MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

A Collaborative Partnership of
National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare,
And The Life Link Training Institute
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.
Mental Health First Aid

> Created in Australia in 2001
> Auspiced 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
Purpose

> Mental Health First Aid is a public education program designed to:
> 
> > reduce stigma
> > improve mental health literacy
> > and empower individuals
Spectrum of Mental Health Interventions

Figure 1: Spectrum of mental health interventions from wellness to mental disorders and through to recovery, showing the contribution of MHFA
Research conducted in Australia has demonstrated:

- Increases mental health literacy
- Expands individuals’ knowledge of how to help someone in crisis
- Connects individuals to needed services
- Reduces stigma
Evidenced Effectiveness

> Four published randomized control trials and a qualitative study have found, for participants:

> Better recognition of mental disorders
> Better understanding of treatment options
> Confidence in providing help to others
> Improved mental health for themselves
> Lessened stigmatizing attitudes and decreased social distance from people with mental disorders
Evidenced Effectiveness

The studies have also demonstrated the following community outcomes:

- Increased help provided to others
- Increased guidance to professional help
- Improved concordance with health professionals about treatments.
Course Content

The Mental Health First Aid curriculum employs a strong Recovery focus to educate participants about:

- Depression
- Suicide and Self-Injury
- Anxiety Disorders (including PTSD)
- Psychotic Disorders
- Substance Abuse Disorders
- Eating Disorders
Course Content

> Mental Health First Aid does not train individuals to become professional counselors, but rather provides skills to:

  > Recognize risk factors and warning signs
  > Assess for imminent risk of suicide
  > Listen more effectively
  > Provide reassurance and information
  > Encourage appropriate professional help, self-help, and other support strategies.
Vision for MHFA in U.S.

Mental Health First Aid will be as commonplace in 15 years as CPR and First-Aid are today.
MHFA by the Numbers
(2008-Mid 2009)

> 330 instructors certified
> 36 state presence
> 180+ community trainings to date
> 3000+ people trained
> 1,000,000 media impressions
People are Saying . . .

> “Just weeks after attending the training, I’ve already used the skills I learned in Mental Health First Aid...” -- Hospital employee

> “I think any professionals who deal with people should take this course, especially emergency personnel, teachers, . . .”
  -- Employment Services Professional

> “I now feel better prepared for what might happen.”
  -- Homeless Shelter volunteer

> “This info can help a person to become more understanding, rather than judgmental, of someone with a mental illness”
  -- Community Member
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
Technical Assistance

- Consultation
- Webinars
- Instructor Listserve
- Technical Assistance Website
“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
Additional Information

www.MentalHealthFirstAid.org

Susan Partain
National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare
SusanP@theNationalCouncil.org
(202) 684-7457 ext. 232