

THERE IS A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS IN AMERICA.
YOU CAN BE PART OF THE SOLUTION.



WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID?

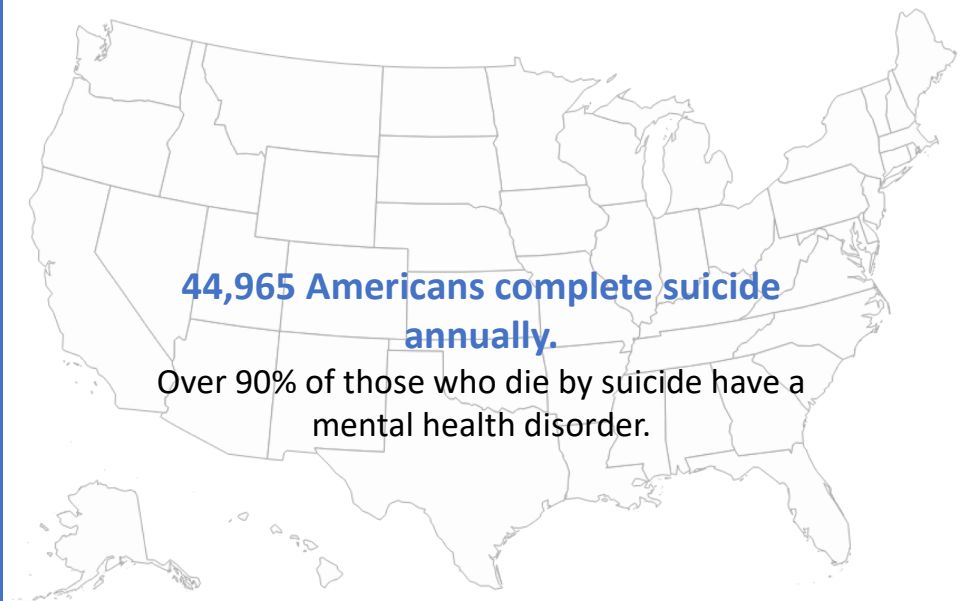
Mental Health First Aid USA is an 8-hour in-person course that teaches you how to **identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders.**

The training gives you the skills you need to reach out and provide initial help and support to someone who may be developing a mental health or substance use issue or experiencing a crisis. Tailored courses are available for target populations such as veterans, educators, youth, law enforcement, and first responders.

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID BY THE NUMBERS

Over **1 Million** First-Aiders in the U.S. were trained by more than **12,000** Instructors.

Currently, less than **1%** of Americans are trained to recognize and respond to signs of mental illness.



TALKING ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID WITH VOTERS AND CONSTITUENTS

- ❑ Too often mental health and substance use issues end in tragedy, **but we can stop this crisis before it's too late.** By training law enforcement, educators, first responders and members of the public in Mental Health First Aid, we can provide those in need to receive timely professional help.
- ❑ Studies show that people trained in Mental Health First Aid are able **to recognize the signs, symptoms and risk factors of mental illness and substance use.** We should pursue policies that devote additional resources toward trainings that de-escalate interactions with individuals living with a mental health or substance use crisis.
- ❑ Anyone can make a difference for someone facing a mental health or substance use crisis – they just need the basic tools and an action plan. That is why any comprehensive approach to mental health should include **expanded education and Mental Health First Aid training opportunities in our communities.**
- ❑ **Suicides and opioid overdoses** are increasing across the country. It's time our policies addressed the reality of this incredible and sad epidemic. That means smarter investments in **evidence-based approaches like Mental Health First Aid** which, like CPR or First Aid, gives people the tools they need to identify early warning signs and offer help to someone facing mental health or substance use disorders.

MENTAL HEALTH IN THE UNITED STATES

- Over **40 million** Americans have a mental health condition (**1 in 5 adults**.)
- **56%** of American adults with a mental illness do not receive treatment.
- Nearly **50%** of those suffering from mental illness have a co-occurring substance use disorder.
- In 2016, **42,249** Americans died from overdosing on opioids.

POLICY OVERVIEW

Since 2015, 20 states have made Mental Health First Aid a priority. Expand services and add yours to the list by:

- Implementing statewide or local Mental Health First Aid training programs that are available to groups like first responders, law enforcement, teachers and child protective services.
- Allocating funding for public health or community behavioral health organizations to implement training.
- Requiring training and/or certification standards for professional groups who frequently interact with at-risk communities, such as:

VETERANS



EDUCATORS & YOUTH



LAW ENFORCEMENT



FIRST RESPONDERS



HOW OTHER STATES HAVE STRENGTHENED SUPPORT FOR MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID:

California

Through a state tax appropriation, mental health funding has been allocated for Youth Mental Health First Aid trainings across the state to sustain a Project AWARE state grant.

Rhode Island

In 2016, Rhode Island mandated Mental Health First Aid training for all law enforcement officers and trainees in order to help them better identify and develop responses to mental health/substance abuse emergencies.

Texas

In Texas, advocacy resulted in an appropriation of \$5 million dollars for thousands of educators to be trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid statewide by hosting multiple instructor trainings and covering the cost of participant manuals.

Virginia

Designated the Commissioner as Chief Executive Officer of the Department running the Commonwealth Mental Health First Aid program, tasked with establishing it and maintaining the Mental Health First Aid program state-wide.