

Reach Out Together Through Frontline Mental Health Training

Empowering young professionals for mental health crisis prevention and management

TORONTO, ON, CANADA, January 27, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- It's 2021! It's a new year, but like any new year, it's a continuation more than a restart. For Toronto-based Reach Out Together and its international community, it signals some new projects built on the foundations of past programs. One of them, Frontline Mental Health Training (FMHT), is a high priority for the organization as Canada and the world as a whole face increased strain on mental well-being, along with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and public health measures.

Reach Out Together's inaugural Frontline Mental Health 2-Day Bootcamp Training will be held on Saturday January 30, and Sunday January 31, from 10 a.m. to noon. The goal is for participants to come away with their certificates of completion, having developed an ability to engage stakeholders with confidence, and to promote access to mental health resources within their community and beyond.

What began as a Mental Health First Aid program, built around the guidelines of the Mental Health Commission of Canada, is being adapted by Reach Out Together into a unique two-day "bootcamp". Reach Out Together describes FMHT as being focused on "Psychological First Aid, a simple tool that can provide frontline mental health workers or community advocates with basic knowledge and skills to help people affected by the crises in their lives."



Reach Out Together's logo, showing the hand sign for "together" in American Sign Language, within an orange circle. In colour therapy, orange represents warmth and healing. The circle represents the world.

The basic knowledge and skills highlighted include an overview of what defines different mental illnesses and how to recognize them, as well as a step-by-step process for helping someone in a crisis.

"This program is designed to teach anyone and everyone how to support someone in distress; especially advocates or people who offer support to their family or friends. We have been training Torontonians on crisis response since January 2018 in-person," says Reach Out Together Founder & CEO Aanchal Vashistha.

"Because of the pandemic, all our in-person training was cancelled. We continued to host these training virtually in 2020 for our volunteers. This year we are moving digital and offering this program to people globally."

The updated program matters now, she adds, "because I believe there is a lack of recognition of the importance of frontline social workers and mental health advocates; people who offer support to others and help guide them to feel better or get the right professional help and support."

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Aanchal Vashistha, Founder & CEO of Reach Out Together

Reach Out Together's Program Supervisor, Disha Chhadva, says this was a major priority for the start of 2021.

"Through this pandemic, we realised more and more people either need help related to mental health, or are caregivers to someone who does," she says.

Ana Fonseca, who worked with Chhadva and Vashistha to develop this program, says "The training material...is taken

from years of experience working with clients. There are a lot of programs out there branded as Mental Health First Aid. We call it Frontline Training because we want to equip people with the tools to go out and directly help others in need."

The poster has an orange background. In the top right corner, a yellow diagonal banner contains the text "30 JAN & 31". The main title "FRONTLINE MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING" is in large, bold, black capital letters. Below it, "COURSE INSTRUCTOR" is in smaller white capital letters, followed by "AANCHAL VASH" in bold black capital letters. A white arrow-shaped box contains the text "AS SEEN ON:" followed by logos for NBC, CBS, FOX, and ABC. To the right of this box is a portrait of Aanchal Vashistha, a woman with long dark hair, wearing a dark blue top, with her arms crossed. Below the portrait, white text reads: "Intl. Bestselling Author", "Award-Winning ThoughtLeader", "Lead Instructor and Founder", and "Reach Out Together Foundation". At the bottom, a white box contains the registration information: "REGISTRATION LINK IN BIO @ROTAMBASSADOR OR VISIT WWW.REACHOUTTOGETHER.COM". To the right of this box is the Reach Out Together logo, which consists of a stylized tree icon and the text "REACH OUT TOGETHER".

FRONTLINE MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING

COURSE INSTRUCTOR

AANCHAL VASH

AS SEEN ON: NBC CBS FOX ABC

Intl. Bestselling Author
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REACH OUT TOGETHER

Reach Out Together Founder & CEO, and bestselling author, Aanchal Vashistha, leads the two-day frontline mental health "bootcamp".

Shravani Salgaonkar is a social entrepreneur and founder of [ChangeSpark](#), “a social enterprise that creates an impact in communities through various programs” addressing a broad range of issues, such as racism and mental illness. She spoke with Reach Out Together’s Founder & CEO, Aanchal Vashistha, for an episode of its weekly Mental Health Impact Series. As a “self-proclaimed global citizen”, she says, “We need to move on from making blank, prejudiced assumptions about people...and empower them.”

This means acknowledging privilege in access to resources, speaking out about mental health in our day-to-day lives, and engaging in self-care.

Each of these topics figures, in some way, into Reach Out Together’s Frontline Mental Health Training, which seeks to empower anyone and everyone to help others who may not be aware of the extent of resources available in a crisis.

Reach Out Together’s Event Coordinator, Neha Sivatkika, emphasizes the value of the FMHT program based on her own experience as a mental health advocate.

Sivatkika also has her own initiative, “Yes, You Matter”, as a space for non-judgmental discussion between her peer group, with a common goal of spreading mental health awareness.

She cites a staggering statistic: In India, every four minutes, a person passes away to suicide. Sivatkika, and Reach Out Together as an organization, believes this is a preventable tragedy.

While socioeconomic and political factors play an undeniable role in our state of mind and cannot be resolved by awareness alone, Reach Out Together believes that knowing that there are resources and a support network available can still be a lifeline for those who might feel they’re out of options.

“What any one of us can do is provide moral support, remind people that resources are there, and let them know they’re not alone,” says Sivatkika.

Reach Out Together’s Content Supervisor, Alinka Avendano, has professional experience in a frontline mental health setting in Leon, Nicaragua.

Her day-to-day life experience sparked her interest in building a professional career in the field of psychology and mental health. While she believes day-to-day habits are crucial for our well-being, she stresses that access to professional frontline resources are a major boon for sticking to those positive personal goals.

Young professionals, Avendano says, have helped to fill a gap in the system for those who may not have immediate access to such resources. She works to encourage everyone to “[use] every resource that you have, internal or external, that is going to help you cope with a mental health

situation.”

That, in short, is the personalized “Mental Health Toolkit” that has been the central focus of Reach Out Together’s work this month, and it ties directly into concepts explored in Frontline Mental Health Training.

The toolkit includes a series of steps for defining your struggle, setting goals, and sticking to them.

As Salgaonkar says, “Just show up! That’s the first step.”

For ticket purchasing and further information, see the EventBrite listing at <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/frontline-mental-health-bootcamp-training-tickets-136144125745> and for more general information about Reach Out Together, see <https://reachouttogether.com> and follow us @ROTAmbassador on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter & LinkedIn.

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