

Making a Difference

Mental Health and Wellness – Lubbock County 2019

Nancy Trevino CEA-UYD

Relevance

The NIH reports that mental illnesses are common in the United States, with recent statistics showing that nearly 1 in 5 American adults is living with a mental illness. In addition, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) reports that 17% of youth between the ages of 6-17 experience a mental health disorder. Mental illness can have huge impacts on individuals in many areas of their life – physical, social and financial impacts. Some of these impacts can be long term, including increased risk for chronic diseases (e.g. diabetes, cancer, heart disease). Other impacts can include co-occurring challenges like substance use disorder, or other social factors including homelessness, justice system involvement, or loss of wages. In the U.S., 1 in 8 emergency room visits is related to mental illness or substance use disorders. With depression being the leading cause of disability in the world, contributing to an estimated \$1 trillion dollars of lost productivity due to anxiety and depression, it is paramount that mental health challenges are addressed. However, sometimes it is difficult for an individual to ask for help because of the stigma that is still associated with mental health challenges and the lack of understanding of mental illness. Mental Health First Aid and Youth Mental Health First Aid are evidence-based curricula that train community members to identify common warning signs for mental illness and gives them both national and local resources to refer those struggling with mental health challenges to for appropriate assistance. We know that with appropriate support and treatment, individuals who have struggled with mental health challenges can go on to live in recovery from their illness.

Response

Local, state and national trends support the need for training to identify mental health challenges and provide assistance to those individuals impacted. During the 2019 Texas Community Futures Forum held in Lubbock County, mental health for both adults and youth were identified as issues that Texas A&M AgriLife Extension could help address through education. AgriLife also received a Rebuild Texas Grant to train Extension agents in Mental Health First Aid and Youth Mental Health First Aid to respond to mental illness that can develop when individuals, families, and communities are dealing with disasters. Nancy was trained through the support of the Rebuild Texas Grant funding. During 2019, Texas House Bill 18 requires that teachers, school counselors, principals, and other appropriate school personnel are trained in mental health, substance abuse prevention, and suicide prevention training. Through a partnership with StarCare Specialty Health Systems, Nancy has been able to provide Youth Mental Health First Aid training to local schools at no additional cost to school districts.

Results

During 2019, Nancy facilitated 14 classes for a total of 200 community members trained in in MHFA or YMHFA. The national average satisfaction score for instructors is 4.72 out of 5. Nancy's average score is higher than the average with a 4.89 out of 5. Participants of the courses were a wide range of ages between 16-80 years of age. The majority of participants were female (93.5%). Youth Mental Health First Aid courses

The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife.

were provided for school nurses, counselors, teachers, administrators, custodians, and other school personnel. Mental Health First Aid courses have been provided for City of Lubbock departmental staff.

Evaluations

Of the 200 participants, evaluation feedback included:

- 97% reported to “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” that the course goals and objectives were achieved.
- 96.5% reported to “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” that the course content was practical and easy to understand.

Mental Health First Aid has a customer satisfaction survey and allows participants to provide comments. Evaluation comments from the Mental Health First Aid courses included:

- “Great Job! Very knowledgeable and conversational.”
- “Answered our difficult questions.”

Evaluation comments from the Youth Mental Health First Aid courses included:

- “Nancy was very effective, confident and a strong presenter.”
- “She is an excellent presenter – kept us engaged and made it fun.”
- “Nancy, you were responsive to comments and questions.”
- “Great communicating and making sure to explain things.”
- “Very knowledgeable & engaging of every individual in the training.”



Left picture: Kris, Brandi, & Nancy preparing for a training at Region 17. Top right picture: Kris & Nancy meeting with local school administrator to set-up a YMHFA training for summer 2020. Bottom right picture: Nancy facilitating MHFA.