



Mental health matters for all.

**Get Trained To Help:
Tri-county mental health training collaboration begins May 1**

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People who live and work in Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington Counties can learn what to do when someone near them is in an emotional or mental crisis at free upcoming classes. These mental health first aid trainings to prevent suicide and support wellness kick off May 1 at a location near you. The three counties have joined together to launch a user-friendly website where people can learn about and register for trainings across the tri-county region.

GetTrainedToHelp.com kicks off May 1 during national Mental Health Awareness Month. The new website is a regional resource to help caring citizens learn about and register for trainings. A variety of classes are available that address situations people may encounter during their everyday lives. Three of the trainings are available in Spanish. The courses are open to anyone 18 or older, regardless of experience level. The content has been tested, proven, and tailored to meet a broad range of unique perspectives.

"Stigma and lack of knowledge can prevent people from getting the care they need early and before conditions worsen," said Jill Archer, Director of Behavioral Health at Clackamas County. "Fortunately, together, we can offer help and hope."

David Hidalgo, the Director of Mental Health and Addiction Services at Multnomah County, said as local community mental health organizations, Clackamas, Washington and Multnomah counties' mission is to help those living with mental illness, addictions or considering suicide.

"Prevention and early intervention are key to a healthier community. These trainings are central to our prevention toolkit," Hidalgo said. "They will give people from all walks of life and professions the knowledge and capacity to skillfully intervene in the event of a mental health crisis or when someone close is in emotional distress until more experienced help is available."

The statistics are jarring. Archer said nearly one out of every five adults each year will likely be affected with an emotional or other mental health issue. She said with people crisscrossing and interacting with so many people on a daily basis, there is a high likelihood of an individual coming across a person with an emotional or mental health issue. The **Get Trained To Help** website will assist people in working with others who are struggling with an emotional or mental health issue, such as thoughts of suicide.

“Suicide remains a leading cause of death for seniors, adults and youth, yet it is preventable,” said Kristin Burke, Director of Washington County’s Community Mental Health Program. “We are boldly setting a goal of zero suicide for our community. Two of the proven trainings -- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) and QPR (Question, Persuade & Refer) -- teach professionals and lay people alike to offer help and hope to people considering suicide.”

In Mental Health First Aid, participants are trained to recognize the warning signs of mental illnesses and suicide, including depression, bipolar, anxiety, psychosis, substance abuse and eating disorders. They learn how to defuse crisis situations skillfully, and make referrals to resources available in the community, such as the county mental health crisis lines. By investing a relatively short amount time in mental health training, a person can become part of a growing community of people who are getting trained to be a first aid responder to an individual having an anxiety attack, suicidal thoughts, or showing signs of depression.

“We are partnering with health systems, social service agencies, first responder organizations and caring citizens to reach our goal of zero suicide,” Burke said. “On May 13, we will hold the Summit of Hope at Pacific University in Forest Grove, featuring internationally renowned keynote David Covington. Through the summit and the trainings, we hope to inspire more partners to get trained to help and support the new community vision of zero suicides.”

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