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NATIONAL COUNCIL  
FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
Mental Health First Aid Advocacy Resource Guide
TheNationalCouncil.org

Mental Health First Aid Briefing Document

There is a mental health crisis in America. You can be part of the solution.

What is Mental Health First Aid?
Mental Health First Aid USA is an 8-hour in-person course that teaches you how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders.

The training gives you the skills you need to reach out and provide initial help and support to someone who may be developing a mental health or substance use issue or experiencing a crisis. Tailored courses are available for target populations such as veterans, educators, youth, law enforcement, and first responders.

Mental Health First Aid by the Numbers
Over 1 Million First-Aiders in the U.S. were trained by more than 12,000 Instructors.

Currently, less than 1% of Americans are trained to recognize and respond to signs of mental illness.

Talking About Mental Health First Aid with Voters and Constituents

- Too often mental health and substance use issues end in tragedy, but we can stop this crisis before it’s too late. By training law enforcement, educators, first responders and members of the public in Mental Health First Aid, we can provide those in need the opportunity to receive timely professional help.

- Studies show that people trained in Mental Health First Aid are able to recognize the signs, symptoms and risk factors of mental illness and substance use. We should pursue policies that devote additional resources toward trainings that de-escalate interactions with individuals living with a mental health or substance use crisis.

- Anyone can make a difference for someone facing a mental health or substance use crisis – they just need the basic tools and an action plan. That is why any comprehensive approach to mental health should include expanded education and Mental Health First Aid training opportunities in our communities.

- Suicides and opioid overdoses are increasing across the country. It’s time our policies addressed the reality of this incredible and sad epidemic. That means smarter investments in evidence-based approaches like Mental Health First Aid, which, like CPR or First Aid, gives people the tools they need to identify early warning signs and offer help to someone facing mental health or substance use disorders.

National Council for Behavioral Health
Mental Health First Aid

Click image to download or print Mental Health First Aid Briefing Document.
MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID BRIEFING DOCUMENT

MENTAL HEALTH IN THE UNITED STATES
- Over 40 million Americans have a mental health condition (1 in 5 adults.)
- 56% of American adults with a mental illness do not receive treatment.
- Nearly 60% of those suffering from mental illness have a co-occurring substance use disorder.
- In 2016, 42,499 Americans died from overdosing on opioids.

POLICY OVERVIEW
Since 2015, 20 states have made Mental Health First Aid a priority. Expand services and add yours to the list by:
- Implementing statewide or local Mental Health First Aid training programs that are available to groups like first responders, law enforcement, teachers and child protective services.
- Allocating funding for public health or community behavioral health organizations to implement training.
- Requiring training and/or certification standards for professional groups who frequently interact with at-risk communities, such as:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>VETERANS</th>
<th>EDUCATORS &amp; YOUTH</th>
<th>LAW ENFORCEMENT</th>
<th>FIRST RESPONDERS</th>
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HOW OTHER STATES HAVE STRENGTHENED SUPPORT FOR MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID:

California
Through a state tax appropriation, mental health funding has been allocated for Youth Mental Health First Aid trainings across the state to sustain a Project AWARE state grant.

Rhode Island
In 2016, Rhode Island mandated Mental Health First Aid training for all law enforcement officers and trainees in order to help them better identify and develop responses to mental health/substance abuse emergencies.

Texas
In Texas, advocacy resulted in an appropriation of $5 million dollars for thousands of educators to be trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid statewide by hosting multiple instructor trainings and covering the cost of participant manuals.

Virginia
Designated the Commissioner as Chief Executive Officer of the Department running the Commonwealth Mental Health First Aid program, tasked with establishing it and maintaining the Mental Health First Aid program state-wide.
STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

There is no single strategy for establishing and sustaining a Mental Health First Aid training program. The National Council and its partners celebrate the diversity and creativity of advocates and Mental Health First Aid providers that have yielded the program’s diffusion thus far. Advocating for state-level policies and funding that expands access to Mental Health First Aid is one way to broaden and strengthen the impact of an association’s training program. Core elements of this work include:

- **Assess** — Take stock of community/state need and resources, evaluate the best policy lever (program bill, budget amendment, agency initiative).

