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## MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING RECENTLY OFFERED

Brookings Area United Way recently hosted an 8-hour, Mental Health First Aid course that gives people the skills to help someone who is developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis such as contemplating suicide. This is an evidence-based program widely used throughout the United States.

18 individuals were trained. The goal of the training is to help support an individual until appropriate professional help arrives. The Mental Health First Aiders learned a strategy that includes: assessing risk, respectfully listening to and supporting the individual in crisis, identifying appropriate professional help and other supports.

The participants were introduced to risk factors and warning signs for mental health or substance use problems, engaged in experiential activities that build understanding of the impact of illness on individuals and families, and learned about evidence-supported treatment and self-help strategies.

Mental Health First Aid is intended for people and organizations that make up the fabric of a community. Professionals who regularly interact with people such as police officers, nurses, human resource directors, primary care workers, school/college leadership, faith communities, and friends and family of individuals with mental illness or addiction, and community members are encouraged to attend.

This was the last Mental Health First Aid training that is scheduled for a year, but there is always opportunity to host more. If you are interested, please contact Heidi Gullickson, Brookings Area United Way, at [heidi@brookingsunitedway.org](mailto:heidi@brookingsunitedway.org) or 692-4979.

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