



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Nina Glaser, Communications Coordinator
Phone: 561-909-7014 (cell)
Email: Nina.Glaser@AlpertJFS.org

VIRTUAL TRAININGS TO EXCLUSIVE GROUPS BY FERD & GLADYS ALPERT JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE RESULTS IN ADDITIONAL “MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AIDERS”

WEST PALM BEACH, FL – December 7, 2020 – A new group of Mental Health First Aiders, able to assess situations, offer nonjudgmental support, reassure, and give hope to someone who may be experiencing a mental health challenge or crisis, while helping them get appropriate professional assistance has emerged, following recent trainings by Ferd & Gladys Alpert Jewish Family Service (Alpert JFS).

“Mental First Aid,” the nationally renowned, evidence-based training course was recently experienced by participants from Bethesda Nursing School, AmeriCorps volunteers, the Breakers Hotel, Palm Beach County Bar Association, as well as Alpert JFS staff and supporters. These 62 new First Aiders have joined a network of more than 50,000 individuals who have made the commitment, virtually, to be the difference in the lives of friends, family, neighbors, colleagues and the public.

The virtual classes deliver practical, realistic activities that build upon each other, to provide participants with an understanding of the impact that mental illness has on individuals and families in a format that includes two (2) hours of self-paced independent classwork followed by interactive Zoom instruction for up to 20 people at a time. Nearly 5,000 instructors have earned their MHFA Virtual certification, nationally, and are breaking down the barriers created by physical distancing to teach their communities how to help one another cope.

“The online pre-course materials were excellent, and provided a strong foundation for the engaging and highly interactive virtual training session that followed,” said Bruce Blitman, Esq., who attended the Palm Beach Bar Association exclusive presentation. “I am proud to be certified as an Adult Mental Health First Aider. I believe that this important course has provided me with the tools, resources, and confidence that I will need to provide initial help to someone experiencing a mental health or substance use challenge.”

Thanks to grants from Palm Health Foundation, Florida Blue Foundation, Palm Beach County Behavioral Health Coalition, in partnership with SAMHSA, and OD2A (Overdose Data 2 Action), residents living in vulnerable communities, first responders, veterans, public safety personnel, firefighters, and those working in addiction recovery can be trained to help family, friends, and neighbors with mental health challenges.

“Many people with mental illness are reluctant to seek help or know where to turn for care, while their friends and family members may struggle to know when and how to help,” said Alpert JFS Clinical Director Elaine Rotenberg. “Mental Health First Aid training teaches people how to begin a conversation with someone who appears to be facing a mental health or substance use issue and, most importantly, in a non-judgmental way, provide support and encouragement so they can get the assistance they need.”

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Exclusive Group MHFA Training

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“Just as CPR training helps us assist those experiencing a health crisis, Mental Health First Aid training helps us help people with mental health challenges,” said Alpert JFS Director of Community Outreach/Mental Health First Aid Cindy Wides. “What a wonderful world it would be if there was no stigma attached to mental illness and substance use abuse, so that those affected felt comfortable seeking help and support.”

To learn how you can be a lifeline to friends, family members, colleagues, and others in the community of the Greater Palm Beaches, visit www.alpertjfs.org/mhfa/, contact Cindy Wides at 561-238-0251 or email Cindy.Wides@AlpertJFS.org to find a MHFA course near you.

Established in 1974, Ferd & Gladys Alpert Jewish Family Service is a nationally accredited service provider for children, adults, seniors (including Holocaust survivors), and individuals with disabilities. The non-profit, non-sectarian organization is a trusted leader, with a team of nearly 200 highly skilled professionals delivering high-quality care to community members. Alpert JFS works to ensure the well-being of children and families, independence of older adults and quality-of-life for individuals with disabilities. Visit www.AlpertJFS.org or phone 561-684-1991 for more information.

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