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MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID



A Collaborative Partnership of
National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare,
Maryland State Department of Mental Hygiene and Missouri Department of Mental Health

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Mental Health First Aid

The help provided to a person developing a mental health problem or experiencing a crisis until professional treatment is received or the crisis resolves.



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Mental Health First Aid vs. Psychological First Aid

- Mental Health First Aid is similar to Red Cross First Aid in that the goal is to quickly triage, put a “bandage” on an injury, and then refer for professional intervention.
- Psychological First Aid is the interventions provided in the immediate aftermath of a disaster to assist victims and/or responders become emotionally and psychologically stabilized after the event.

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Mental Health First Aid

- > Created in Australia in 2001
- > Developed at the University of Melbourne
- > Expanded to more than 14 countries: Cambodia, Canada, England, Finland, Hong Kong, Japan, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Singapore, South Africa, Thailand, and Wales
- > Piloted in the U.S. in 2008
- > Youth program launched 2013



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Evidenced Effectiveness

- > Four published randomized control trials and a qualitative study (in Australia)
 - > Increases mental health literacy
 - > Expands individuals' knowledge of how to help someone in crisis
 - > Connects individuals to needed services
 - > Reduces stigma

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Vision for MHFA in U.S.



Mental Health First Aid will be as commonplace in 15 years as CPR and First-Aid are today.

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MHFA by the Numbers (2008-June 2013)

- > 3000+ instructors certified
- > 100,000+ people trained
- > 1,000,000+ media impressions



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MHFA by the Numbers - Kansas

- > High Plains MHC in Hays was one of the first training providers in Kansas beginning in 2009
- > 25 of the 27 Community Mental Health Centers in Kansas have certified MHFA instructors
- > Over 80 CMHC instructors have been trained since 2010
- > Estimates are that 120 classes will be taught across the state this year
- > In Kansas over 6,000 people trained



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People are Saying . . .

- > *"I enjoyed every minute of the entire class and have already applied some of the concepts to my clients (and some family members as well)."*
--Developmental Services of Northwest Kansas, Hays
- > *"Much was a review for me but I was very interested in the update and felt my days were well spent."* --USD 407, Russell
- > *"I now feel I have the tools to help somebody."*
--Phillips County
- > *"I wish that I would have had this class 35 years ago. Maybe it would have helped or stopped my son-in-law from committing suicide."*
--Ellis County Organization Volunteer

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People are Saying (continued)

> *“A friend of my wife’s came by the house. She was drunk and agitated. My first instinct and my wife’s was to get angry and tell her to leave, but then I remembered Mental Health First Aid. We really tried to be nonjudgmental and listen more; the situation went much better than it would have otherwise.”*

—Thomas County Participant

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Key Audiences

- > Hospitals and Health Centers
- > Employers
- > Faith communities
- > Schools
- > Law Enforcement / Justice
- > Nursing home staff
- > Families and caring citizens
- > Key Professions
- > Mental Health Authorities
- > Policymakers

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MHFA Curriculum

- > There are two versions of MHFA
 - > The Adult Curriculum is focused on disorders that adults may experience.
 - > The new Youth Curriculum is focused on adolescent development and disorders that adolescents may experience. This class is for adults who work with adolescents.

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Class Objectives

- > Be able to describe what a mental disorder is
- > Gain an understanding of the prevalence of mental illness in the United States
- > Understand the impact of mental illness on individuals and to the population as a whole
- > Gain an understanding of the major mental illnesses and their signs and symptoms
- > Learn the acronym ALGEE, the MHFA Action Plan

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Class Objectives, Cont'd

- > Learn elements of suicide risk and how to ask about them
- > Develop skills to engage and interact with persons who may be experiencing mental illness
- > Learn about professional resources to support those needing mental health services
- > Learn about non-professional and community supports
- > Practice developing Mental Health First Aid Action Plans

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Class Structure

- > 8 hours in length
- > Two, 4-hour sessions
- > Can be presented in 1 or 2 days



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MHFA Topics

- > What is the prevalence of mental illness in the US?
- > Who experiences mental illness?
- > What are risk factors for mental illness?
- > Why is there a “stigma” attached to mental illness?

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Diagnostic Categories

- > Depression
- > Anxiety
- > Eating Disorders
- > Substance Use Disorders
- > Psychotic Disorders
- > Adolescent Development
- > Disorders of Adolescence

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Other Learning

- > How to talk with someone who may be experiencing mental illness
- > What professional resources are available to treat mental illness
- > What informal resources are available for those with mental illness, or their families

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How to locate MHFA Classes

- > Go to the MHFA website
- > Click on “Find a Course Near You”
- > Enter City and State or Zip code
- > Enter distance willing to travel
- > Click on “Find MHFA”

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Or.....

- > Contact the Community Mental Health Center in your area
- > Ask for the MHFA Training Coordinator
- > Classes may be provided at the CMHC or at locations in the community

- > Note: A typical class will require a minimum of 12 participants

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Is There a Cost?

- > This varies from center to center
- > Grant funding may cover classes in some areas
- > There may be a per-participant charge, but the amount may vary.

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What Do I Need to Bring?

- > Each participant will receive a MHFA manual
- > Bring a pad and pen/pencils for taking notes
- > Bring an open attitude and willingness to participate in activities and discussions

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Graduation

- > Students must participate in all 8 hours of instruction to receive credit for the course
- > Students receive a completion certificate
- > MHFA certification is good for 3 years

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Putting MHFA to Work

- Mental Health First Aiders may be able to use learned strategies in their day to day lives.
- Remember, however, that MHFA is not therapy, and first aiders are not therapists or counselors.
- The goal is to identify potential mental health concerns and assist people in getting appropriate help.

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Putting MHFA to Work

> *“Mental Health First Aid, with its new focus on recovery, has the power to transform communities, the power to change beliefs and the ability to connect people in ways they never would have connected otherwise.”*

> --- Larry Fricks
National Consumer Leader

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Local Information

High Plains Mental Health Center
1-800-432-0333 or 785/628-2871
www.hpmhc.org

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