



# teen

## MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID



MENTAL  
HEALTH  
FIRST AID

NATIONAL COUNCIL  
FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

BORN THIS WAY/  
FOUNDATION

# CONTENT

teen Mental Health First Aid Overview



How We Can Support You



Why Choose Our Training?



Learning Objectives and Course Outline



Becoming a tMHFA Implementing Site



Prices



NATIONAL COUNCIL  
FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

BORN THIS WAY/  
FOUNDATION



# teen MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

**1 in 5**

has had a serious **mental health disorder** at some point in their life.

**50%**

of all **mental illnesses** begin by age 14,

**75%**

by the mid-20s.

Suicide is the **second leading cause of death** for

**15- to 24-**  
year-olds.

**The course will teach teens how to apply the teen Mental Health First Aid Action Plan to help a friend:**

- Look for warning signs.
- Ask how they are.
- Listen up.
- Help them connect with an adult.
- Your friendship is important.

## Why **teen** Mental Health First Aid?

teen Mental Health First Aid teaches young people in grades 10-12 **how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders among their friends and peers.** The training gives teens the skills to have supportive conversations with their friends and get a responsible and trusted adult to take over as necessary. It is designed to be delivered in schools or community sites in three interactive classroom sessions of 90 minutes each or six sessions of 45 minutes each.

Schools and organizations offering the training are required to train at least 10% of adult staff in Youth Mental Health First Aid and to train the entire grade level in teen Mental Health First Aid. A critical step in the teen Mental Health First Aid action plan is connecting with a trusted adult. Youth Mental Health First Aid trains adults to be prepared to help young people facing a crisis.

### Who Should Take it

- Teens in grades 10, 11 and 12
- High schools, organizations partnering with a high school and youth-serving organizations are eligible to teach teen MHFA to young people.

### What it Covers

- Common signs and symptoms of mental illness
- Common signs and symptoms of substance use
- Common signs and symptoms of a mental health crisis, particularly suicide
- How to open the conversation about mental illnesses and addiction with friends
- The impact of school violence and bullying on mental health
- How to seek the help of a responsible and trusted adult



“Schools offering this training can save lives, families and communities. Regardless of how happy, smart or popular someone seems on the outside, everyone is fighting battles we have no idea about. tMHFA taught me that sometimes we need a reminder of what is important and the tools to make that a priority.” – **Katie Ramboyong**, teen Mental Health First Aider

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT **teen** Mental Health First Aid,  
VISIT [www.mhfa.org/teens](http://www.mhfa.org/teens)



NATIONAL COUNCIL  
FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

BORNTTHIS WAY/  
FOUNDATION

# HOW WE CAN SUPPORT YOU

**teen Mental Health First Aid teaches young people in grades 10-12 how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders among their friends and peers.**

teen Mental Health First Aid gives young people the skills to have supportive conversations with their friends and get a responsible and trusted adult to take over as necessary. The training is designed to be delivered in schools or community sites in three interactive classroom sessions of 90 minutes each or six sessions of 45 minutes each.

We'll work with you to ensure your staff are prepared to teach teen Mental Health First Aid and support young people in challenging or crisis situations. We will provide teaching notes, presentations, and informational material that can be shared with parents and families.



## **Bringing teen Mental Health First Aid to your school or organization can:**

- **Give** young people the skills to identify and respond to mental health and substance use concerns, including how to seek the help of a responsible and trusted adult.
- **Promote** a healthy and happy environment that recognizes the value of physical and mental health.
- **Empower** teens to open the conversation about mental illnesses and addiction with friends.
- **Address** the impact of school violence and bullying on mental health.

---

## CONTACT US

Reach out to us for more information about teen Mental Health First Aid in relation to your specific school or organization. Call **888-244-8980, ext. 5**, email [TeenMHFA@TheNationalCouncil.org](mailto:TeenMHFA@TheNationalCouncil.org), or visit [www.MHFA.org/teens](http://www.MHFA.org/teens).