- **Find a Champion** — Identify community and policy leader(s) who support Mental Health First Aid and give visibility as well as political clout to your effort.

- **Build Alliances** — Find strategic partners in agencies, organizations, businesses, foundations and other community entities that lend support and power to the Mental Health First Aid message or can help leverage resources to reach a wider audience.

- **Prioritize Marketing** — Identify creative methods and partners to publicize Mental Health First Aid programs, develop relationships with potential audiences (e.g., educators, hospitals) and raise awareness.

- **Evaluate and Repeat** — Make data collection a priority and use it for marketing, relationship building and advocating for resources.

Survey data and advocate interviews yielded similar themes. National Council members, state agency supporters and Mental Health First Aid leaders offered the following wisdom about what makes advocacy for Mental Health First Aid successful.

**IT’S ABOUT LEADERSHIP**

- A legislative, administrative or executive champion is essential.

- Make sure all players are included from the beginning. Despite efforts to include everyone, organizations that are overlooked early in the process often fail to support the program.

- Work with key agencies to make sure the program is structured to meet the needs of the state.

- Utilize Mental Health First Aid Instructors as effective and passionate spokespeople.

**GET CREATIVE ABOUT MONEY**

- Secure dedicated funding for Mental Health First Aid programming. This can include seeking prioritization of block grant dollars or related initiative funds (e.g., youth wellness, suicide prevention) on Mental Health First Aid components.

- Build awareness about Mental Health First Aid among agency/department leaders. Discretionary spending in existing programs may offer more traction for a Mental Health First Aid pilot initiative.
FIND STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

- Community relationships are a strong factor in successful advocacy for Mental Health First Aid.
- Look to private entities, local foundations, and other partners to promote and even finance Mental Health First Aid initiatives.

KNOW YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE(S)

- If targeting a certain population, try to ensure the language is appropriately inclusive to reach the right individuals.
- Educators and law enforcement remain priorities. Since so many states have targeted the education community, it is important to understand the structure of the school system as well as potential structural roadblocks (e.g., school calendar, teacher unions, etc.).

KEEP THE MESSAGE CONSISTENT AND SIMPLE

- Stay focused on the core messages that work.
- Be clear about the goals and scope of Mental Health First Aid. It is a public awareness and educational program; it will not fix the entire mental health system without other programs in place.
- Consider how to weave Mental Health First Aid messages and initiatives into other current events, such as state health care reform efforts around the Affordable Care Act, focus on youth safety and wellness and anti-violence initiatives.
- Focus on using social media and your community network to sustain attention on Mental Health First Aid in the midst of competing policy priorities.
- Anticipate and prepare for “counter messages” that may emerge. Examples cited by advocates include why the Mental Health First Aid funding model differs from Red Cross CPR/first aid self-pay, differentiation with other training programs, length of the program or misconceptions about focus of program on referral vs. clinical service delivery.

DATA IS CRITICAL

- Track number of individuals trained and collect demographic data (e.g., race/ethnicity, age, occupation/sector) to demonstrate the reach of Mental Health First Aid.
- Conduct post-training follow-up to assess how Mental Health First Aid knowledge and/or skills have been put into practice by First Aiders (e.g., educators, parents). This builds the story base for how Mental Health First Aid can impact a community.
ANNUALLY, 44,965 AMERICANS COMPLETE SUICIDE and it is the 10th leading cause of death in the country. More than 90 percent of those who die by suicide have a mental health disorder. Our state is in the middle of a mental health crisis and it is time our communities start becoming part of the solution.

Too often mental health and substance use issues end in tragedy, but we can stop this crisis before it’s too late. By training law enforcement, educators, first responders and members of the public in Mental Health First Aid/Youth Mental Health First Aid, we can help those in need receive timely care.

Studies show people trained in Mental Health First Aid/Youth Mental Health First Aid are able to recognize the signs, symptoms and risk factors of mental illness and substance use. We should pursue policies that devote resources toward trainings that de-escalate interactions with individuals living with a mental health or substance use crisis.

Any educator, administrator or support staff in a school can make a difference for a child facing a mental health or substance use crisis — they just need the basic tools and an action plan. That is why any comprehensive approach to mental health should include expanded education and Youth Mental Health First Aid training in our education community.

