

Mental Health First Aid for Public Safety

Mental Health First Aid USA is an 8-hour course that teaches a 5-step action plan encompassing the skills, resources, and knowledge to help an individual in crisis connect with appropriate professional, peer, and self-help care. Participants learn the unique risk factors and warning signs of mental health problems, builds understanding of the importance of early intervention, and, most importantly, teaches individuals how to help someone in crisis or experiencing a mental health challenge.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The course is taught to police, first responders, corrections officers, and other public safety audiences around the country. Mental Health First Aid for Public Safety provides officers with more response options to help them deescalate incidents and better understand mental illnesses so they can respond to mental health related calls appropriately without compromising safety. Approximately 20,000 public safety professionals have taken the course, including at police academies in Philadelphia, DC, Seattle, and numerous smaller and rural departments.

“Public Safety Officers, regardless of rank or position, may find themselves confronted with a mental health crisis. My Mental Health First Aid training helped me save a life, and regular incidents serve as reminders of how public safety officers fall back on their training in times of crisis.”

- Captain Joseph Coffey,
Rhode Island Municipal Police Academy
Mental Health First Aid National Trainer



“What struck me most about Mental Health First Aid is the interest it generates among people who don’t have a direct connection to the mental health field. This is a program that can move us beyond usual constituencies to truly build a healthy community.”

-David Johnson, CEO, Bert Nash Center, Lawrence, Kansas

WHO CAN BE A MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AIDER?

- Law enforcement
- Corrections officers
- Other first responders
- 911 Dispatch Staff
- Human resources professionals
- Business leaders
- Nurses and other primary care workers
- School and college workers
- Faith community leaders
- Caring citizens

- Defusing crises
- Promoting mental health literacy
- Combating stigma of mental illness
- Enabling early intervention through recognition of signs and symptoms
- Connecting people to care



To schedule a Mental Health First Aid training for your organization, please call Bill Giguere at (256) 260-7325



MENTAL HEALTH FACTS

- One in four adults—approximately 61.5 million Americans—experiences mental illness in a given year. One in 17—about 13.6 million—live with a serious mental illness such as schizophrenia, major depression or bipolar disorder.
- Approximately 20 percent of youth ages 13 to 18 experience severe mental disorders in a given year. For ages 8 to 15, the estimate is 13 percent.
- Approximately 1.1 percent of American adults—about 2.4 million people—live with schizophrenia.
- Approximately 2.6 percent of American adults—6.1 million people—live with bipolar disorder.
- Approximately 6.7 percent of American adults—about 14.8 million people—live with major depression.
- Approximately 18.1 percent of American adults—about 42 million people—live with anxiety disorders, such as panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), generalized anxiety disorder and phobias.
- About 9.2 million adults have co-occurring mental health and addiction disorders.
- Approximately 26 percent of homeless adults staying in shelters live with serious mental illness and an estimated 46 percent live with severe mental illness and/or substance use disorders.
- Approximately 20 percent of state prisoners and 21 percent of local jail prisoners have “a recent history” of a mental health condition.
- Seventy percent of youth in juvenile justice systems have at least one mental health condition and at least 20 percent live with a severe mental illness.

Getting Mental Health Treatment in America

- Approximately 60 percent of adults, and almost one-half

of youth ages 8 to 15 with a mental illness received no mental health services in the previous year.

- African American and Hispanic Americans used mental health services at about one-half the rate of whites in the past year and Asian Americans at about one-third the rate.
- One-half of all chronic mental illness begins by the age of 14; three-quarters by age 24. Despite effective treatment, there are long delays—sometimes decades—between the first appearance of symptoms and when people get help.

The Impact of Mental Illness in America

- Serious mental illness costs America \$193.2 billion in lost earnings per year.
- Mood disorders such as depression are the third most common cause of hospitalization in the U.S. for both youth and adults ages 18 to 44.
- Individuals living with serious mental illness face an increased risk of having chronic medical conditions. Adults living with serious mental illness die on average 25 years earlier than other Americans, largely due to treatable medical conditions.
- Over 50 percent of students with a mental health condition age 14 and older who are served by special education drop out—the highest dropout rate of any disability group.
- Suicide is the tenth leading cause of death in the U.S. (more common than homicide) and the third leading cause of death for ages 15 to 24 years. More than 90 percent of those who die by suicide had one or more mental disorders.
- Although military members comprise less than 1 percent of the U.S. population, veterans represent 20 percent of suicides nationally. Each day, about 22 veterans die from suicide.

Facts taken from: www.nami.org



Help is available... Last year the Mental Health Center provided services for almost 4,000 children and adults in north central Alabama. If you or someone you know is in need of psychiatric help, please call our central intake office, ACCESS, at (256) 355-5904 or (800) 365-6008. **All calls are confidential!**