**NATIONAL COUNCIL**  
FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

**BORN THIS WAY/  
FOUNDATION**

# WHY CHOOSE OUR TRAINING?

## **An evidence-based approach**

teen Mental Health First Aid is an evidence-based training program for teens that originated in Australia. Research is ongoing with Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health to measure the skills, knowledge and confidence in providing Mental Health First Aid to a peer and actual usage of Mental Health First Aid after taking the course.

## **Young people turn to each other**

National surveys and other studies show that young people will turn to their friends for support before a parent, sibling, significant other, teacher, online service or professional/school service. This training teaches young people the skills they need to recognize and help their friends with mental health and substance use challenges and crises and how to get the help of a trusted adult quickly.

tMHFA is a universal approach to mental health education. Schools are required to train an entire grade level of students if in a school or all the age-appropriate teens in non-school settings. The intent is to equip all teens — not just a select group — with the skills to help one another.

## **Adults are trained to help**

A critical step of the teen Mental Health First Aid action plan is to get the help of a trusted adult. teen Mental Health First Aid requires that 10% of school staff must be trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid before teaching teen Mental Health First Aid to students. This ensures that adults are available and prepared to help young people facing a crisis. Sites are encouraged to provide Youth Mental Health First Aid for parents and caregivers.

## **Tailored for your environment**

teen Mental Health First Aid is designed to be delivered based on what schedule works best for your youth. It can be offered in three interactive classroom sessions of 90 minutes each or six sessions of 45 minutes each.

## **Internationally recognized**

More than 3 million people around the world have been trained in Mental Health First Aid. In the United States alone, more than 2 million people are trained.

---

## CONTACT US

Reach out to us for more information about teen Mental Health First Aid in relation to your specific school or organization. Call **888-244-8980, ext. 5**, email **[TeenMHFA@TheNationalCouncil.org](mailto:TeenMHFA@TheNationalCouncil.org)**, or visit **[www.MHFA.org/teens](http://www.MHFA.org/teens)**.



MENTAL  
HEALTH  
FIRST AID

NATIONAL COUNCIL  
FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

BORN THIS WAY/  
FOUNDATION

# EVIDENCED-BASED PROGRAM

The teen Mental Health First Aid program is an evidence-based program developed in Australia in 2015 by Dr. Laura Hart at the University of Melbourne and Dr. Claire Kelly at Mental Health First Aid Australia. To develop the program, the researchers conducted a consensus study to understand the minimum amount of information and the most critical skills teens need to help a friend experiencing a mental health challenge. From there, the guidelines for teens providing Mental Health First Aid to peers was developed, which formed the foundation of the tMHFA curriculum.

## **Two evaluations, including one randomized controlled trial, of the Australian teen Mental Health First Aid program showed that teens:<sup>1</sup>**

1. Demonstrated increased mental health literacy
2. Were more confident helping a peer with a mental health problem
3. Viewed seeking help from mental health professionals (school counselors, therapists, etc.) more positively
4. Reported less psychological distress, after receiving the tMHFA training

## **Researchers from Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health are currently conducting an evaluation of teen Mental Health First Aid in the United States. The pilot study is measuring the following:**

- Adolescents' knowledge of the general warning signs that a mental illness may be developing
- Skills and confidence in providing Mental Health First Aid to a peer
- Actual usage of teen Mental Health First Aid skills with peers six months after the training.

<sup>1</sup> Hart, L. M., Mason, R. J., Kelly, C. M., Cvetkovski, S., & Jorm, A. F. (2016). 'teen Mental Health First Aid': a description of the program and an initial evaluation. *International journal of mental health systems*, 10(1), 3.

<sup>2</sup> Hart, L. M., Morgan, A.J., Rossetto, A., Kelly, C. M., Mackinnon, A., Jorm, A.F. (2018). Helping adolescents to better support their peers with a mental health problem: a cluster-randomized crossover trial of teen Mental Health First Aid. *Australia and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*.

