

## Mental Health First Aid for Older Adults

Mental Health First Aid USA for Older Adults is an 8 hour public education program which introduces participants to the unique risk factors and warning signs of mental health problems in adults over the age of 65, builds understanding of the importance of early intervention, and teaches individuals how to help an older adult in crisis or experiencing a mental health challenge. Mental Health First Aid uses role-playing and simulations to demonstrate how to assess a mental health crisis; select interventions and provide initial help; and connect older adults to professional, peer, social, and self-help care.

### WHAT WILL PARTICIPANTS LEARN?

The course teaches participants the risk factors and warning signs of a variety of mental health challenges common among older adults, like depression and anxiety. Participants **do not** learn to diagnose, nor how to provide any therapy or counseling – rather, participants learn to support an older person developing signs and symptoms of a mental illness or in an emotional crisis by applying a core five-step action plan:

- **Assess** for risk of suicide or harm
- **Listen** nonjudgmentally
- **Give** reassurance and information
- **Encourage** appropriate professional help
- **Encourage** self-help and other support strategies



The Mental Health First Aid USA for Older Adults curriculum is primarily focused on information participants can use to help adults ages 65 and over.

### WHO SHOULD TAKE THE COURSE?

The course is designed for adults who regularly interact with older people (caretakers, nursing staff, etc.). Since 2008, the core Mental Health First Aid course has been successfully offered to hundreds of thousands of people across the USA, including hospital staff, employers and business leaders, faith communities, law enforcement, and the general public.

### WHO CREATED THE COURSE?

Mental Health First Aid USA is coordinated by the National Council for Behavioral Health, the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and the Missouri Department of Mental Health. Mental Health First Aid USA worked with experts at the National Technical Assistance Center for Children's Mental Health at the Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development to develop the youth program.

### WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

To learn more about the Mental Health First Aid USA, or to find a course or contact an instructor in your area, visit [www.MentalHealthFirstAid.org](http://www.MentalHealthFirstAid.org).