

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID USA

Mental Health First Aid is a public education program that introduces participants to risk factors and warning signs of mental health problems, builds understanding of their impact and overviews appropriate supports. This 8-hour course uses role-playing and simulations to demonstrate how to offer initial help in a mental health crisis and connect people to the appropriate professional, peer, social and self-help care. The program also teaches common risk factors and warning signs of specific illnesses like anxiety, depression, substance use, bipolar disorder, eating disorders and schizophrenia.

COURSE DETAILS

Mental Health First Aid teaches participants a five-step action plan, ALGEE, to support someone developing signs and symptoms of a mental illness or experiencing an emotional crisis:

- ◆ Assess for risk of suicide or harm
- ◆ Listen nonjudgmentally
- ◆ Give reassurance and information
- ◆ Encourage appropriate professional help
- ◆ Encourage self-help and other support strategies

Like CPR, Mental Health First Aid prepares participants to interact with a person in crisis and connect the person with help. First Aiders do not diagnose or provide any counseling or therapy. Instead, the program offers concrete tools and answers key questions like, “What do I do?” and, “Where can someone find help?” Certified Mental Health First Aid instructors provide a list of community healthcare providers and national resources, support groups and online tools for mental health and addictions treatment and support. All trainees receive a program manual to complement the course material.

4 Reasons to Become a Mental Health First Aider

- **Be prepared**
When a mental health crisis happens, know what to do
- **You can help**
People with mental illnesses often suffer alone
- **Mental illnesses are common**
1 in 5 adults in any given year
- **You care**
Be there for a friend, family member, or colleague

Kodi Pollard, M.A., C.M.
1200 N.E. 13th
PO Box 52377
Oklahoma City, OK 73152-3277
Phone: 405-522-6051
E-mail: kapollard@odmhsas.org
