



AMES IN ACTION

OCTOBER 2023



PREPARING COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO PROVIDE MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID



WHAT DID AMES DO?

Elisabeth Dilling and Katherine Moore of the AMES Research Center have been delivering an exciting community-based training called "Mental Health First Aid." This training prepares an adult to recognize and respond to someone who may be experiencing a mental health challenge or substance use challenge. As of October 2023, 50 members of the community have participated in this full-day hybrid training opportunity. We commend these individuals for adding tools to their toolkit to support a safe and healthy community!

HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO THE MILITARY, VETERANS, EMERGENCY SERVICES, AND/OR THE COMMUNITY?

Mental Health First Aid is a type of training known as a Gate Keeper Training. This approach involves training those who are not mental health professionals in how to recognize and respond to signs of mental health concerns in community members. Although these non-professionals cannot provide mental health treatment, they can provide support that encourages someone to seek treatment with a professional. This approach is very similar to training community members to provide first aid for a physical injury as medical treatment is being coordinated. Mental Health First Aid is an important tool in promoting mental health literacy, positive attitudes toward mental health, and helping behaviors toward those with mental health concerns.

HOW CAN YOU APPLY THIS INFORMATION?



USE ACTIVE LISTENING



BE AWARE OF RESOURCES



ATTEND A TRAINING

Active listening, or listening with the goal of understanding, can be very helpful when speaking to someone with a mental health concern. Ask questions to understand their perspective, listen more than you speak, and express empathy.

When speaking to someone with a mental health concern, you may encourage them to seek help from a professional. It can be helpful to be aware of resources that can be quickly accessed at any time, such as SAMHSA's National Helpline.

To effectively build your skills related to mental health literacy and mental health first aid, consider participating in a formal training. Reach out to the AMES Research Center to learn about Mental Health First Aid training opportunities.