



## Loudoun County, Virginia

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### County Partners with Public Schools in Teen Mental Health Pilot Program

The Loudoun County government is partnering with Loudoun County Public Schools in a national pilot program designed to promote mental health wellness in teens.



The Department of Mental Health, Substance Abuse and Developmental Services and Freedom High School were selected by The National Council for Behavioral Health and Born This Way Foundation as one of eight pilot projects in the country to offer the teen Mental Health First Aid training, the first program of its kind developed for high school students in the U.S.

The in-person training teaches high school students about mental illnesses and addictions, particularly how to identify and respond to a developing mental health or substance use problem among their friends and classmates. Similar to CPR, students learn a five-step action plan to help their friends who may be facing a mental health problem or crisis, such as suicidal thoughts.

The teen Mental Health First Aid training is a companion course to Mental Health First Aid classes currently offered by the Loudoun County Department of Mental Health, Substance Abuse and Developmental Services. The department offers two versions of the program, one for adults who interact with young people and one for adults in general.

- **Youth Mental Health First Aid** focuses on the unique risk factors and warning signs of mental health problems in adolescents, the importance of early intervention and how to help an adolescent who is in crisis or experiencing a mental health challenge.
- **Adult Mental Health First Aid** introduces participants to common risk factors and warning signs of mental illness, including anxiety, depression, substance abuse, bipolar disorder, eating disorders and schizophrenia, and how to offer initial help to someone in a mental health crisis.

Classes are offered to the public at no-cost throughout the year. Each eight-hour course is taught over a two-day period.

More information, including course descriptions and information on how to register, is online at [www.loudoun.gov/mhfirstaid](http://www.loudoun.gov/mhfirstaid).

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