



Walker Consulting Partners with City of Haverhill to Offer Youth Mental Health First Aid

Helping recognize student warning signs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Needham, MA –Walker Consulting has partnered with the City of Haverhill and Haverhill Public Schools (HPS) to offer Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) training to 100 participants from HPS and local youth-serving organizations. The training is designed to help participants recognize and support students who may be experiencing a mental health issue or crisis and, if needed, refer them for appropriate services.

“Training teachers and school support staff to recognize when a youth may be experiencing a mental health issue is critical during these times,” said Shannon Lee, Ed.M., LCSW, Walker’s vice president of communications and strategic initiatives. “Youth Mental Health First Aid Training is designed for those who have close contact with youth, but who may or may not have received specific mental health training.”

Walker Consulting is a division of [Walker Therapeutic & Educational Programs](#), a leading nonprofit organization providing comprehensive, highly therapeutic academic and behavioral health services for children, youth and families from over 100 communities in Massachusetts.

Youth Mental Health First Aid training sessions run 6.5 hours. Participants do the first two hours on their own asynchronously, and then complete the training with a 4.5-hour interactive Zoom session. Participants learn how to approach a youth that they may be concerned about, including how to engage in difficult but critical conversations with students having a mental health issue or in crisis.

“Now, more than ever, we need a variety of trained eyes on our students, monitoring their mental health and well-being. Mental Health First Aid training provides our frontline educational staff with the information needed to recognize the early warning signs of developing mental health concerns; tools for in-the-moment conversations with at-risk students; and guidance around

referring students to clinical interventions,” said Haverhill Public Schools Superintendent Margaret Marotta.

“The training is not intended to help others diagnose or treat students with mental health issues,” said Lee, “but rather to position more people that are in contact with youth to act as an extra set of eyes so we can recognize when they may be in need of additional support or services.”

Walker Consulting is also partnering with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to offer 40 Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) training sessions to educators throughout the state. The trainings are funded by a U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention grant to DESE to promote COVID mitigation strategies.

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About Walker: Founded in 1961, [Walker Therapeutic & Educational Programs](#) is a leading non-profit organization providing intensive, highly therapeutic academic and behavioral health services for children, youth and families living in 150 communities across the Commonwealth.

Walker’s service offerings are divided across eight different educational, residential and community-based programs.

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