

What Teens Need to Know

Our school is conducting teen Mental Health First Aid (tMHFA) training, which teaches teens in grades 10-12 or ages 15-18 the skills they need to recognize and help their friends with mental health and substance use problems and crises and how to get the help of an adult quickly.

Teens often turn to each other when stressed or upset and try to help, sometimes taking on too much. This course teaches you not to try to take these problems on alone, and when to get an adult involved. You won't be talking about any problems you are having yourself and you won't learn to give therapy or diagnose a problem.

The course discusses school violence and suicide. Some people will find those topics distressing. Talk to a parent or guardian about it if you're worried that talking about suicide or school violence will make it too hard for you to be part of the course. However, you should be aware that most people find that even if they have lost someone to suicide, the information in the course makes them feel better, not worse.

This course isn't happening because of any specific problems at your school and no individual people will be discussed in the course.

Depending on your school's schedule, you will be taught the course in either three sessions of 90 minutes each or six sessions of 45 minutes each. The following is an outline of the course.

Session 1
This session covers mental health in general and explains what mental health challenges are and how common these are in teens.
This session reviews the impact of mental health challenges on teens, how people with mental health challenges can get better, and professionals who can help.
Session 2
This session focuses on helping a friend who is in crisis because they are suicidal. Teens will learn the tMHFA Action Plan ("Look, Ask, Listen, Help Your Friend") for the first time, and how it can be used in a crisis situation. A video shows a teen helping a friend who is experiencing suicidal thoughts.
This session talks about helping a friend who is in another type of crisis, such as threatening violence or harm to others, engaging in nonsuicidal self-injury, or experiencing a traumatic event such as bullying, abuse, or assault. Teens will practice using the tMHFA Action Plan ("Look, Ask, List, Help Your Friend") in these types of crisis situations.
Session 3
This session focuses on how to help a friend who may be in crisis due to substance use. Then, it takes a step back and discusses how to help if someone might be developing a mental health challenge. The course does not teach teens how to diagnose — it's information about being a supportive friend, encouraging friends to seek help, and knowing when it's time to get someone else involved.

This session highlights recovery and resiliency and all final activities to complete the tMHFA course.
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You will receive a certificate of completion for taking the course and a manual to use during the course that you can take home after the last session. There are resources for further information in the manual and you may want to explore them alone or with a parent or guardian. If you wish to learn more now, the following resources are provided.

Resources

Learn more about mental health problems

Teens Health

http://teenshealth.org/teen/your_mind

National Alliance on Mental Illness

www.nami.org/Find-Support/Teens-and-Young-Adults

National Institute of Mental Health

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/child-and-adolescent-mental-health/index.shtml>

Learn more about Mental Health First Aid

Mental Health First Aid USA

www.MentalHealthFirstAid.org/

National Helplines

If you or someone you know needs help immediately, please call 911.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - save this in your phone!

Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Visit www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Crisis Text Line – save this in your phone!

Text “MHFA” to 741741 for free 24/7 crisis counseling.

Visit www.crisistextline.org

You can also talk to your school mental health professionals for additional information and support.