## CONTACT US

Reach out to us for more information about teen Mental Health First Aid in relation to your specific school or organization. Call **888-244-8980, ext. 5**, email **[TeenMHFA@TheNationalCouncil.org](mailto:TeenMHFA@TheNationalCouncil.org)**, or visit **[www.MHFA.org/teens](http://www.MHFA.org/teens)**.



NATIONAL COUNCIL  
FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

BORN THIS WAY/  
FOUNDATION

# WHAT PARTICIPANTS SAY

The National Council for Behavioral Health and Lady Gaga's Born This Way Foundation brought teen Mental Health First Aid to the United States in spring 2019. Since then, thousands of young people have been trained in teen Mental Health First Aid and many have used the skills they learned to help their friends.

Additional teen Mental Health First Aider and Instructor testimonials can be found on the MHFA blog.



As I sat through tMHFA, I cried. There were about 30 of us in the room, and, from the start, my peers began to open up about their own struggles. That day, I heard how my classmates had been abused, tossed from home to home, and traumatized throughout life. I had never felt less alone. In that classroom, I began to realize that everyone has a story that includes pain and struggles. And as we learn how to share our stories, we feel less helpless and more empowered." - **DREW VORIS**, teen Mental Health First Aider.



We have incorporated the training into our sophomore health curriculum. Teaching students to be aware of mental health issues in peers has been beneficial in multiple ways. We find students are more aware of their peer struggles and students are more accepting and understanding of mental health issues." - **DOUGLAS FULTON**, Principal, Freedom High School, South Riding, VA



The program opened up more positive adult-student relationships, increasing the overall morale of the school. Students are seeking out adults when they recognize crisis." - **TIM NORBECK**, Superintendent, Boulder, MT



Since the training we have noticed more students have been reporting concerns about their friends who are struggling. We believe tMHFA has had a significant impact on our sophomore class and we will continue to train our sophomores. I believe teen Mental Health First Aid should be implemented in every high school. Our teens are struggling, and we need to help them. We need to educate them about mental health and stop this epidemic of depression and suicide. We need teens to take mental health seriously and report to an adult any time their friends talk about suicide." - **AMY MORAN**, teen Mental Health First Aid Instructor.



We trained almost 550 10th graders in tMHFA. From the last day of training at the end of April to the last day of school in early June, nine students who were having a mental health crisis were referred to a trusted adult by 10th graders who had been trained in tMHFA. School counselors conducted nine suicide screenings within that amount of time, and nine students were linked with additional resources to help them moving forward. tMHFA is a game changer." - **KENNETH CHRISTOPHER**, teen Mental Health First Aid Instructor.



The impact of this program was immediate and far-reaching for these students. The feedback was focused on how most of the Valley High School seniors wished they had this training earlier to help them better cope with the stress and pressure of high school. It was a revelation to the trainers to learn that these young adults were self-aware enough to realize that tMHFA program wasn't just beneficial for their future, they recognized moments in their past that they could have used the training as well." - **ANDREW MAGNESS**, teen Mental Health First Aid Instructor.

## CONTACT US

Reach out to us for more information about teen Mental Health First Aid in relation to your specific school or organization. Call **888-244-8980, ext. 5**, email [TeenMHFA@TheNationalCouncil.org](mailto:TeenMHFA@TheNationalCouncil.org), or visit [www.MHFA.org/teens](http://www.MHFA.org/teens).



MENTAL  
HEALTH  
FIRST AID

NATIONAL COUNCIL  
FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

BORN THIS WAY/  
FOUNDATION

# LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND COURSE OUTLINE

teen Mental Health First Aid teaches young people in grades 10-12 how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders among their friends and peers. A critical step highlighted in the teen Mental Health First Aid action plan is connecting with a trusted adult.

