

CSIU offers free mental health training

By Anna Wiest

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The Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit (CSIU) will offer free training opportunities for educators, first responders and community members throughout June, July and August.

Two trainings will be offered at several times throughout the summer months.

One of the two, Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) focuses on challenges that may arise in individuals ages 6 to 18.

“YMHFA teaches individuals how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental health and substance use challenges among children and adolescents ages 6 to 18,” said Julie Petrin, CSIU director of behavioral health support services.

The training lasts 6.5 hours and will be offered at the following times: 8:15 a.m. to 4 p.m. on June 23; 8:15 a.m. to 4 p.m. on July 12; and 8:15 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Aug. 7. Sessions include an hour lunch break.

Two blended trainings will also be available. The blended sessions require individuals to complete two hours of work online before going to the CSIU for the rest of the training. The live portions of the training will be offered from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on July 7 and 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Aug. 2.

The second program the CSIU will offer is Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR), a suicide prevention training.

“QPR is a concise (120-minute) suicide prevention training in which participants learn how to recognize

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the signs of mental distress, ask simple and direct questions, and help those in need to access local resources,” Petrin said.

QPR training will be offered four times throughout the summer: 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. on June 26, July 6, July 11 and Aug. 8.

The trainings are fitting for all kinds of residents, Petrin said. “Anyone within Snyder, Union, Montour, Columbia and Northumberland counties are able to attend,” she said. “From parents to community organizations, like the YMCAs and Boy Scouts, to school personnel to first responders, like the police and fire departments,” she said.

The free trainings are funded by three local grants, according to Petrin. The grants include Mental Health Awareness and Training, through the McDowell Institute at Bloomsburg University, PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency through the Greater Susquehanna United Way and Advancing Mental Health Practices Across Communities Together (Project AWARE IMPACT), through the CSIU.

“A common goal of the three grants includes increasing mental health awareness and building family, community and school capacity to address mental health needs with the youth in our five county region,” Petrin said.

Registration for both CSIU free training opportunities is required and can be completed at <https://sites.google.com/csiu.org/summer-trainings/home>.

Erin Demcher, Behavioral Support Services project coordinator for Project AWARE is handling the scheduling and coordination of the trainings. For more information, Demcher can be reached at ademcher@csiu.org.