



## What is Mental Health First Aid?

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is the help provided to a person developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis. Just as physical first aid is administered to an injured person before medical treatment can be obtained, MHFA is given until appropriate treatment is found or until the crisis is resolved.

The MHFA Canada program aims to improve mental health literacy, and provide the skills and knowledge to help people better manage potential or developing mental health problems in themselves, a family member, a friend or a colleague.

The program does not teach people how to be therapists. It does teach people how to:

- Recognize the signs and symptoms of mental health problems.
- Provide initial help.
- Guide a person towards appropriate professional help.

MHFA shares the same overall purpose as traditional first aid. It aims to:

- Preserve life where a person may be a danger to themselves or others.
- Provide help to prevent the mental health problem from developing into a more serious state.
- Promote the recovery of good mental health.
- Provide comfort to a person experiencing a mental health problem.

## MHFA Canada Basic Course

### DESCRIPTION

The following mental health problems are covered:

- Mood disorders
- Anxiety disorders
- Psychosis
- Substance Use Disorder



The following mental health crisis situations are covered:

- Suicidal behaviour
- Overdoses
- Panic Attacks
- Reactions to traumatic events
- Psychotic episodes

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

### ***Session 1: Mental Health and Mental Illness***

- Mental Health First Aid
- Common mental health problems
- The five basic steps of mental health first aid
- What are substance use disorders?
- Symptoms and risk factors
- Crisis first aid for overdose
- Mental health first aid for substance use disorders
- Treatment and resources

### ***Session 2: Mood Disorders***

- What is depression?
- Symptoms of depression
- Risk factors for depression
- What is bipolar disorder?
- Symptoms of bipolar disorder
- Risk factors for bipolar disorder
- Alcohol, drugs and depression
- Suicide in Canada
- Crisis first aid for suicidal behaviour
- Mental health first aid for mood disorders
- Treatment and resources

### ***Session 3: Anxiety Disorders***

- What are anxiety disorders?
- Symptoms of anxiety disorders
- Risk factors for anxiety disorders
- Alcohol, drugs and anxiety disorders



- Crisis first aid for panic attacks
- Crisis first aid for acute stress reaction
- Mental health first aid for anxiety disorders
- Treatment and resources

#### **Session 4: Psychosis**

- What are psychotic disorders?
- Symptoms of psychotic disorders
- Risk factors for psychosis
- Alcohol, drugs and psychotic disorders
- Crisis first aid for acute psychosis
- Mental health first aid for psychosis
- Treatment and resources
- Other expressions of distress

## **In the Workplace**

In a recent major Canadian study, **82%** of responding organizations ranked mental health conditions in their top three causes of short term disability (**72% for long-term**).

**30%** of all short and long term disability claims are due to mental health problems and illnesses.

The average responding organization reported spending more than **\$10.5 million** annually on absence claims.

In 2011, lost productivity due to absenteeism and presenteeism (present but less than fully productive at work) due to mental health problems and illnesses was approximately **\$6 Billion**.

### **WORKPLACE FIRST AID INCLUDES MENTAL HEALTH**

Mental Health First Aid is the help provided to a person developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis. Just as physical first aid is administered to an injured person before medical treatment can be obtained, MHFA is provided until appropriate support is found or until the crisis is resolved.



**Colleagues and managers are best placed** to be the first to recognize the signs and symptoms of mental health issues in their co-workers, provided they are properly trained in Mental Health First Aid.

MHFA trained employees will help equip your organization to:

- **Recognize and understand** the **symptoms** of mental health problems, including those related to substance abuse
- **Provide help** to prevent the mental health problem from developing into a more serious state
- **Promote the recovery** of good mental health by accommodating employees in distress or recovering from a crisis
- **Increase productivity** and reduce absenteeism and overall pressure on benefits

Evidence has shown that individuals who complete the 12-hour basic course have:

- Significantly **greater recognition** of the most common mental health **illnesses** and problems
- **Decreased social distance** from people with mental health illnesses or problems
- **Increased confidence** in providing help to others
- **Demonstrated increase** in helpful actions

## **MHFA IMPROVES ALL ASPECTS OF THE ORGANIZATION**

Employers who set a strategic direction for improving mental health are rewarded with **dramatic cost and effectiveness benefits**, enjoying significant and sustainable enhancements in:

Productivity: happy and psychologically healthy employees work harder and more efficiently

**Recruitment and Retention:** today's top-quality employees expect a workplace that supports their personal and professional growth



**Cost Savings due to Disability and Absenteeism:** there is a strong link between mental health, physical well-being and injury prevention

**Conflict Reduction:** better mental health among employees means fewer grievances and complaints and a stronger corporate reputation

**Operational Success:** mentally healthy workplaces are characterized by higher levels of employee motivation, commitment, innovation and creativity, as well as fewer errors, better decision making and improved planning.

### **For more information or to register, contact**

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Course includes a participant manual and certificate of completion

In house sessions available

[www.acede.ca](http://www.acede.ca)