

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**

Presenter

Steve Christenberry, M.S. LMLP

Director of Clinical Services

Family Service & Guidance Center

Topeka, Kansas 66606

schristenberry@fsgctopeka.com

(785) 232-7904

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.





So Why Mental Health First Aid?

Prevalence of Mental Health Challenges

- It is estimated that approximately 20-25% of adults and youth experience a mental health disorder in a given year.
- Over 30% of youth experience an anxiety disorder each year compared to 19% of adults.
- The lifetime prevalence of depression in adults is 17% and for adolescents it is 14%

Mental Health Treatment

- Only about 40% of those with a mental illness seek treatment
- The median length of time before a person seeks treatment for a serious mental illness is 10 years
- Half of all those that experience a mental illness will have their first episode before age 14

Cost of Mental Illness

- A 2011 Harvard study states that the global cost of mental illness was \$2.5 trillion....by 2030 it will be \$6 trillion
- Mental illness was listed as one of the top 5 non-communicable diseases, after cardiovascular disease, cancer, and chronic respiratory diseases

Mental Illness in Kansas

- 1 in 10 Adults have a serious mental illness
- Untreated Mental Illness is Associated with:
 - 21,000 Incarcerations
 - 128 Suicides
 - 29,000 Unemployed Adults
 - Annual Cost Burden for untreated severe mental illness in Kansas: \$1.17 Billion

Recovery from Mental Illness

- While the impact of mental illness is staggering, treatment is available
- Treatment is most effective when started soon after a mental illness is detected.

Types of Treatment

- Psychotherapy: Individual, family, group
- Psychiatric: May include medication management
- Support groups: AA, NA, Grief and Loss groups, etc.

Types of Providers

- Physicians
- Psychiatrists
- Psychologists
- Clinical Social Workers
- Professional Counselors
- Marriage and Family Therapists
- Paraprofessionals

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 (PFA) 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.

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



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

Vision for MHFA in U.S.



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

Mental Health First Aid Goals

- Teach members of the public how to respond to a mental health emergency in youth or adults
- Offer support to a person who appears to be in emotional distress

MHFA by the Numbers: United States

(2008-June 2014)

- 3000+ instructors certified
- 250,000+ people trained
- 1,000,000+ media impressions



MHFA by the Numbers: Kansas

- Bert Nash Mental Health Center in Lawrence was one of the pilot sites in the US in 2008
- All 26 of the 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 have been trained



MHFA by the numbers: Shawnee County

- MHFA in Shawnee County began in 2011 with one instructor from Valeo and one from FSGC; we now have 6 instructors.
- From 2011 through 2013 we taught 18 classes (14 in 2014) and 329 students. So far in 2014 we've taught 8 classes with 150 participants.
- More classes scheduled in upcoming months

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

MHFA Curriculum

- There are two primary versions of MHFA
 - The Adult Curriculum is focused on disorders that adults may experience. It is for adults who work with or who have daily contact with adults.
 - The Youth Curriculum is focused on adolescent development and disorders that adolescents may experience. This class is for adults who work with adolescents.

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

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

Class Structure

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



Mental Health First Aid Manual

- Students are provided a manual specific to each of the two curricula
- The manuals include a wealth of information about mental health disorders, dealing with crisis, and resources to address mental health concerns

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?

Mental Health Disorders

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

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

Is There a Cost?

- This varies from center to center
- Grant funding may cover the costs for classes in some areas
- There may be a per-participant charge, but the amount may vary (most centers only charge \$25-30 to cover expenses)

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

Certification

- 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

Putting MHFA to Work

- Mental Health First Aiders may be able to use learned strategies in their day to day lives.
- 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.

“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

New MHFA Modules

- Military, Veterans, & Families: Is being piloted by the National Guard in Kansas and Arizona and will be available in Kansas in October
- Law Enforcement, Corrections, & Public Safety Module
- Both modules are based on the adult MHFA curriculum with adaptations for each population

How to locate MHFA Classes

- Go to the MHFA website
 - 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”

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 and up to 30 participants

Additional Information

www.MentalHealthFirstAid.org

Susan Partain

National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare

SusanP@theNationalCouncil.org

(202) 684-7457 ext. 232