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Bootheel Counseling Services Introduces Mental Health First Aid

APRIL 25TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Joins National Initiative to Increase Mental Health Literacy

Bootheel Counseling Services will kick off Mental Health Month this May by providing Mental Health First Aid training.

The agency will train members of the public to improve mental health literacy; helping them identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illness.

“We are thrilled to bring Mental Health First Aid to our communities,” said David Terrell, Executive Director of Bootheel Counseling Services. “This important educational effort goes a lot further than emergency interventions; it really helps people understand the fear and misjudgment facing individuals and families who experience mental illnesses and addiction. It will help rid this community of the associated stigma and help move more and more people toward recovery. Because we strongly believe in the training and the importance for everyone to receive it Bootheel Counseling Services will offer this training at no charge.”

Mental Health First Aid is an 8-hour training course which teaches participants a five-step action plan to assess a situation, select and implement interventions and secure appropriate care of the individual, the certification program introduces participants to risk

factors and warning signs of mental health problems, builds understanding of their impact and overviews common treatments. Thorough evaluations in randomized controlled trials and quantitative study have proven the CPR-like program is effective in improving trainees' knowledge of mental health disorders, reducing stigma and increasing the amount of help provided to others.

Bootheel Counseling Services first began offering Mental Health First Aid training sessions in 2009. Since that time hundreds of local law enforcement personnel, probation and parole staff, hospitals, medical centers, schools, juvenile centers, faith-based communities as well as the general public have participated. Terrell concluded, "We hope that by offering the Mental Health Fist Aid training sessions in our area, it will become as common as the CPR trainings; and communities will learn how to respond to an individual in time of crisis or in a mental health emergency."

The Mental Health First Aid training session will be on May 1st at the New Madrid Public Safety Center in New Madrid. Because the training is very hands on seating is limited to 25 individuals. For more information, to participate in or host a Mental Health First Aid training contact Jennifer Hartlein, Director of Fund Development and Public Relations at Bootheel Counseling Services by calling 573-471-0800 or by visiting the BCS website at **www.bootheelcounseling.com.**

Bootheel Counseling Services is not-for-profit community mental health center and the Administrative Agent for the State of Missouri Department of Mental Health. Services offered include medication management, individual, family, couples and group counseling. In home case management services are available for children and adults with serious mental health or emotional disorders. Other matters to call about may be depression and anxiety, grief and loss, relationship and behavioral problems, stress and anger management, and substance use disorders.

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