

**From:** Tramaine Stevenson, Director of Program Development and Operations, National Council

**Date sent** 07/14/2014 06:07:28 am

**Subject:** Mental Health First Aider eNews

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**NATIONAL COUNCIL**  
FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH  
MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID



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**MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID™**  
*News and Updates*



## Public Safety Spotlight: Mental Health First Aid Reaches Law Enforcement in Harford County

The Harford County (Maryland) Sheriff's Office, one of the earliest adopters of Mental Health First Aid USA, has extended their reach to the community. The Department has partnered with the county's Division of Emergency Services to train more than 100 dispatchers and supervisors from police and fire response as well as key emergency planners in the county. Participant consensus was that the program was much needed and would be immediately useful in the critical communications role that dispatchers play in emergency response. As one veteran dispatcher wrote, "I've been doing this job for 20 years, and my only regret is that I didn't get this training sooner." The Division of Emergency Services is now taking steps to incorporate Mental Health First Aid into its own internal training program.

Dispatchers and planners are not the only new group that the Sheriff's Office has reached with Mental Health First Aid. Last year the Department piloted the program with families of law enforcement officers and staff. Feedback was so overwhelmingly positive that the Department is



### RESEARCH REMINDER

As a reminder, we are administering a research study and several Mental Health First Aiders may receive a link to an online survey (from [MHFA@georgetown.edu](mailto:MHFA@georgetown.edu)). If you receive the survey link, please help us by completing the survey as soon as possible. Thank you in advance for participating in this exciting project!



### FIRST AIDER POLL

In what setting has your MHFA training been most useful?

- Home
- School
- Faith Community
- Work/Professional
- General Public
- Other

[Click here to take the poll today!](#)

now launching a series of family trainings in summer, 2014. Just weeks after the initial family training, one family reported that they had put ALGEE into action. A daughter who took the course recognized the signs of suicide in a friend's Facebook post and was able to connect this friend and the friend's family with lifesaving services.

The Hartford County Sheriff's Office has already integrated Mental Health First Aid into many aspects of its own training program. It is a new hire orientation course for sworn staff, a pre-requisite for CIT and other selected specialties, and part of the Department's comprehensive CISM program.

For more information about the Public Safety and Law Enforcement designation visit [www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org](http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org).

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## IN OTHER NEWS

This week, MHFA USA will be hosting congressional hearings on Capitol Hill to highlight the value of MHFA to law enforcement and other public safety officials. Hearings will feature testimonials from MHFA instructors and advocates who have backgrounds in law enforcement and public safety. Rep. Ron Barber (D-AZ) and Rep. Lynn Jenkins (R-KS) will sponsor the House hearing, and Sen. Mark Begich (D-AK) and Sen. Kelly Ayotte (R-NH) are sponsoring the Senate briefing.

*Mental Health First Aid USA is coordinated by the National Council for Behavioral Health, the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and the Missouri Department of Mental Health.*

## CONTACT

For more information, email [info@mentalhealthfirstaid.org](mailto:info@mentalhealthfirstaid.org) or call 202.684.7457.



## ALGEE IN ACTION



*A few days ago a co-worker arrived at work very distressed. My "old" reaction would have been to immediately ask, "What's wrong?" Instead I led him to a private area and told him if he wanted to talk that I was willing to listen. After a few moments he started to tell me about the terrible day he was having. He calmed down as I just sat and listened. I surprised myself at how much easier it was for me to handle this type of situation. Because of the [MHFA] training, I didn't feel nervous." –Becky T.*

Send us your story to [info@mentalhealthfirstaid.org](mailto:info@mentalhealthfirstaid.org) and it could be featured in our next issue!

