

SEARHC offers mental health first aid certification course

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JUNEAU EMPIRE STAFF REPORT

The SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium Behavioral Health Prevention and Community Family Services programs will offer a free, two-day mental health first aid course in May in the communities of Juneau, Sitka, Klawock and Kake.

“Mental health first aid will help anyone in any setting provide the care needed to a person experiencing a mental health problem or mental health crisis until appropriate professional treatment staff is available or until the crisis resolves,” said Behavioral Health Division Director Melody Price-Yonts.

The Juneau class is May 8-9, at the Vocational Training and Resource Center auditorium (3239 Hospital Dr.). The Sitka class is May 10-11, at the SEARHC At Kanik Hít Community Health building first-floor conference room (1212 Seward Ave.). The Klawock class takes place May 24-25, at the Klawock Salvation Army Church (585 Summit). The Kake class is May 28-29, at the Kake Salvation Army Church (on Keku Road).

During the 12-hour certification course, participants will learn:

- The potential risk factors and warning signs for a variety of mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety/trauma, psychosis and psychotic disorders, eating disorders, substance use/abuse disorders and self-injury.
- Appropriate professional, peer, social and self-help resources available to help someone with a mental health problem.
- A five-step action plan encompassing the skills, resources and knowledge to assess the situation, to select and implement appropriate interventions, and to help the individual in crisis connect with appropriate professional care.
- An understanding of the prevalence of various mental health disorders in the U.S. and the need for reduced stigma in our communities.

These courses are open to all members of the community, young people, families and the general public. If you work in the following fields we encourage you to take this opportunity to attend this training — health workers, state policymakers, employers, faith communities, school personnel, law enforcement, nursing home staff and mental health support staff. Participants who complete the course will earn a mental health first aid certificate from the National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare.

To register for the training or for more information, please call Kathryn Mathews in Sitka at 907-966-8744. The registration deadline is April 20. To learn more about the mental health first aid training, go to www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org.