

## 2014 Mally Education Grant Report: Journey Mental Health **Mental Health First Aid Training (\$1,752.55)**

Thank you for funding Journey Mental Health Center's request for training Dane County Senior Center staff in Mental Health First Aid. We believe the training was very successful – enabling Journey Mental Health Center to provide this training to those who are on the front line serving seniors throughout Dane County.

In September of 2014, Journey Mental Health Center was privileged to receive funding for Mental Health First Aid training for senior center staff from around Dane County. That training took place on September 25 and October 2, 2014.

Mental Health First Aid is a public education program that helps the public identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders. The program is offered in the form of an interactive 8-hour course that presents an overview of mental illness and substance use disorders in the United States and introduces participants to risk factors and warning signs of mental health problems, builds understanding of their impact, and overviews common treatments. Those who take the 8-hour course to certify as Mental Health First Aiders learn a five-step action plan encompassing the skills, resources, and knowledge to help an individual in crisis connect with appropriate professional, peer, social, and self-help care.

Losses are common for this age group. Deaths of spouses and friends are common. Loss of independence due to failing health can be a very traumatic event. As a result, depression and related mental health issues are common. Suicide rates rise substantially with seniors.

Mental Health First Aid training is important for people who work regularly with senior populations. They are often the first to notice changes in the seniors they serve. Mental Health First Aid training gives Senior Center staff the tools necessary to recognize emerging signs/symptoms of a mental health problem. Once recognized, the training enables staff to engage the person and guide them to resources in the community that can help.

Nineteen Senior Center staff attended the September/October training. We also provided three additional Senior Center staff members training who were unable to attend the scheduled September/October training.

Each participant in the training completed an evaluation of the class. These evaluations were largely very positive.

Thank you for making this valuable training possible.