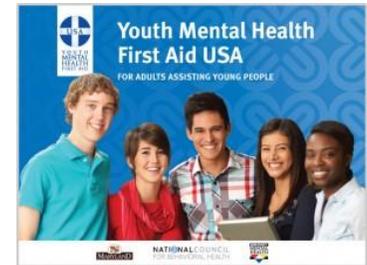


Youth mental health issues are more common than one might think. In any given year, one out of five youth experience mental health issues. To assist school districts in addressing these issues, the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction's Safe and Healthy Schools unit has partnered with the National Council for Behavioral Health to train a statewide cadre in Youth Mental Health First Aid.

Youth Mental Health First Aid helps educators know that mental disorders are real, common, and treatable and that it's OK to seek help. Research has demonstrated the effectiveness of this program to improve knowledge of mental disorders and substance abuse, remove fear and misunderstanding, and enable those trained to offer concrete assistance.



#### WHAT WILL PARTICIPANTS LEARN?

The Youth Mental Health First Aid curriculum focuses on adults who interact with youth, ages 12-18. This 8- hour course teaches participants the risk factors and warning signs of a variety of mental health challenges common among adolescents, including anxiety, depression, trauma, eating disorders, ADHD, disruptive behavior disorders, and substance abuse disorders. During the course, participants will understand the importance of early intervention and how to help an adolescent in crisis or experiencing a mental health challenge. The course demonstrates how to assess a mental health crisis; select interventions and provide initial help; and connect young people to professional, peer, social and self-help care. Participants do not learn to diagnose, nor how to provide any therapy or counseling – rather, participants learn to support a youth developing signs and symptoms of a mental illness or in an emotional crisis by applying a core five-step action plan.

#### Five-Step Action Plan

- Assess for risk of suicide or harm
- Listen nonjudgmentally
- Give reassurance and information
- Encourage appropriate professional help
- Encourage self-help and other support strategies

#### WHO SHOULD TAKE THE COURSE?

The course is designed for adults who regularly interact with adolescents (teachers, school staff, coaches, youth group leaders, parents, etc.). The core Mental Health First Aid course has been successfully offered to more than 325,000 people across the USA.

For more information and/or to arrange a training, contact Gail Schauer at the ND Department of Public Instruction's Safe and Healthy School unit at [gschauer@nd.gov](mailto:gschauer@nd.gov) or (701) 328-2265.