



Title: 3ai and 4aiii projects - Mental Health and First Aid (MHFA) Training

Date Created: 1/20/2017

Date Modified:

Date Approved by Board of Directors:

Policy# CGC-CG-40

Purpose: To promote a culturally sensitive workforce and to support the mental health and well-being of our children and community members across the 9-county region. Mental Health First Aid Training is an evidence based public education program to teach participants on how to respond to individuals who are experiencing one or more acute mental health crises such as panic attacks, suicidal thoughts, acute psychotic behavior, chronic mental health disorders (depression, anxiety or substance abuse).

Definitions: The MHFA definition is pulled directly from the SAMSHA website.

MHFA training teaches participants to assess for a risk of suicide or harm, listen nonjudgmentally, give reassurance and information, embolden the individual to seek professional help, and encourage self-help and other support strategies. Role playing and activities that are included in the training can normalize a variety of what would otherwise be potentially uncomfortable situations.

<https://www.samhsa.gov/homelessness-programs-resources/hpr-resources/mental-health-first-aid-training>

Policy:

Mental health and First Aid Training will be offered to partners who are participating in the 3ai and 4aiii projects.

-) Priority will be given to contracted partners in 3ai and 4aiii projects.
-) Training will be free and open to all our partners across the PPS if there are slots available.

Care Compass Network encourage partners to send staff who have direct contact with patients in the communities and clinics such as medical assistants, care coordinators, case management, health navigators, health coaches, nurses and behavioral health specialists.

The certified MHFA trainer will be required to turn in the training roster which will consist of the names of the attendees, job title, and site name to Care Compass Network's Project Management Office within 5 days.

Policy Board Approval History:

Policy Revisions:

Date	Revision Log	Updated By
1/28/2017	Initial	B. Rosetti

This Policy and Procedure shall be reviewed periodically and updated consistent with the requirements established by the Board of Directors, Care Compass Network’s senior management, Federal and State law(s) and regulations, and applicable accrediting and review organizations.

Mental Health First Aid Offers Behavioral Health Training

 [samhsa.gov/homelessness-programs-resources/hpr-resources/mental-health-first-aid-training](https://www.samhsa.gov/homelessness-programs-resources/hpr-resources/mental-health-first-aid-training)

When someone trips over a curb and skins his knee, odds are good at least one witness will offer first aid. But what if, instead of a physical injury, it's anxiety that's plaguing him, or he's contemplating suicide? Can we count on strangers to offer the kind of help that's needed in such situations? With the advent of Mental Health First Aid (MHFA), the answer will often be yes.

Although it's relatively new, in principle, MHFA takes the same approach as traditional first aid: offer short-term comfort to someone until professional assistance or support from a family member or peer arrives. It's just that, with MHFA, the focal point is less visible, whether it's a developing mental health conditions or a full-blown mental health crisis or overdose.

Created in Australia in 2001 by a nurse and a mental health literacy professor, MHFA is now routinely practiced in a handful of countries, including the United States, and is taught in much the same way that standard first aid is: through an eight-hour course that allows the public to identify, understand, and respond to the signs of distress. Instructors must complete a five-day training; they're drawn largely from behavioral health organizations, state mental health departments, and mental health and addictions advocacy groups.

In the United States, MHFA is overseen by the [National Council for Behavioral Health \(link is external\)](#), the [Missouri Department of Mental Health](#), and the [Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene](#), which collectively provide instructors, training, and technical support. Their goal is to make MHFA training as available and as familiar as CPR.

Training Helps People Assess Others with Mental Health Conditions

But it's not just used in helping strangers on the street—MHFA is equally applicable to friends and family members of individuals with mental illness at any level. The training teaches participants to assess for a risk of suicide or harm, listen nonjudgmentally, give reassurance and information, embolden the individual to seek professional help, and encourage self-help and other support strategies. Role playing and activities that are included in the training can normalize a variety of what would otherwise be potentially uncomfortable situations.

Given the high rates of [co-occurring mental and/or substance use disorders](#) among individuals experiencing homelessness, staff in homeless shelters and people elsewhere who routinely come into contact with such individuals have also benefited from MHFA training.

But, interestingly, it's not just about being there for someone in the short term. [USA MHFA states \(link is external\)](#), "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." Research reveals that those who are trained in MHFA have greater confidence in providing help to others, greater likelihood of advising people to seek professional help, greater agreement with health professionals about treatments, and decreased negative attitudes.

MHFA Receives National Support for More Certified Instructors

MHFA is getting support at all levels. In his White House report, [Now Is The Time: The President's Plan to Protect Our Children and Our Communities by Reducing Gun Violence – 2014 \(PDF| 192 KB\)](#), President Barack Obama called for MHFA training for teachers and other school staff members. For the past three years, [Congress has appropriated \\$15 million MHFA trainings \(link is external\)](#) nationwide. Learn more about [becoming a certified](#)

[instructor \(link is external\)](#) to train people in Mental Health First Aid.

This article was originally published to highlight the August 2015 theme of Mental Health Awareness. Access more [behavioral health and homelessness resources](#).