

This weekend I received my certification for Mental Health First Aid. I learned that the five basic actions of mental health first aid are: (ALGEE)

**A**ssess the risk of suicide and/or harm.

**L**isten non judgmentally.

**G**ive reassurance and information.

**E**ncourage the person to get appropriate professional help.

**E**ncourage other supports.

Throughout the two day training, I learned how to apply these actions to various disorders:

- Substance related disorders
- Mood related disorders
- Anxiety and trauma related disorders
- Psychotic related disorders.

Although this course focuses more on adults, I still came away feeling like I could apply what I learned in the classroom. During our discussion on CBT (cognitive behavioral therapy), we did talk about some beneficial apps for children: Mindshift CBT-Anxiety Canada, CBT Companion and Ninja Focus.

There is a more focused course regarding mental health first aid as it pertains to children/youth but unfortunately at this time it is not offered in the Sault. I feel that if it does become available that this would be of great benefit to not only support staff, but also teachers for professional development. It may be worthwhile looking into the services offered at Algoma Family Services. For example, if someone from there could provide us all with training on a professional development day. None of us have had specific training through the board on the growing problem of mental health issues within the school system.

Thank you for this opportunity to expand on my knowledge base. I will definitely implement the skills I learned into the classroom.

Sarina Thomlinson