

Mental Health First-Aid

The root of most stigmas is generally fear. The stigma surrounding mental illnesses in America is no different: fear of not understanding the problem, fear of doing or saying the "wrong" thing, and fear of not knowing what to do when someone needs help.

The nation's first program to train the public on how to help someone experiencing a mental health crisis was introduced in 2008. Mental Health First Aid, brought to the U.S. from Australia by the National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare (National Council. **Mental Health First Aid** is a 12-hour training course designed to give members of the public key skills to help someone who is developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis, the tools necessary to respond to psychiatric emergencies until professional help arrives, and to improve people's mental health literacy. The evidence behind the program demonstrates that it makes people feel more comfortable managing a crisis situation and builds mental health literacy — helping the public identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illness.

“We want the training to teach people both how to recognize waning signs and how to get the situation under control until professional help arrives,” said Linda Rosenberg, President and CEO of the National Council. “This program has the potential to become as common as CPR in the near future and will help people better understand mental illness.”

Jeana Boyd, LCSW, Network Development Coordinator and Daquarii Rock, Grants Manager for Project ACCESS/*Mental Health*, recently completed the necessary training to become Instructors in Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) and will begin hosting MHFA certification trainings on the Palouse this summer.

Daquarii Rock is enthusiastic about bringing this opportunity to the Palouse region “We are very excited to have the opportunity to be a front runner with this program! Many people have CPR certification and we hope that within a few years MHFA certification will be just as common.”

The Project ACCESS/*Mental Health* team recognizes the value of this program and is committed to training as many community members as possible over the next three years. To schedule a training for your community, employees, or area, please contact Jeana Boyd or Daquarii Rock at 208-883-6486.