TALKING POINTS

Learn more about opportunities to get certified by visiting Mental Health First Aid online.

Our leaders in the legislature have an opportunity to reverse this incredible and sad epidemic before it’s too late. We need their support for policies that will provide Colorado educators and school staff access to Youth Mental Health First Aid training which, like CPR and first aid, will give them the tools they need to identify the early warning signs and offer help to someone facing mental health or substance use disorders.

State legislators can be leaders in increasing access to youth mental health training within schools. In fact, one of the easiest steps the state could take is to give legislators greater choice when it comes to professional development. By allowing teachers to get credit for taking a Youth Mental Health First Aid course, they will both meet their continuing education obligations and gain a valuable tool for their work.

Youth Mental Health First Aid is an evidence-based and nationally recognized program. This course is designed to give any member of the education community the tools they need to provide timely help to a student facing a mental health or substance abuse issue. The program is cost-effective, accessible to every school in the state and can be taught by any of the 8,500 Instructors who have already trained more than 530,000 Youth Mental Health First Aiders.
STEPS TO A DIGITAL ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN

1. Identify key legislators.

2. Create target audiences of individuals within the legislators’ constituencies who will support Mental Health First Aid and will contact their legislators via email and phone calls.

3. Develop a messaging strategy to be utilized on digital platforms.

4. Develop digital assets (website, contact your legislator tools, digital advertising creatives).

5. Identify advertising platforms to get the desired outcome of branding, education and legislator contact.

6. Run digital advertising campaign.

7. Monitor and optimize to achieve campaign goals.

BEST PRACTICES FOR ADVOCACY DIGITAL CREATIVE

- Keep copy short and concise.
- Clear and concise call to action.
- Use emotion to help convey the message.
- Optimize design for all forms of digital devices.

- Ensure the message and graphic align.
- Keep designs cohesive between landing pages, static and video ads.
- Correlate the website and creatives with the geography of the campaign.
- Keep video ads under 15 seconds, with the most important information within the first six seconds.
- Place a web form to capture personal details with minimal barriers to entry.
- Use a mix of targeting that will accomplish the goals:
  - Data targeting — legislators, staff, reporters, influencers, vocal voters likely to take action.
  - Keywords — articles about the issue or legislators.
  - Prominent news websites.
  - Mail, TV or phone universes other voter contact is utilizing.
ENGAGEMENT PLATFORMS

Facebook (Video and Lead Gen) — Provides great interaction rate with target audiences, gives the best bang for your buck.

Twitter — A news platform used by legislators who can be targeted to see your ads.

YouTube — A very educational-based platform that allows a 15-second video ad targeted to a broad audience, as well as giving a user the opportunity to take action via hyperlinks throughout the viewing experience.

Instagram — An expanding ad unit partnered with Facebook that is a popular platform with young audiences who care about mental health and/or addictions.

Google search — Reactionary ad unit that ensures that users who actively search your issue will see your ad.

Programmatic display — Using static graphic ad units we can target influential news and policy websites to help increase calls and emails to legislators.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

1. Constituents contacting their legislators about the issue.
   • Lowest possible cost per action (phone calls and emails).
2. Capturing these constituents’ contact information for future grassroots campaigns.
   • Lowest possible cost per acquisition.
3. Education on and awareness of the issue.
   • Competitive cost per impressions/video views.

EXAMPLES OF PREVIOUS MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID DIGITAL ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN CREATIVE

VIDEO

• Be the 1 to Make a Difference
• Youth Mental Health First Aid
Lady Gaga’s Born This Way Foundation has trained 150,000 Americans in Mental Health First Aid!

Celebrate Mental Illness Awareness Week by sharing your voice, your story.

Be one in a million.
CASE STUDIES

CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBERG POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD) in North Carolina has jurisdiction over the city of Charlotte and the unincorporated areas of Mecklenburg County. CMPD is the largest police department between Washington, D.C., and Atlanta, Ga., with almost 2,000 officers on the force. In 2016, CMPD made participation in Mental Health First Aid training mandatory for all their officers and has trained approximately 90 percent of their police force in the last year.

