

The Daily
Advertiser
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**LIFE-SAVING
COURSE:** Narelle
Heywood is
presenting a mental
health first aid course
in Wagga yesterday
and today.

Picture: Les Smith



MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION

Mental first aid is a life-saver

JUST as physical first aid can save the life of an injured person, mental first aid can be life-saving for a person suffering from depression.

A two-day mental health first aid course began in Wagga yesterday and the group behind it believes every Australian should have the training.

"People have developed a greater understanding of mental health over the past 10 years but many do not know what to do for a person with a mental health problem, and that is the background of this course, it gives them skills in much the same way a first aid

course does for physical problems," said instructor Narelle Heywood.

Mrs Heywood is delivering the course to 23 non-government welfare sector workers at the Bob Osborne Skills Centre.

The course is being presented by the Mental Health Co-ordinating Council.

The course covers:

- Introduction to common mental illnesses, such as depression, anxiety disorders, psychotic disorders and substance abuse disorders;

- Crisis first aid for suicidal behaviour, acute stress reaction, panic

attacks, acute psychotic episode and drug overdoses;

- On-going first aid skills for all common mental illnesses;

- The warning signs of mental illness;

- How to address difficult situations

- How and where to get the right help.

Mrs Heywood said the courses helped individuals overcome their fear of people with a mental illness and this flowed through to easing the stigma attached to the condition.

For help visit www.mhfa.com.au.