FSSA News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Indiana to offer Psychological First Aid training in response to COVID-19 epidemic

Intervention approach is designed to reduce the initial distress caused by traumatic events and to foster short and long-term adaptive functioning and coping.

INDIANAPOLIS – The Indiana Family and Social Services Administration, in partnership with the American Red Cross Indiana, announced today a series of trainings in Psychological First Aid for Hoosier health care and social services professionals. Psychological First Aid is an approach to helping people who have been exposed to a disaster or traumatic event, in this case the COVID-19 pandemic. Beginning next week, the Red Cross will offer two virtual, instructor-led training sessions intended for health care professionals, social services professionals and the like who may be able to help administer Psychological First Aid should they encounter Hoosiers experiencing distress or needing help coping.

“Being a health care professional is a calling, and now is our time to rise to that calling,” said Jennifer Sullivan, M.D., M.P.H., FSSA secretary. “In this time of enhanced anxiety and uncertainty, we want to do all we can to equip health and wellness professionals with effective tools to support the mental well-being of Hoosiers. Psychological First Aid is a tried-and-true approach to reducing the emotional effects caused by traumatic events, so that Hoosiers have the best chance of maintaining normalcy.”

The Red Cross and FSSA are making two opportunities available for professionals to participate in this virtual training. To register for one of the trainings, click the link on the preferred date below to register. Only the first 30 registrants will be accepted for each training session.

- Tuesday, March 24, 2020, 1 – 4 p.m. EDT
- Tuesday, April 7, 2020, 1 – 4 p.m. EDT

“We know that both medical and mental health providers are likely to encounter individuals who are experiencing various levels of emotional distress about the outbreak and its impact on them, their families and communities,” said Jay Chaudhary, director of the Indiana Division of Mental Health and Addiction. “Providers should know how best to acknowledge the uncertainty people feel about emerging diseases and help Hoosiers understand that there is an emotional component to potential health concerns. This Psychological First Aid training is designed to help in this effort.”

DMHA also recommends that Hoosiers feeling distress or anxiety due to the pandemic call the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Disaster Distress Helpline at 800-985-5990. This hotline provides live crisis counseling and is toll-free, multi-lingual and confidential. A text option is also available: Text "TalkWithUs" to 66746 to connect with a trained crisis counselor.

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