they are being treated fairly and that staff get a better understanding and training in dealing with inmates with mental health issues.

Jessica Oates

Jessica lives in Columbiana. She is a graduate of YSU with a BA in Psychology and a Masters in Education, Community Counseling. She is a licensed Professional Clinical Counseling Supervisor (LPCC-S) and is employed at Comprehensive Behavioral Health as the Clinical Director and Counselor. She is a member of the ADAPT Coalition. Born and raised in Columbiana County, she has a true appreciation for the Appalachian culture. She believes in advocacy and continued education in the mental health field to promote evidence-based treatment practices, and firmly believes in the quality and importance of developing relationships, listening fully, and having a patient heart.

Bonnie Landsberger-Crook

Bonnie lives in Columbiana, is a graduate of Crestview High School and attended KSU in Salem. Bonnie has expertise in autism and is a member of the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities. She previously worked for the Columbiana Police Dept., Family Recovery Center, and Corey Oil Company. Bonnie believes that helping and serving is a gift and would like to serve the area where she lives.

Jack Hile

Jack lives in Salem and is a graduate of Malone University. He is a National Association of Workforce Development Professional and is employed at the Mahoning and Columbiana Training Association. Jack is a member of the Kiwanis, the ADAPT Advisory Committee, the Apple Grove Board, and the Career and Technical Center Advisory Board. He cares about the community and its residents and feels that his more than 20 years in workforce development and services would be a benefit to the Board.
Fifty-two people attended the August 8 Culture of Addiction Training co-hosted by the Board and the Counseling Center. Addiction specialists, mental health professionals, criminal justice professionals, members of faith based groups, employment specialists, people in recovery, and loved ones of people in recovery attended. The training contributed to a deeper understanding of how addiction is more than an illness. People with addictions belong to a specific culture that meets the basic needs of safety and belonging, even though it meets these needs in destructive ways. Elements of the culture of poverty, relevant to people with addictions who come from generational poverty, were also presented. A panel of people in recovery shared their insights and experiences as they relate to culture. Trainers provided much food for thought, along with practical tips, on how both the addiction treatment and recovery system and the community as a whole can use this knowledge to more effectively support people with addictions in their journey of recovery.