



MENTAL  
HEALTH  
FIRST AID

*A Collaborative Partnership*

NATIONAL COUNCIL  
for Community Behavioral  
Healthcare

Maryland State Department of  
Health and Mental Hygiene

Missouri Department of Mental  
Health

# What Is 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.



# Program Origins

- Created in Australia in 2001
- Auspiced at the University of Melbourne
- Expanded to 17 countries, including Scotland, China, Canada, Finland, Singapore, Ireland, Wales, England, Cambodia, Japan, South Africa, Thailand and New Zealand.
- Piloted in the U.S. in 2008

# 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

# Potential Audiences

- Hospitals and health centers
- Employers
- Faith communities
- Schools/universities
- Law enforcement/first responders
- Nursing home staff
- Consumers, families and caring citizens
- Mental health authorities
- Policymakers

# 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*

# People Are Saying . . .

- “I now feel better prepared for what might happen.”

*Homeless Shelter Volunteer*

- “This info can help a person become more understanding, rather than judgmental, of someone with a mental illness”

*Community Member*

# By the Numbers: 2008-2011

- 45,000+ Mental Health First Aiders
- 1,800+ instructors certified
- 45 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico





# What You Learn

- Overview of mental health problems
  - Depressive/Mood disorders
  - Anxiety disorders
  - Disorders in which psychosis occurs
  - Substance use disorders
  - Eating disorders
- Mental Health First Aid for crisis situations
- Mental Health First Aid for non-crisis situations

# 5 Step Action Plan

- A – Assess for risk of suicide or harm
- L – Listen Nonjudgmentally
- G – Give reassurance and information
- E – Encourage appropriate professional help
- E – Encourage self help and other support strategies

# Methods of Learning

- Didactic
  - PowerPoint
  - Workbooks
  - Active participation
- Videos
  - On Depression, Anxiety disorders, Psychosis
- Case Vignettes

# How it Works

## Training Components

- 12-hour community program offered by instructors
- 5-day instructor certification training offered by the National Council, Missouri Department of Mental Health, and Maryland Department of Health & Mental Hygiene

# My Experience

- Have taught MHFA 10 times
  - Youth Advocates
  - Senior Center Staff
  - General Public
- Class sizes are capped at 25 for maximum learning and participation

# Vision



By 2020, Mental Health First Aid in the USA will be as common as CPR and First Aid.

# For More Information

[www.MentalHealthFirstAid.org](http://www.MentalHealthFirstAid.org)

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