

Wellness Associates of Greater Rochester

Mental Health First Aid

AGENCY DESCRIPTION

Wellness Associates of Greater Rochester (WAGR) partners with organizations to deliver comprehensive employee assistance and wellness services. They offer tailored education, response, and support programs—including mental health literacy training, trauma-informed workplace development and consultation, and both immediate and long-term critical incident support. Services can be customized to fit the unique needs of an organization's leadership team, management, and frontline staff.

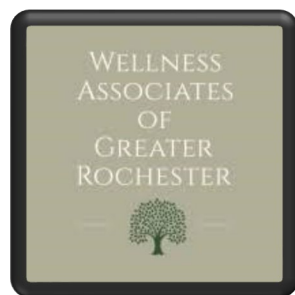
OVERVIEW

The Wellness Associates of Greater Rochester was one of the inaugural winners of the Community Health Improvement Workgroup mini grants. WAGR was awarded a mini-grant to promote mental health and well-being through training key stakeholders in Mental Health First Aid - an internationally-recognized program designed to increase awareness of the signs and symptoms of mental illness and decrease negative stigmas associated with these conditions.

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HIGHLIGHTS

The Wellness Associates of Greater Rochester used their mini-grant funds to provide five Mental Health First Aid certification training sessions. WAGR purchased Mental Health First Aid training manuals and participant processing guides, as well as hired bi-lingual instructors to expand the training further. After registering 81 participants, 45 individuals became fully certified in Mental Health First Aid from the National Council of Mental Wellbeing.

LESSONS LEARNED & NEXT STEPS

Participants faced challenges completing the post-work required for certification by the National Council for Mental Wellbeing when attending in-person training sessions. In contrast, there were fewer issues with the virtual format, where participants were required to complete two hours of pre-work before attending the instructor-led Zoom training. Accessing the Learning Management System and completing the brief, 10-minute pre-course knowledge check is also a certification requirement to become a Mental Health First Aider. To address these challenges, WAGR designated a virtual assistant to proactively contact participants based on rosters provided by supervisory staff from maternal and child health organizations and offered consistent follow-up and technical assistance both before and after training sessions.

Finding a bilingual instructor who could commit to the required three-day Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training and provide three trainings per year proved to be challenging. Due to unforeseen circumstances, the selected candidate was no longer able to provide the trainings shortly before the start date. However, WAGR was able to resource an individual with a nursing background as an instructor.