There was a time when being trained in Mental Health First Aid wasn’t mandatory for CMPD police officers. However, because of the increasing frequency police officers now interact with individuals living with mental illness, CMPD’s leadership had to find a solution to equip their officers with the tools necessary to handle such situations.

RESULTS

- Almost all CMPD officers have taken Mental Health First Aid training, which is now offered to every incoming officer during their time at the police academy.
- CMPD officers have found the Mental Health First Aid training to be particularly useful in helping identify and de-escalate situations where an individual might be experiencing a mental health crisis.
- Each officer has a certain number of hours allocated for additional training that the department considers useful. In this case, some of that time is dedicated to Mental Health First Aid.

SPOKEN WORD

“I wish that every corrections officer could receive Mental Health First Aid training. I believe that our corrections system would be better because of it — the inmates would benefit, the officers would benefit and ultimately our communities would benefit.”
— Lt. Virgil Meyer, Pennsylvania Department of Corrections

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

Founded in 1795, the University of North Carolina (UNC) at Chapel Hill is the nation’s first public university. The university enrolls approximately 30,000 undergraduate, graduate and professional students who are taught and cared for by more than 12,000 faculty and staff. In the past two years and with support from a state grant, UNC has managed to train approximately 900 of their staff and faculty in Mental Health First Aid.

The decision to train staff and faculty in Mental Health First Aid was influenced by the fact that staff was much less transient than the students, which would likely give them the opportunity to help future generations of UNC students. The training’s value to the students and the university’s culture can be seen in the demand it has generated among staff and faculty through word of mouth. As the number of people who have completed the training has increased, so has the widespread demand for participating in the course, indicating that faculty and staff can derive clear value from the training.

"Foremost, our students need support and we wanted to maximize the level of support they receive. You have this population of people that are age 18 to 25, who are at a most vulnerable age, and they find themselves in an environment that is a unique social microcosm with little access to support. Why wouldn't we equip those around them with the initial tools to identify distress symptoms and the confidence and knowledge to intervene, if needed?"
— TARA LEA BOHLEY, DIRECTOR OF UNC’s BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SPRINGBOARD
YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH AT SCHOOL

1 IN 5 CHILDREN AGE 13-18 HAVE OR WILL HAVE A MENTAL ILLNESS

THAT MEANS IN A CLASSROOM OF 25 STUDENTS, 5 WILL EXPERIENCE A MENTAL ILLNESS.

2ND LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH FOR AGES 10-24

50% OF STUDENTS AGE 14 AND OLDER WITH A MENTAL ILLNESS DROP OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL.

EVERY DAY IN THE UNITED STATES OVER 5,240 STUDENTS IN GRDES 7-12 ATTEMPT SUICIDE

4 OF 5 HAVE GIVEN CLEAR WARNING SIGNS

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID CAN HELP YOU START A CONVERSATION THAT COULD SAVE A LIFE.

LEARN MORE AND GET TRAINED AT WWW.MENTALHEALTHFIRSTAID.ORG

Mental Health First Aid Advocacy Resource Guide
TheNationalCouncil.org
20 VETERANS DIE BY SUICIDE EACH DAY

30% of active duty and reserve military personnel deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan have a mental health problem requiring treatment.

Of the 30%, only half of returning veterans in need receive any mental health treatment.

MENTAL HEALTH & LAW ENFORCEMENT: MAKING A DIFFERENCE

357 law enforcement agencies have taken the International Association of Chiefs of Police's One Mind Pledge to improve police responses to people affected by mental illness.

182 police officers across the country have been trained in Mental Health First Aid.

100% of their officers in Mental Health First Aid through the One Mind Pledge.

> 125,000

"Mental Health First Aid for Public Safety is an actionable public safety training program that gives police officers a simple, effective way to intervene during any mental health crisis." - Chief William G. Brooks III

WWW.MENTALHEALTHFIRSTAID.ORG
OP-EDS

NOTE: Op-eds will be adjusted based on the messenger, target audience and final policy objectives.

SAMPLE #1: Anyone Can Be the Difference with Training in Mental Health First Aid (Linda Rosenberg)

There is a mental health crisis in America and the statistics should compel us all to ask, “What can I do?”

