

# PRESS RELEASE

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## A DIFFERENT TYPE OF FIRST AID

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JACKSON (August 31, 2015) – Equipping members of the community to render first aid for those facing mental illness is the goal of specialized classes being offered by LifeWays Community Mental Health.

“One in every five persons lives with a mental illness, and many aren’t receiving treatment,” said Marla Sanford, Public Relations Coordinator at LifeWays. “By offering Mental Health First Aid classes, LifeWays hopes to train community members to support those in need and help them find care.”

Similarly to first aid courses taught by the American Red Cross, Mental Health First Aid trains attendees to provide support to someone experiencing a mental illness until professional help can intervene. Mental Health First Aiders are taught to recognize the signs and symptoms of a mental health disorder or crisis, how to approach the person experiencing those symptoms, and how to direct that person to a professional that can help them.

Like physical illness, mental illness is treatable and most people who suffer from mental illness live full, productive lives, said Sanford.

Speaking on Mental Health First Aid recently at the Change Direction campaign, First Lady Michelle Obama said, “It really gives you the skills you need to identify – and ultimately help – someone in need. Because you never know when these kinds of skills might be useful.”

LifeWays Community Mental Health offers Mental Health First Aid classes for both adults assisting adults and adults assisting youth (Youth Mental Health First Aid) to community members in both Jackson and Hillsdale counties. The course is taught in a single eight-hour format and is offered for a nominal fee to cover the course materials and certification. More information on how to become certified in Mental Health First Aid is available at [www.lifewayscmh.org/mentalhealthfirstaid.html](http://www.lifewayscmh.org/mentalhealthfirstaid.html).

### **More information about:**

- *Jackson County Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition* and its activities, please contact Ravenn Moore at (517) 796-5133 or via email at [rmoore@uwjackson.org](mailto:rmoore@uwjackson.org)
- *LifeWays Community Mental Health* and how to attend a Mental Health First Aid course, please contact Marla Sanford at (517) 789-2490 or via email at [marla.sanford@lifewayscmh.org](mailto:marla.sanford@lifewayscmh.org)

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