The program is designed to be delivered in schools or community sites in three interactive classroom sessions of 90 minutes each or six sessions of 45 minutes each.



## After the course teens will be able to:

- Recognize early warning signs that a friend is developing a mental health or substance use challenge.
- Recognize warning signs that a friend may be experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis.
- Describe how to talk to a friend about mental health and seeking help.
- Explain when and how to get a responsible adult involved.
- Discuss where to find appropriate and helpful resources about mental health challenges and professional help.
- Apply the tMHFA Action Plan to help a friend with a mental health or substance use challenge or crisis.

## CONTACT US

Reach out to us for more information about teen Mental Health First Aid in relation to your specific school or organization. Call **888-244-8980, ext. 5**, email **[TeenMHFA@TheNationalCouncil.org](mailto:TeenMHFA@TheNationalCouncil.org)**, or visit **[www.MHFA.org/teens](http://www.MHFA.org/teens)**.



NATIONAL COUNCIL  
FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

BORN THIS WAY/  
FOUNDATION

## Outline of teen Mental Health First Aid:

- I. Welcome and Introduction to tMHFA
- II. Overview of mental health and mental health challenges
- III. Impact of mental health challenges on young people
- IV. Professionals who can help and types of help
- V. Your role as a teen Mental Health First Aider
- VI. Learning the tMHFA action plan
  - Look for warning signs.
  - Ask how they are.
  - Listen up.
  - Help them connect with an adult.
  - Your friendship is important.
- VII. Using the action plan to help a friend experiencing a crisis
  - Suicidal thoughts or behaviors
  - Video and discussion
  - Following a traumatic event
  - Self-injuring
  - Harming others/violence/bullying behavior
  - Case study
  - Substance use misuse/overdose
  - Recovery position demonstration and practice
- VIII. Using the action plan to help a friend that may be experiencing a mental health challenge
  - Role-play practice
- IX. Helpful school, community and national resources
- X. Graduation

---

## CONTACT US

Reach out to us for more information about teen Mental Health First Aid in relation to your specific school or organization. Call **888-244-8980, ext. 5**, email [TeenMHFA@TheNationalCouncil.org](mailto:TeenMHFA@TheNationalCouncil.org), or visit [www.MHFA.org/teens](http://www.MHFA.org/teens).



NATIONAL COUNCIL  
FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

BORN THIS WAY/  
FOUNDATION

# BECOMING A tMHFA IMPLEMENTING SITE

Schools, organizations partnering with a school and youth-serving organizations are eligible to register as tMHFA implementing sites. All sites will need to register with the National Council of Behavioral Health as a tMHFA implementing site before sending their individual Instructor candidates to be trained to deliver the program to young people. Individual Instructor candidates will not be eligible to apply apart from registering their organizations as a tMHFA implementing site.

## **To register as a tMHFA implementing site, organizations must meet the following requirements:**

- 10% of adult staff at the training location must be trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid prior to teaching teen Mental Health First Aid to young people. Instructor candidates who wish to be trained to deliver teen Mental Health First Aid to young people must also be trained in the Youth Mental Health First Aid community course before attending the teen Mental Health First Aid Instructor certification course. Instructor candidates do not need to be certified to teach Youth Mental Health First Aid in order to be eligible to teach teen Mental Health First Aid.
- The program must be taught to an entire grade level of students (not individual classes) or to an entire group of teens if teaching at a youth-serving organization or youth program.
- The program must be taught to teens in grades 10, 11 or 12. At this time, grade 9 is not permitted.
- Sites offering the training must meet criteria to ensure teen safety by having a mental health professional on site while the course is being taught and a protocol to respond to teens in distress. Sites must also commit to using tMHFA Exit Tickets to provide teens with a discreet way of asking for help for themselves or a friend after every session of the course. Sites must establish a protocol to have Instructors and/or a site staff person read every tMHFA Exit Ticket and contact any teen who requests help.
- It is recommended that sites have one teen Mental Health First Aid Instructor for every 100-150 teens. Instructors will not teach teens in large, assembly-style sessions; this recommendation is to help sites gauge how many Instructors need to be trained in the curriculum.
- Sites are encouraged to provide Youth Mental Health First Aid for parents and caregivers before the tMHFA course begins or concurrently.
- Each site will designate a teen Mental Health First Aid coordinator. teen Mental Health First Aid coordinators will serve as the liaison between the site and Mental Health First Aid USA. teen Mental Health First Aid coordinators may be responsible for disseminating information to teens and parents about teen Mental Health First Aid before the course starts, scheduling information sessions, scheduling the courses, managing the course evaluation process and teen Mental Health First Aid Instructor observation process, and entering data at various intervals for Mental Health First Aid USA about the number of teens being trained at the site.