Every 13 minutes, someone in the United States dies by their own hand, making suicide the nation’s 10th leading cause of death and second among those aged 15 to 34. Among children 10 to 14, the suicide rate has caught up with the death rate from traffic accidents. Many times that number attempt suicide each year — more than 8 percent of high school students.

But it’s not just the young. Among middle-aged white Americans with no more than a high school education, the historic increase in life expectancy has gone into reverse. As death rates have risen dramatically, suicides, drug overdoses and alcohol-related liver disease are now the main drivers of so-called “deaths of despair.” This population is less likely to get or stay married and less likely to participate in the labor force and is increasingly turning to chemical crutches. Consequently alcoholism worsens, suicide climbs, and substance use disorder takes root.

The opioid epidemic is raging across America — with nearly 100 people dying every day from overdoses. Substance use disorder may start out of necessity, when a person undergoes surgery or experiences the discomfort of kidney stones and is prescribed a high-powered pain medication, usually opiate-based. For some, use of that prescription painkiller begins a downward spiral to a substance use disorder — leaving family members, friends, and colleagues at a loss for a way to help.

More than ever, mental health is becoming a concern in the workplace — so much that this year’s World Health Organization World Health Day focused on the toll that anxiety and depression take on the global workplace. In the U.S. alone, depression annually costs in excess of $1 trillion in lost productivity. The human and emotional cost is unmeasurable.

But the numbers are more than mere statistics. They reflect personal experiences. It’s likely that you know someone who is living with a mental illness, lost a loved one to suicide or is struggling to get an adolescent treatment for substance use disorder — we all do.

How can we help? We want to do the right thing, to say the right thing, yet we struggle to find the words. The time has come when our response to someone with a mental health problem or a substance use disorder is no different than someone with cancer, diabetes or heart disease. Mental Health First Aid offers the tools that enable all of us to have the conversation, to be the difference in the life of someone struggling.

That is why we are launching the Be the Difference campaign. Because anyone, anywhere can be the one to make a difference — if you know what to do. You’ll learn the skills you need in Mental Health First Aid.

Substance use disorder, mental illness, suicide. The stakes couldn’t be higher. Learn to Be the Difference.

Mental Health First Aid is a training designed for anyone to learn about mental illness and substance use disorder, including risk factors and warning signs. Participants learn a 5-step action plan to help people who are living with a mental health challenge or experiencing a crisis. Find courses at MentalHealthFirstAid.org.
SAMPLE #2: Equipping Teachers to Help Students Facing a Mental Health Crisis

(Insert a personal anecdote about a student facing mental health and/or substance use challenges.)

Unfortunately, scenes like this are all too common in <<STATE>> classrooms. Teachers and school staff need to be better equipped to identify and respond to the telltale signs of mental illness and substance use. Our youth are suffering. Suicide is the second leading cause of death for children ages 10 to 14 and the third leading cause for ages 15 to 24 in the United States. As scary as these statistics are, we know that the problem is a lot larger. For every young person who dies by suicide, four more have made attempts. A nationwide survey of high school students found that 16 percent of students reported seriously considering suicide in the past year. Because so many cases of mental illness in youth go undetected and undiagnosed, many suffering young people turn to dangerous and addictive substances as a coping mechanism.

Every day I think about how if I hadn’t intervened, my student could have easily been a part of a growing statistic. The turning point for me was attending a Youth Mental Health First Aid training offered by my school district. This training course has empowered me to identify and respond to first signs of mental illness and substance abuse in my students. I can approach a student who is suffering with more confidence because I know where to direct them for the appropriate help. I wonder how many teachers avoid having a conversation with a concerning student because they don’t know the appropriate language.

Youth suicides are preventable, and we as a society need to invest more resources into creating informed and resilient schools and communities. Only around 500,000 individuals are trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid. Mental health awareness programs do more than just prevent suicide, they help reduce stigma around mental illness and provides educators and other school staff with an action plan to support students facing mental health and substance use challenges. Unaddressed mental health concerns in young people can affect every aspect of their lives – from relationships with classmates to performance in school – and teachers are in a unique position to notice and intervene when a student may be struggling. The more school and community members who are trained, the less the chance of students slipping through the cracks.

