

# Mental Health First Aid

Training you need to manage a mental health issue



Linden Oaks Behavioral Health is a proud supporter of Mental Health First Aid (MHFA), an in-person training designed to teach participants how to help an individual experiencing a mental health issue and/or crisis.

MHFA is a national public education program managed and coordinated by the National Council for Behavioral Health, the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the Missouri Department of Mental Health.

The MHFA program teaches participants to recognize the signs and symptoms of behavioral health issues and tools and techniques for administering early support and crisis intervention.

The goal of the MHFA program is to make responding to a mental health crisis as common as utilizing CPR in a cardiac emergency.

While participants are not taught to assume the role of a mental health professional, participants do learn to effectively communicate with individuals experiencing a mental health crisis and guide them to appropriate professional help.

Upon completion of this 8-hour training program, participants receive a Mental Health First Aid certificate and program manual.

For information on setting up MHFA training in your area, contact [mhfa@edward.org](mailto:mhfa@edward.org) or (630) 646-5154.

## Skills learned:

- ▶ Mental illness signs and symptoms
- ▶ Risk assessment
- ▶ Intervention strategies
- ▶ Communication skills
- ▶ Referral for professional help approaches

## Participants include:

- ▶ Educators/school administrators
- ▶ Human resources professionals
- ▶ Members of faith communities
- ▶ Homeless shelter staff and volunteers
- ▶ Medical professionals
- ▶ Police/Fire/Paramedic
- ▶ First responders
- ▶ Security personnel
- ▶ Behavioral/mental health professionals
- ▶ Community members

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## Mental Health First Aid USA

Mental Health First Aid is a public education program that introduces participants to risk factors and warning signs of mental health problems, builds understanding of their impact and overviews appropriate supports. This 8-hour course uses role-playing and simulations to demonstrate how to offer initial help in a mental health crisis and connect people to the appropriate professional, peer, social and self-help care. The program also teaches common risk factors and warning signs of specific illnesses like anxiety, depression, substance use, bipolar disorder, eating disorders and schizophrenia.

Mental Health First Aid is included on the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP).

### COURSE DETAILS

Mental Health First Aid teaches participants a five-step action plan, ALGEE, to support someone developing signs and symptoms of a mental illness or experiencing an emotional crisis:

- ✱ Assess for risk of suicide or harm
- ✱ Listen nonjudgmentally
- ✱ Give reassurance and information
- ✱ Encourage appropriate professional help
- ✱ Encourage self-help and other support strategies



Like CPR, Mental Health First Aid prepares participants to interact with a person in crisis and connect the person with help. First Aiders do not diagnose or provide any counseling or therapy. Instead, the program offers concrete tools and answers key questions like, "What do I do?" and, "Where can someone find help?" Certified Mental Health First Aid instructors provide a list of community healthcare providers and national resources, support groups and online tools for mental health and addictions treatment and support. All trainees receive a program manual to complement the course material.

### PROGRAM GROWTH

Mental Health First Aid was introduced in the U.S. in 2008 and, to date, more than 1 million people from all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico have taken the course. The course is offered to a variety of audiences, including hospital staff, employers and business leaders, faith communities and law enforcement. Approximately 400 people are trained each day, with that number expected to increase.

In 2012, Youth Mental Health First Aid was introduced to prepare trainees to help youth ages 12-18 that may be developing or experiencing a mental health challenge. Specialized versions of Mental Health First Aid including the Veterans, Public Safety, Higher Education, Rural and Older Adults modules and a Spanish version of the Youth and Adult curriculum are also available.

Mental Health First Aid was included in the President's plan to reduce gun violence and increase access to mental health services. In 2014, Congress appropriated \$15 million to SAMHSA to train teachers and school personnel in Youth Mental Health first Aid; in 2015 an additional \$15 million was appropriated to support other community organizations serving youth. The Mental Health First Aid Act of 2015 (S. 711/H.R. 1877) has broad bi-partisan support and would authorize \$20 million annually for training the American public. Fifteen states have made Mental Health First Aid a priority by appropriating state funds, including Texas that has allocated \$5 million.

For more information or questions about Mental Health First Aid, please go to [info@MentalHealthFirstAid.org](mailto:info@MentalHealthFirstAid.org). To find a course or contact an instructor in your area, visit [www.MentalHealthFirstAid.org](http://www.MentalHealthFirstAid.org).

*Revised 10/19/2017*





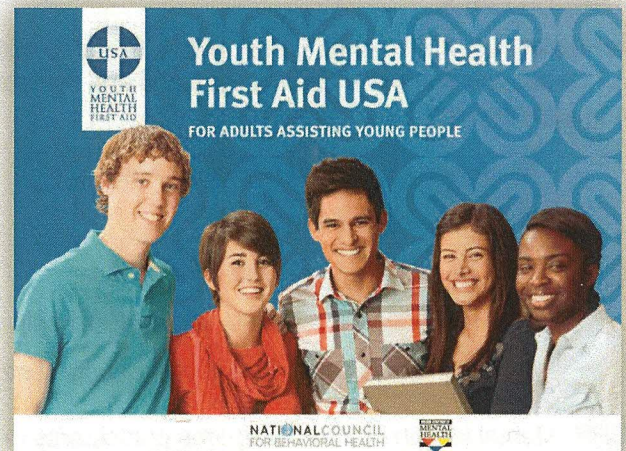
## Youth Mental Health First Aid

Youth Mental Health First Aid USA is an 8 hour public education program which introduces participants to the unique risk factors and warning signs of mental health problems in adolescents, builds understanding of the importance of early intervention, and teaches individuals how to help an adolescent in crisis or experiencing a mental health challenge. Mental Health First Aid uses role-playing and simulations to demonstrate how to assess a mental health crisis; select interventions and provide initial help; and connect young people to professional, peer, social, and self-help care.

### WHAT WILL PARTICIPANTS LEARN?

The course teaches participants the risk factors and warning signs of a variety of mental health challenges common among adolescents, including anxiety, depression, psychosis, eating disorders, AD/HD, disruptive behavior disorders, and substance use disorder. Participants **do not** learn to diagnose, nor how to provide any therapy or counseling – rather, participants learn to support a youth developing signs and symptoms of a mental illness or in an emotional crisis by applying a core five-step action plan:

- Assess for risk of suicide or harm
- Listen nonjudgmentally
- Give reassurance and information
- Encourage appropriate professional help
- Encourage self-help and other support strategies



The Youth Mental Health First Aid USA curriculum is primarily focused on information participants can use to help adolescents and transition-age youth, ages 12-18.

### WHO SHOULD TAKE THE COURSE?

The course is designed for adults who regularly interact with adolescents (teachers, school staff, coaches, youth group leaders, parents, etc.). In January 2013, President Obama recommended training for teachers in Mental Health First Aid. Since 2008, the core Mental Health First Aid course has been successfully offered to more than 1 million people across the USA, including hospital staff, employers and business leaders, faith communities, law enforcement, and the general public.

### WHO CREATED THE COURSE?

The National Council for Behavioral Health was instrumental in bringing Mental Health First Aid to the U.S. Mental Health First Aid USA worked with experts at the National Technical Assistance Center for Children's Mental Health at the Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development to develop the youth program.

### WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

To learn more about the Mental Health First Aid USA, or to find a course or contact an instructor in your area, visit [www.MentalHealthFirstAid.org](http://www.MentalHealthFirstAid.org).