

FAQ's

1. [What is Mental Health First Aid?](#)

Mental Health First Aid is an 8-hour course that gives people the skills to help someone who is developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis. The evidence behind the program demonstrates that it does build mental health literacy, helping the public identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illness.

2. [How long does it take to participate in Mental Health First Aid course?](#)

The Mental Health First Aid course runs 8 hours and may be offered in a variety of formats. Most often, it is provided in one day, or in two 4-hour sessions spaced over a short period of time.

3. [What do people learn in a Mental Health First Aid course?](#)

Just as CPR training helps a person with no clinical training assist an individual following a heart attack, Mental Health First Aid training helps a person assist someone experiencing a mental health crisis such as contemplating suicide. In both situations, the goal is to help support an individual *until appropriate professional* help arrives. Mental Health First Aiders learn a single 5-step strategy that includes assessing risk, respectfully listening to and supporting the individual in crisis, and identifying appropriate professional help and other supports. Participants are also introduced to risk factors and warning signs for mental health or substance use problems, engage in experiential activities that build understanding of the impact of illness on individuals and families, and learn about evidence-supported treatment and self-help strategies.

4. [What types of crisis interventions are covered?](#)

Trainees are taught how to apply the 5-step action plan in a variety of situations such as helping someone through a panic attack, engaging with someone who may be suicidal, or assisting an individual who has overdosed. An important component of the Mental Health First Aid course is the opportunity to practice the intervention strategy rather than to just learn about it. This simple experience can make it easier to actually apply the knowledge in a real-life situation.

5. [Who should take a Mental Health First Aid course?](#)

Mental Health First Aid is intended for all people and organizations that make up the fabric of a community. The course is presented to chambers of commerce, professional associations, hospitals, nursing homes, rotary clubs, parent organizations, social clubs, and other groups. Professionals who regularly interact with a lot of people (such as police officers, human resource directors, and primary care workers), school and college leadership, faith communities, friends and family of individuals with mental illness or addiction, or anyone interested in learning more about mental illness and addiction should get trained.

6. [How can I learn more about Mental Health First Aid USA?](#)

Gulf Bend Center's Claudia McCarty will be happy to answer additional questions, provide information on upcoming classes or, schedule one with you and your group.

Phone: 361-575-0611 Email claudia5240@gulfbend.org

7. [Where did Mental Health First Aid start?](#)

Mental Health First Aid was created in Australia in 2001 by Betty Kitchener, a nurse specializing in health education, and Tony Jorm, a respected mental health literacy professor. More information on the history of the course is available at [Mental Health First Aid™ Australia](#).

8. [Which countries have Mental Health First Aid?](#)

The United States is just one of many countries that have adapted the program from the original Australian program. Check out the latest map of countries with the program and news from these countries at [Mental Health First Aid International](#).

9. [Have individuals who have experienced a mental illness or addiction contributed to the development of Mental Health First Aid?](#)

Yes. In fact, one of the original founders of the program in Australia is in recovery from depression. Here in the U.S., we continually consult with people living with mental illnesses and addictions to ensure the program content accurately reflects their experiences and perspectives. Additionally, a significant portion of certified instructors are in recovery from a mental illness or addiction.

10. [Is there evidence to support the effectiveness of the program?](#)

Yes. 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. One trial of 301 randomized participants found that those who trained in Mental Health First Aid have greater confidence in providing help to others, greater likelihood of advising people to seek professional help, improved concordance with health professionals about treatments, and decreased stigmatizing attitudes. For further evidence supporting Mental Health First Aid, please see the Evaluation section of [Mental Health First Aid™ Australia's website](#)

11. [Who operates Mental Health First Aid in the U.S.?](#)

The National Council for Behavioral Health operates Mental Health First Aid USA in partnership with the Missouri Department of Mental Health.

12. [What is the vision for Mental Health First Aid in the US?](#)

Our vision is for Mental Health First Aid to become as common as CPR and First Aid training. That means having regular courses offered in every community across the US

13. [How often do you offer instructor certification programs?](#)

Frequently! We host at least six national instructor trainings each year, and partner with organizations to host additional regional trainings throughout the country. If your organization should wish to host a training, contact Tramaine Stevenson for details and scheduling.