



Mental Health First Aid Trainings at Bridgton Hospital



Background Overview

According to the 2022 Oxford County Maine Shared Community Health Needs Assessment Report, **one in five adults report experiencing depression and/or anxiety** in their lifetime in Oxford County, and the mental health emergency department rate of 199.3 per 10,000 in Oxford County is significantly higher than in Maine overall (181.5)*. Although Bridgton Hospital is located in Cumberland County, it shares many health outcome similarities with its rural neighbor, Oxford County. To help address these health outcomes, Bridgton Hospital identified mental health as one of its main priorities in its 2022-2025 Community Health Implementation Plan. One of the activities identified to address this priority was offering mental health trainings to the community.

Planning

Beginning in the Summer of 2023, the Bridgton and Rumford Community Engagement Health Promotion Coordinator, Kristina, contacted the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Maine to ask about offering a mental health training at Bridgton Hospital. NAMI Maine agreed to offer an Adult Mental Health First Aid training for no cost to participants through one of their grants. [Mental Health First Aid](#) is a public education program that teaches participants how to recognize and respond to mental health challenges.

After communicating with Bridgton Hospital leadership, it was determined that the training would happen on November 21st, 2023, in a conference room on hospital grounds.



Pictured above: Participants from the Adult Mental Health First Aid Training

Summary of Training

There were 13 participants for the Adult Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training. These participants included community members from both Bridgton and surrounding areas, as well as a wide range of professional backgrounds. Findings from the day-of evaluations of the training showed that:

- o **92.3%** of participants agreed that **“this course was helpful and informative”**
- o **Over half** of participants agreed that **“this course has better prepared me for the work I do professionally”**
- o **100%** of participants either agreed or strongly agreed that **“there was adequate opportunity to practice the skills learned”**
- o **100%** of participants answered yes to the question: **“Based on your experience would you take another MHFA course?”**

Looking Ahead

Based on the positive feedback from this training, a Youth Mental Health First Aid training, which teaches adults how to recognize and respond to mental health challenges in youth, was offered at Bridgton Hospital on March 28th, 2024 in partnership with The Opportunity Alliance. This training had 10 participants from local schools and youth-serving organizations in attendance. Every person trained with Mental Health First Aid symbolizes one step closer to Maine communities that support the mental wellbeing of all.



Pictured above: Participants from the Youth Mental Health First Aid Training

Contact Healthy Androscoggin for more information at info@healthyandroscoggin.org or 207-795-5991



*Link to full report: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/phdata/MaineCHNA/documents/county-reports/2022/Oxford%20County%20MSCHNA%20Report%202022.pdf>