



Overnight Warming Center Alton Offers Mental Health First Aid Training

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Local Group is Part of a National Initiative to Increase Mental Health Literacy

ALTON - In response to the nation's mental health crisis, the Overnight Warming Center Alton will bring Mental Health First Aid training to Alton on October 16, 2021. This groundbreaking skills-based course gives people the tools to identify, understand and respond to someone who might be struggling with a mental health or substance use challenge — and connect them with appropriate support and resources when necessary.

One in five Americans has a mental illness, and the pandemic has dramatically increased depression and anxiety, but many are reluctant to seek help or don't know where to turn for care. Unlike physical conditions, symptoms of mental health and

substance use problems can be difficult to detect. Friends and family members may find it hard to know when and how to step in. As a result, those in need of mental health services often do not receive care 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.

“Never has it been more important for our communities to talk about mental health and substance use,” says Chuck Ingoglia, president and CEO of the [National Council for Mental Wellbeing](#), which helped bring Mental Health First Aid to the U.S. in 2008. “This program is breaking down barriers and stigma so that together we can learn how to better support one another. Without mental health, there is no health.”

In just 12 years, Mental Health First Aid has become a full-blown movement in the United States — more than 2.5 million people are certified Mental Health First Aiders, and that number is growing every day.

Isaac and Kristina Sandidge, local Mental Health First Aid instructors, will be facilitating the course to volunteers for the Overnight Warming Center. Combined, they have trained over 1,500 Mental Health First Aiders across the nation.

For more information or to participate in a Mental Health First Aid training visit www.isaacsandidge.com or contact Isaac Sandidge at Isaac.sandidge@gmail.com

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The National Council for Mental Wellbeing was instrumental in bringing Mental Health First Aid to the United States. To learn more about Mental Health First Aid USA, visit MHFA.org.