<<STATE>> has an opportunity to be a national leader in increasing access to youth mental health training within schools. <<ENTER POLICY OBJECTIVE: By setting a goal of training XX percent of its education personnel by 20XX, our governor and state legislators will set the gold standard for other states to follow>>. This goal can be achieved by expanding access to Youth Mental Health First Aid through funding assistance and by ensuring educators can apply training hours towards their professional development requirements.

(Tie back to personal anecdote at the beginning of the op-ed.)
SAMPLE #3: Sample Letters to the Editor

NOTE: Letters to the editor will be adjusted based on the messenger, target audience and final policy objectives.

Educator (Youth Mental Health First Aid Trainer/First Aider)
231 words:
As a teacher/school administrator I am constantly amazed by the opportunities I have to make an impact on the lives of the young people in my school. It is incredibly rewarding to work with my students both inside and outside the classroom to help support their interests through classes, academic clubs, sports and field trips. However, this work also puts me and my colleagues on the front lines when it comes to the youth mental health and substance use crisis in our state and our schools.

I am trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid — a nationally recognized training program that helps teachers, parents and community members get the tools they need to identify a young person in crisis and direct them to care. Sadly, suicide is the first leading cause of death for children ages 10 to 14 and the third leading cause for ages 15 to 24 in our state. If more members of the education community had access and experience with Youth Mental Health First Aid, we could begin to address this crisis head-on.

<<STATE>> has an opportunity to be a national leader in youth mental health training within its schools and our leaders in Springfield can help lead the way. Our governor and state legislators need to speak out on this issue and engage with members of the education community on solutions they could pursue in the next legislative session.

Parent
198 words:
Every day it seems like there is a tragic story of another young person who was lost to the mental health and substance use crisis in this country. We need to provide the front-line members of our communities working with children — parents, teachers, coaches, school resource officers — greater access to tools and trainings to help identify a child in crisis and direct them to the help they need.

One such training resource is Youth Mental Health First Aid, a program that teachers in our community were recently trained in. This course is both cost-effective and accessible to every school in the state. It is taught by local instructors (XXX in <<STATE>>) who are certified by the National Council for Behavioral Health and have already trained XXXX Youth Mental Health First Aiders in <<STATE>>.

Here in <<STATE>>, our elected leaders have an opportunity to set a gold standard for other states to follow. By providing access to resources like Youth Mental Health First Aid, setting state-wide training goals, and allowing educators to count training hours toward professional development we can make an enormous impact on the well-being of our children. As a community, we can meet this crisis head-on.
Law Enforcement
268 words:
As a police officer, my number one priority is keeping the public and my fellow officers safe from harm. One of the most challenging parts of my job is working with those who are experiencing mental health challenges. This is why I am trained in Mental Health First Aid — a nationally recognized training program that helps law enforcement officials and other community members get the tools they need to identify someone in crisis and direct them to care.

Sadly, suicide is one of the most common mental health challenges I encounter. It’s the leading cause of death for children ages 10 to 14 and the third leading cause for ages 15 to 24 in our state (refine stats based on state). Through Mental Health First Aid training, I’ve learned to support people experiencing mental health and substance use challenges and to ask “What happened?” rather than “What’s wrong with you?” Learning how to normalize the conversation around mental health and respond to mental health emergencies has been a game changer for my fellow officers and me.

Recently, the International Association of Chiefs of Police recently called for 100 percent of sworn officers and other support staff to be trained in Mental Health First Aid. I believe our state should be a national leader in training all of its police officers. Our governor and state legislators need to speak out on this issue and engage with members of the law enforcement community on solutions they could pursue in the next legislative session. I urge all of our elected leaders in (X) to make Mental Health First Aid a priority.

Law Enforcement
149 words:
As a police officer, my number one priority is keeping the public safe from harm. One of the most challenging parts of my job is working with those who are experiencing mental health challenges or substance abuse. That is why I am trained in Mental Health First Aid — a nationally recognized training program that helps law enforcement officials and other community members get the tools they need to identify someone in crisis and direct them to care.

Through Mental Health First Aid training I’ve learned to support people experiencing mental health and substance use challenges and to ask “What happened?” rather than “What’s wrong with you?” This training has been a game changer for my fellow officers and me. Our state should be a national leader in Mental Health First Aid. I urge all of our elected leaders in (X) to make Mental Health First Aid a priority.