



MHFA England

Why Youth Mental Health First Aid?

Mental health and emotional issues often develop during adolescence. Half of young adults with mental health issues have symptoms by the age of 15, and nearly 75% by their late teens.

First aid is the help given to an ill or injured person before medical treatment can be obtained. Youth Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is the help given to a young person experiencing a mental health issue before professional help is obtained.

The aims of Youth MHFA are to:

- Preserve life where a young person may be a danger to themselves or others
- Intervene to prevent the emotional or mental health issue developing into a more serious state
- Provide comfort to a young person experiencing a mental health issue
- Empower a young person to access appropriate professional help
- Promote the recovery of good mental health
- Raise awareness of mental health issues in the community
- Reduce stigma and discrimination

Currently, only around a quarter of people who need treatment for mental ill health receive it. With access to an adult with MHFA skills we can provide early intervention in guiding a young person to the support they need.

What do you learn on a Youth MHFA course?

Youth MHFA provides teachers and frontline professionals working with young people the skills and confidence to spot common signs and triggers of mental health issues, as well as the knowledge and confidence to help. Through a mix of presentations, discussions and activities, the course covers these key topics:

- What is mental health?
- Depression and anxiety
- Suicide and psychosis
- Self harm and eating disorders

Within each section there is clear focus on the issues faced by young people today, including bullying/cyber bullying and substance misuse.

The one day Youth MHFA course has been designed specifically with schools and colleges in mind and fits perfectly into inset days and busy timetables. Over 25,000 people have already taken a Youth MHFA course in England, including staff in over 500 schools and colleges.

Completing the one day Youth MHFA course designates you as a **Youth MHFA Champion**. A Youth MHFA Champion is skilled in understanding how to spot the signs and symptoms of mental health issues in young people and will have the confidence to guide the young person to a place of support.

Feedback on Youth MHFA courses

“To ensure that students do not have any barriers to their learning we need to support them holistically in providing top-quality pastoral care and this excellent course effectively raises awareness and understanding of mental health issues.”

“I believe Youth MHFA has provided me with extra tools to be able to better understand and support young people - something so valuable in my line of work.”

“Straight after the first session I was able to use the techniques with a student (who) had anxiety and panic attacks for a number of years. By listening, reassuring her and helping her to recognise her mental health she became more confident in discussing her concerns and we were able to give her the appropriate help during her examinations.”

“I developed observational and listening skills to pick up signs of difficulties at an early stage (and) further developed close links with external agencies.”

“It is the structured approach of the course and the supporting materials that makes it so practical and a fantastic tool to have at our fingertips.”

About MHFA England

MHFA England is a Community Interest Company with the objective to raise mental health literacy and reduce stigma and discrimination in mental health across the whole community. Since our beginnings in 2007, our instructors have delivered courses to over 165,000 people in England. We are part of an international mental health training community who have trained over two million people worldwide in MHFA skills. To find out more, please visit our website at mhfaengland.org.

MHFA has a proven international track record and has consistently demonstrated its effectiveness through evaluation – details can be found at mhfaengland.org/evaluations-and-research. Every MHFA course is delivered by a quality assured instructor who has attended our instructor training programme accredited by the Royal Society for Public Health. Youth MHFA instructors have been recruited due to their diverse backgrounds in education and youth work, experience in mental health, and their ability to engage and motivate participants. Our robust quality assurance processes ensure that our instructors are consistently delivering to an agreed high standard which is continually monitored.

Programme delivery plan

In year one of the Youth Mental Health First Aid in Schools programme, training will start from Easter 2017. We anticipate training days to be concentrated in June/July and September/early December due to availability of staff and inset days.

Funded by the Department of Health, 100 x one day Youth MHFA courses will be delivered which equates to over 1,000 places available. One representative from each invited school may attend a course, with the exception of host schools who are offered four additional places (see below). This will ensure that at least one person in a third of all secondary schools in England will receive the training and become an MHFA Champion.

A similar number of courses will be delivered in years two and three of the programme, at the end of which all state secondary schools in England will have at least one MHFA Champion.

Host Schools

MHFA England requires 100 host schools to provide venue and refreshments for the one day course. In return they will be offered an additional 4 places per course. It is anticipated that host schools will use up to two of these places for internal staff with the remainder offered to the host school's feeder primary school/college.

If you would like to nominate your setting as a host school please contact Fiona Moir in Public Health on FXMoir@somerset.gov.uk