



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES


### Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services

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GOVERNOR

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Interim Senior Director

TO: Local School Districts and Charter Schools

FROM: Rachel Johnson, Mental Health Program Coordinator  
North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services 

DATE: February 22, 2017

RE: Train the Trainer Opportunity in Youth Mental Health First Aid

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) are excited to be able to partner to support local school systems in adding tools that will help address youth mental health concerns and support the mission to educate the children of North Carolina. Youth Mental Health First Aid is one of those tools.

Unidentified mental health needs lead to classroom disruption and increased absenteeism. Teachers and other school personnel educated in Youth Mental Health First Aid are empowered with an increased competence and skill set to deal with these issues, thus decreasing frustration, which also affects staff retention. Youth Mental Health First Aid is an evidence-based eight-hour curriculum that teaches laypersons to recognize and appropriately respond to a young person who may be displaying mental health or substance use symptoms or be in crisis. Several North Carolina school districts already utilize Youth Mental Health First Aid training for staff. The training is vital and beneficial to all who regularly interact with youth such as teachers, cafeteria workers, bus drivers, custodial staff, coaches, school resource officers, school support staff, principals, and other school administrators. The curriculum does not teach individuals to intervene beyond their scope of practice, but much like physical First Aid/CPR, it teaches how to recognize, intervene, and refer to appropriate professionals. In an effort to help support school districts to have a less costly and sustainable option for providing Youth Mental Health First Aid training, as well as help equip staff in working with students, DHHS and DPI have partnered to offer the train-the-trainer option to school district personnel. This training normally cost over \$1800 per participant; however, through this collaboration, we are able to offer it to school districts at no cost to you other than your own travel expenses.

[www.ncdhhs.gov](http://www.ncdhhs.gov) • [www.ncdhhs.gov/mhddsas/](http://www.ncdhhs.gov/mhddsas/)  
Tel 919-733-7011 • Fax 919-508-0951

Location: 306 N. Wilmington St. • Bath Building • Raleigh, NC 27601  
Mailing Address: 3001 Mail Service Center • Raleigh, NC 27699-3001  
An Equal Opportunity / Affirmative Action Employer

Five-day instructor certification trainings are scheduled twice this summer at DPI in Raleigh, July 17<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> and August 7<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup>. Districts are invited and encouraged to select up to three district representatives to be trained as certified instructors so they can offer the one-day (8-hour) Youth Mental Health First Aid training to school personnel and others.

In selecting district representatives to be trained, the following are a few important points to consider:

Participants

- must complete the instructor application and be pre-registered to attend
- must be able to attend all five days of training in order to be certified as an instructor
- are comfortable teaching groups of adults
- understand best practices in learning and facilitating groups
- are able to deliver Youth Mental Health First Aid training at least three, preferably six, times per year
- preferably have some general knowledge of mental health and substance use issues (e.g. school counselors, school social workers, school psychologists, school nurses, behavioral specialists, teachers trained in Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, etc.)

Two informational webinars will be held on the following dates to provide an overview of the instructor training, discuss expectations and to answer questions about Youth Mental Health First Aid. Please click [here](#) to register for one of these sessions.

Tuesday, March 21, 2017 4:00pm      **OR**      Thursday, March 23, 2017 8:30am

**Click [here](#) to access the instructions and application packet for the 5-day instructor certification course. If you have trouble accessing these documents, please email Ruby Brown-Herring at [rubylo@email.unc.edu](mailto:rubylo@email.unc.edu). Please submit applications to [MHFA-NC@listserv.unc.edu](mailto:MHFA-NC@listserv.unc.edu).**

DHHS and DPI look forward to continued partnership at the state and local levels as we work to empower school personnel with the necessary tools to teach and interact with the youth in their schools. We believe Youth Mental Health First Aid is a vital tool in equipping our schools to continue to be places where students thrive and educators excel. More information about Youth Mental Health First Aid can be found [here](#).

For questions, contact:

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