



Brown County Mental Health and Wellness Action Team

This action team works throughout Brown County to reduce the stigma of mental health, improve resiliency and improve access to mental health treatment and services.

Priorities and Recent Accomplishments — 2023

Mental Health Resource Guide Distribution

- In the spring, the team distributed the Mental Health Resource Guide in the *Scoop* to almost 10,000 homes. One community member sent a Facebook message thanking the team for sending, explaining that the winter had been hard and they appreciated the information. The resource guide makes it easier for community members to figure out where to start when they are struggling with mental health issues.

Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Trainings

- The team partnered with the Farm-City Hub Club to offer a free QPR training to attendees at the Farm Show in March to help people learn how to recognize the warning signs of a suicide crisis and how to use three simple steps — **Q**uestion, **P**ersuade and **R**efers — to help save a life.
- Throughout the year, the team partnered with a local school, church and nonprofits to offer four trainings on understanding Adverse Childhood Experiences to 84 community members and continues to offer trainings as requested.

Kindness in Chalk

- During Mental Health Awareness Month in May, the team promoted a Kindness in Chalk activity in the communities of New Ulm, Springfield, Sleepy Eye and Comfrey. The goal was for people to cover the sidewalks with messages and images of love, peace, hope and acceptance with the intention of bringing smiles to the faces of those who need it the most. Local school students and area businesses also participated.



Suicide Prevention Training for Faith-based Professionals

- In partnership with the New Ulm Ministerial Association, the team offered a free safeTALK training in October to 28 faith-based professionals on how to help prevent suicide. SafeTALK is a half-day training program that teaches participants to recognize and engage people who might be having thoughts of suicide and connect them with community resources trained in suicide intervention. SafeTALK stresses safety while challenging taboos that inhibit open talk about suicide.



safeTALK

Brown County Lunch Table Initiative

- In the fall, the team began the Brown County Lunch Table Initiative at Springfield High School, with plans to bring it to all of the county's middle and high schools. The initiative brings public health nurses and health educators into the schools to talk to students and staff about various health topics, ranging from physical health to mental health and anything in between. The goal is to lower the rates of mental illness, self-harm and suicide attempts of Brown County students by providing them access to additional supportive adults to whom they can turn.

Mental Health Conference

- To continue to raise awareness, educate and empower those who work in mental health or are affected by mental health in some capacity, the team began working with Brown County Public Health to plan an inaugural South Central Minnesota Mental Health Conference, which will take place in May 2024.

