

Mental Health First Aid for HR Professionals

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Someone you know could be experiencing a mental illness or crisis. You can help them! You are more likely to encounter someone – friend, family member, co-worker, neighbor, or member of the community – in an emotional or mental crisis than someone having a heart attack. Mental Health First Aid teaches 5-step action plan to offer initial help to people with the signs and symptoms of a mental illness or in a crisis, and connect them with the appropriate professional, peer, social, or self-help care. Anyone age 18 or older can take the 8-Hour Mental Health First Aid Course – first responders, students, teachers, leaders of faith communities, human resources professionals, and caring citizens.



Mental Health First Aid is an international training program proven to be effective. Peer-reviewed studies show that individuals trained in the program:

- Grow their knowledge of signs, symptoms and risk factors of mental illnesses and addictions.
- Can identify multiple types of professional and self-help resources for individuals with a mental illness or addiction.
- Increase their confidence in and likelihood to help an individual in distress.
- Show increased mental wellness themselves.

Studies also show that the program reduces the social distance created by negative attitudes and perceptions of individuals with mental illnesses. Mental Health First Aid USA is listed in the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices. NREPP is a searchable database of mental health and substance abuse interventions to help the public find programs and practices that may best meet their needs and learn how to implement them in their communities. All interventions in the registry have been independently assessed and rated for quality of research and readiness for dissemination.

Topics covered include depression and mood disorders, anxiety disorders, trauma, psychosis and substance use disorders. Trainees are taught how to apply the 5-step action plan in a variety of situations such as helping someone through a panic attack, engaging with someone who may be suicidal, or assisting an individual who has overdosed. An important component of the Mental Health First Aid course is the opportunity to practice the intervention strategy rather than to just learn about it. This simple experience can make it easier to actually apply the knowledge in a real-life situation.

Peer reviewed studies from Australia and across the globe show that the program saves lives, improves the mental health of the individual administering care and the one receiving it, expands knowledge of mental illnesses and their treatments, increases the services provided, and reduces overall social distance toward individuals with mental illnesses by improving mental health literacy.