MEET YOUR LIBRARIAN!

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA
School of Library and Information Science

USA
MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID
UNION COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM

Opened in 1905 as first Carnegie Library in SC

$2.5 million renovation and restoration in 2018 – new partnership facility (USC Union)

Operates branches in 3 municipalities throughout the county

Small staff of 19

- 5 full-time / 5 part-time on payroll
- 2 Americorps VISTA (full-time)
- 2 Americorps Financial Stability Navigators (part-time)
- 1 College of Social Work MSW (part-time)
- 1 SCSEP (part-time)
- 2 - 3 USC Union Work Studies (part-time)

Taylor Atkinson, November 2018
UNION COUNTY

Rural; 512 square miles
27,700 (shrinking, aging) population
1 in 3 poverty rate among children
1 in 5 adults at or below 3rd grade reading level
1 in 4 students does not graduate high school in 5 years
Former mill county; current lack of industry
1 hospital in the county; part of a tri-county service area
MENTAL HEALTH IN THE US

Statistics Courtesy of NAMI, National Alliance on Mental Illness

You Are Not Alone

- **19.1%** of U.S. adults experienced mental illness in 2018 (47.6 million people). This represents 1 in 5 adults.
- **4.6%** of U.S. adults experienced serious mental illness in 2018 (11.4 million people). This represents 1 in 25 adults.
- **16.5%** of U.S. youth aged 6-17 experienced a mental health disorder in 2016 (7.7 million people)
- **3.7%** of U.S. adults experienced a co-occurring substance use disorder and mental illness in 2018 (9.2 million people)
WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID?
Mental Health First Aid is a 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 problem or experiencing a crisis.

WHO WE’VE REACHED
More than 2 million people across the United States have been trained in Mental Health First Aid by a dedicated base of more than 15,000 Instructors.

Mental Health First Aiders are...
Teachers, first responders and veterans. They’re neighbors, parents and friends. They’re people in recovery, and those supporting a loved one. They’re First Ladies and Mayors. Mental Health First Aiders are anyone who wants to make their community healthier, happier and safer for all.
MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID: THE ALGEE ACTION PLAN

ALGEE: THE ACTION PLAN

ASSESS for risk of suicide or harm.
LISTEN non-judgmentally.
GIVE re-assurance and information.
ENCOURAGE appropriate professional help.
ENCOURAGE self-help and other support strategies.
LISTENING & COMMUNICATION

IMPROVE YOUR LISTENING WITH NON-VERBAL SKILLS

- Pay close attention to what the person says.
- Maintain comfortable eye contact. Don’t avoid eye contact, but do avoid staring.
- Maintain an open body position. Don’t cross your arms over your body, as this may appear defensive.
- Sit down, even if the person is standing, as this seems less threatening.
- It’s best to sit alongside and angled toward the person rather than directly opposite him or her.
- Do not fidget.

Nonverbal communication and body language express a great deal. Good nonverbal skills show you are listening, while poor nonverbal skills can damage the rapport and negate what you say. Keep these nonverbal cues in mind next time you have a conversation with someone who may need help.
DE-ESCALATION

- Move to a private place
- Use “I” statements
- Do not interrupt
- Let them set the style and pace of interaction
- Remain calm; use short, simple sentences
- Maintain your safety and access to an exit
LIBRARY POLICIES

- Review your policy and procedure manuals
  - All staff and board members should be clear on library policies so they can be consistently enforced
  - Noise policies and accessibility standards should be flexible to accommodate non-disruptive library users with mental illness (for example, a patron who talks to herself can be reminded that the noise may bother others, and could be offered a study room; patrons who are bothered by noise may be offered headphones)
  - Include resources such as the Crisis Text Line and National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

- Security Procedures
  - Non-emergency line
  - Always 2+ staff in the building

- Staff Wellness
  - Wellness committee
  - Quiet room or space
  - Outside resources? HR? EAP?

- Self-checkout machines – why? Privacy!
MENTAL HEALTH & COVID-19

How to Care for Yourself While Practicing Physical Distancing

**EAT HEALTHFULLY**
To keep your body in top working order.

**EXERCISE**
Workout at home or take a solo jog around the neighborhood.

**PRACTICE RELAXATION THERAPY**
Voluntarily tensing and relaxing muscle groups can help you relax voluntarily when feeling overwhelmed or anxious.

**LET LIGHT IN**
Increased exposure to light can improve symptoms of depression. Open the shades and let more sunlight in.

**BE KIND TO YOURSELF**
Treat yourself with the same compassion you would a friend.

**STAY CONNECTED**
Stay connected to loved ones with phone calls, text messages, video chats and social media.

**MONITOR MEDIA CONSUMPTION**
Balance media consumption with other activities you enjoy.

Learn more at [MHFA.ORG](http://MHFA.ORG)

*Information provided in the Mental Health First Aid curriculum.
*Mental Health First Aid is managed, operated, and disseminated by the National Council for Behavioral Health.
What are your self-care strategies?
THANK YOU!

Questions?
Contact Me:

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