



MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID  
*United in Heart and Mind*

### **Mental Health in Our Community**

Research studies and strategic plans have identified mental health as a growing concern within our community. 1 in 3 people in the Omaha-Council Bluffs metro experience symptoms of chronic depression. When it comes to mental health access, Nebraska ranks in the bottom half of all 50 states. On average, 130 people die by suicide every single day. Due to the stigma around asking for help, many people suffer silently without getting the help they need.

### **Women United's Mental Health Initiative: United in Heart and Mind**

Women United has prioritized mental health to address the increased demand for services and access challenges. Specifically, Women United is committed to raising awareness of and increasing access to Mental Health First Aid training, to ensure people throughout the community receive the right care at the right time.

### **Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)**

UWM has developed a partnership with Region 6 Behavioral Healthcare to expand MHFA training to improve our community's understanding of mental health and reduce barriers to seeking help.

Similar to CPR training, MHFA is an internationally recognized, evidence-based training program that has certified more than two million Americans as Mental Health First Aiders. The MHFA Action plan equips individuals with the skills to:

- Understand the impacts of mental health challenges
- Notice the signs and symptoms of mental illnesses
- Develop an action plan to connect with an individual they may be concerned about, by using the following tools:
  - Assess for risk of suicide or harm
  - Listen nonjudgmentally
  - Give reassurance and information
  - Encourage appropriate professional help
  - Encourage self-help and other support strategies

Targeted audiences for this training include employers and business leaders, faith communities, school personnel and educators, and any of our friends and neighbors that want to better understand how to help someone struggling with mental health challenges.

Enhancing the capacity to provide MHFA training will significantly increase community awareness and education around mental illness, and empower community members to connect with individuals and increase support for those in need of mental health services.

### **Women United's Impact**

Women United's support will fund an awareness campaign, and cover the costs of training to UWM's 211 staff on MHFA referrals. Targeted awareness efforts and direct outreach will significantly increase the number of individuals in our community receiving MHFA training. In addition, Women United's support will fund a MHFA Coordinator at Region 6 Behavioral Healthcare to increase the number of individuals in our community receiving MHFA training.