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PRESS RELEASE

From: Yarmouth Hospital Foundation

Re: Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) Workshop

Release Date: November 2, 2017

Suicide intervention skills course answers community demand

Elisha Stairs can't forget the day someone came into her office and announced that they planned to attempt suicide immediately after that meeting.

Stairs kept her cool and used her training to eventually help the young person to develop a safety plan for the rest of the day. She was just a phone call away for the rest of the day and at home in the evening.

The support worker/program coordinator at the Tri-County Women's Centre credits the training she received in the Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) offered as part of her Mental Health Recovery and Promotion course at Nova Scotia Community College Burrigade Campus with allowing her to resolve this life-threatening situation safely.

In fact, Stairs says she uses the skills and techniques she acquired by taking the ASIST workshop more than any others when she worked at SHYFT (Supportive Housing Youth Focus Team), and nearly as often at the Women's Centre.

An ASIST workshop is being offered at Yarmouth Regional Hospital Nov. 30 - Dec. 1. It is a two-day interactive workshop in suicide first aid. ASIST teaches participants to recognize when someone may be at risk of suicide and work with them to create a plan that will support their immediate safety.

It is being organized by the Nova Scotia Health Authority's (NSHA) Mental Health and Addictions program in partnership with the Yarmouth Hospital Foundation and the Tri-County Women's Centre.

"The Foundation is so grateful that the generosity of the late businessman Richard Shapiro has allowed us to present this workshop at a reduced cost," says Foundation Board Chair Don Cook.

“Dealing with potential risk of suicide is a very complex problem and this training is just one component — an important component, but not the only one,” says Larry Phillips, prevention & health promotion coordinator, Mental Health and Addictions.

“The goal is to have more folks in our community who are prepared to support those who have thoughts of suicide and their families,” says Lianne Turner, sexualized violence service coordinator at the Tri-County Women’s Centre.

“The program is beneficial for community groups, teachers, police, organizations that work with youth, seniors, anyone who might be at risk of mental illness and therefore in danger of considering suicide,” says Phillips.

“A lot of people rally around the youth component — we always want to protect our youth,” he says. “But it’s not just youth; it can be anybody. It’s really important to have people out there who are trained to detect potential risk of suicide, and now the community will have more people who are trained in how to identify and refer for appropriate services.”

The program is open to anyone 16 years of age or older, but space is limited. The cost is \$50 (instead of the usual \$195). It will be held in the Bluenose Conference Room at the Yarmouth Regional Hospital from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. both days. To register, contact Terri at 902-742-0085 or therapy@tricountywomenscentre.org.

*If you are having thoughts of suicide and would like support, you can reach out to the Mental Health Crisis Line, 24/7: **1(888)429-8167***

For more information:

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