



FOR RELEASE  
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## **Mental health first aid course adapted for northerners**

WHITEHORSE—The Mental Health Commission of Canada launched its adapted Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) course at the commission's annual general meeting in Yellowknife earlier this summer.

Yukon Health and Social Services' Mental Health Services branch officials were part of a pan-territorial working group that helped the Mental Health Commission of Canada develop *Mental Health First Aid Canada for Northern Peoples*, a first aid course adapted specifically for people living in northern Canada.

"Developing a course with northern culture in mind shows the Mental Health Commission of Canada is dedicated to helping people in various regions across Canada," Minister of Health and Social Services Doug Graham said. "The Yukon government and the Northern Institute of Social Justice, Yukon College, will continue to work in partnership and offer the course tailored for our northern context."

The *Mental Health First Aid Canada for Northern Peoples* course recognizes northern life, peoples and related experiences. It will be an asset for anyone interested in helping someone who is experiencing mental health symptoms or working with high-risk individuals.

This year, the course was offered to the public in Whitehorse and to students in the Home Management Support Essential Skills Program at the Haines Junction, Yukon College campus. In addition to public offerings, the course can be delivered to organizations upon request. It will be delivered to students in the Yukon College Home Support program in Dawson, from October 21 to 23. Seats in this training session will also be available for the public. Other course offerings will be advertised throughout the year.

"Work of all parties, particularly the pan-territorial community-based advisory committee, should be clearly acknowledged and celebrated," Graham added.

In recent years, the Northern Institute of Social Justice, Yukon College, offered the standard two-day Mental Health First Aid course.

The newly adapted three-day course is based on the standard course as well as highlighting the challenges of living in remote and isolated communities. By looking at the main elements of health, course participants will be taught to identify—and temporarily deal with—someone who is exhibiting mental health symptoms or experiencing a mental health crisis until a higher level of help can be obtained.

The Northern Institute of Social Justice, Yukon College, handles training requests and will offer the course to the public twice per year and upon request by groups of interested individuals or workplaces.

Visit [Mental Health First Aid Canada Northern Peoples Course](#) to learn more about the national initiative,

or call 867-456-8590 for information about course offerings in Yukon. Also watch for newspaper advertisements on how to register or visit the [Northern Institute of Social Justice](#) website.

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The Mental Health Commission also issued a [news release on this topic](#).

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