

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

Talking Points

Top-line Messages

- Members of the public who enroll in local Mental Health First Aid trainings learn a five-step action plan to help loved ones, colleagues, neighbors and others cope with mental health problems.
- Similar to traditional First Aid and CPR, Mental Health First Aid is help provided to a person developing a mental health problem or experiencing a crisis until professional treatment is obtained or the crisis resolves.
- Mental Health First Aid is an empirically-backed public education and prevention tool – it improves the public’s knowledge of mental health problems *and* connects people with care for their mental health problems.

Talking Points

- Mental Health First Aid was originally created in Australia in 2001 under the auspices of the University of Melbourne, and is now international with programs in countries such as the United Kingdom, China, Canada, Finland, Singapore, and the U.S.
- The National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare brought Mental Health First Aid to the United States in 2008 with the goal of making it as common in 10 years as traditional First Aid and CPR are today.
- Mental Health First Aid has strong evidence backing it. Three quantitative and one qualitative studies have shown that the program: (1) improves people’s mental health, (2) increases understanding of mental health issues and treatments, (3) connects more people with care, and (4) reduces stigma.
- Trainees go through an 8-hour training program that teaches them a five-step action plan to (1) assess a situation, (2) select and implement appropriate interventions, and (3) secure appropriate care for an individual experiencing a mental health problem.
- There are two main curricula: Adult Mental Health First Aid and Youth Mental Health First Aid. Two new supplements have been created, one for Law Enforcement, Corrections, and Public Safety and the second for Military, Veterans, and Families.
- Trainees also learn risk factors and warning signs of mental illness and about available mental health treatments.
- Trainees receive a Mental Health First Aid manual to supplement what they learn in class.
- Trainees are from all walks of life and include school personal, law enforcement, faith-based communities, hospital and nursing home staff, families and young people.
- Each of the 26 Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs) in Kansas has MHFA trainers, and in some communities there are trainers not affiliated with the CMHCs.
- Classes typically will be held at the CMHCs, but may also be held in other settings in the community. The class includes two, 4-hour sessions and can be completed in one or two days.
- For more information about class dates or how to schedule a class for your organization, contact your local CMHC and ask for the MHFA training coordinator.
- Or, Go to the MHFA website, [www. Mentalhealthfirstaid.org](http://www.Mentalhealthfirstaid.org), 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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