

# Mental Health First Aid



# What is Mental Health First Aid?

Mental Health First Aid is an evidenced-based public education course that teaches you how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders.

The training provides the skills you need to reach out and provide initial help and support to someone who may be developing a mental health or substance use problem or experiencing a crisis.

# What is Mental Health First Aid?

Currently there are more than 3 million Mental Health First Aiders in the United States and territories. MHFA is offered in all 50 states and over 25 countries around the world.



**\*Each participant receives a 3-year nationally recognized certification**

## What it Covers

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Common signs and symptoms of mental illness.

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Common signs and symptoms of substance use.

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How to interact with a person in crisis.

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How to connect the person with help.

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Expanded content on trauma and addiction.

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A strong focus on self-care.

# THE EVIDENCE



## **INCREASED MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY**

Grow their knowledge of signs, symptoms, and risk factors of mental illness and addictions.



## **INCREASED CONFIDENCE**

Increase their confidence and likelihood to help an individual in distress.



## **INCREASED KNOWLEDGE OF RESOURCES**

Can identify multiple types of professional and self-help resources for individuals with a mental health challenge.



## **PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS**

Show decreased psychological distress and increased mental wellness themselves.

# What is the Vision for Mental Health First Aid in the US?

MHFA wants everyone in America to have at least one First Aider in their close circle.

Every 1 in 15 people should be certified to identify, understand and respond to signs and symptoms of mental health and substance use challenges.

**#BeThe1in15**

# What are the Benefits of MHFA

- ❑ Most of us would know how to help if we saw someone having a heart attack — we'd start CPR, or at the very least call 911. But too few of us know how to respond if we saw someone having a panic attack or if we were concerned that someone close to us might be showing early signs of a mental health challenge.
- ❑ MHFA takes the fear and hesitation out of starting conversations about mental health by improving understanding and providing an action plan.
- ❑ MHFA teaches people to safely and responsibly identify and address a potential mental health or substance use challenge.
- ❑ MHFA provides the opportunity to practice — through role plays, scenarios, and activities — makes it easier to apply these skills in a real-life situation.

# Mental Health First Aid for the Perinatal Community

MHFA is being used to support pregnant people during the prenatal, delivery, and postpartum period.

Although there is not a specific curriculum for the perinatal community, the Quality Institute, in partnership with The Mental Health Association of New Jersey, brought together experts, direct providers of care, and individuals with lived experience to develop six maternity scenarios for use in the training.

The National Council for Mental Wellbeing, the organization that created MHFA, approved our maternity scenarios, which are based on real-life examples that doulas and others face regularly.

This pilot, the first-in-the-nation customized MHFA scenarios for perinatal community health workers!



## Key Takeaways

- ❖ Mental Health First Aid should not be a replacement for professional help — it is a tool for triage.
- ❖ Encouraging early intervention can aid recovery.
- ❖ Let's all work towards having compassionate and empathetic conversations about mental health.

# Thank You!

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