## CONTACT US

Reach out to us for more information about teen Mental Health First Aid in relation to your specific school or organization. Call **888-244-8980, ext. 5**, email **[TeenMHFA@TheNationalCouncil.org](mailto:TeenMHFA@TheNationalCouncil.org)**, or visit **[www.MHFA.org/teens](http://www.MHFA.org/teens)**.



**NATIONAL COUNCIL**  
FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

**BORN THIS WAY/  
FOUNDATION**

# PITCHING **teen** MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TO YOUR ADMINISTRATOR

Use the following template to pitch tMHFA to your school or organization's leadership. This may be adapted to suit your needs.

Dear [Insert Name],

I am writing about an exciting new peer-to-peer training program, teen Mental Health First Aid (tMHFA), specifically designed for teens in grades 10-12. This program was developed in response to critical mental health needs of young people — half of all mental illnesses develop by the age of 14 and suicide is one of the leading causes of death among teens — as well as research indicating that young people have a preference for sharing problems with peers, but that their friends do not always have the knowledge or skills to help.

tMHFA is an evidence-based training program from Australia for teens in grades 10-12. The National Council for Behavioral Health adapted the training to make it relevant for young people in America. It teaches young people how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders among their friends. It also gives them the skills to have supportive conversations with their friends and get a responsible and trusted adult to take over as necessary.

This course is designed to be delivered in schools or community sites by a trained tMHFA Instructor in three interactive classroom sessions of 90 minutes each or six sessions of 45 minutes each.

I'd love to discuss the possibility of bringing this important program to our youth this school year!

Thank you,

[Insert Name]

---

## CONTACT US

Reach out to us for more information about teen Mental Health First Aid in relation to your specific school or organization. Call **888-244-8980, ext. 5**, email [TeenMHFA@TheNationalCouncil.org](mailto:TeenMHFA@TheNationalCouncil.org), or visit [www.MHFA.org/teens](http://www.MHFA.org/teens).



NATIONAL COUNCIL  
FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

BORN THIS WAY/  
FOUNDATION



# t PRICES

To bring **teen Mental Health First Aid** to your school or youth-serving organization, you will need to account for the following costs:

## **Tuition fee for teen Mental Health First Aid Instructor Training:**

An adult must be certified by Mental Health First Aid USA to teach the teen Mental Health First Aid course. Certification is achieved through a 3-day interactive training.

**\$3,200** per teen Mental Health First Aid Instructor.

*If you are a National Council of Behavioral Health member, you will receive a discounted price of \$3,000 per Instructor.*

The price includes all tMHFA Instructor training materials, implementation resources and ongoing implementation tMHFA support.

## **3-day hosted training for up to 20 participants:**

For schools or organizations that would like to train a large number of participants as teen Mental Health First Aid Instructors, the National Council for Behavioral Health can bring an onsite Instructor training to you for

**\$45,000** for up to 20 participants.

*National Council of Behavioral Health members will receive a discounted price of \$40,500.*

## **3-day virtual hosted training for up to 16 participants:**

For schools or organizations that would like to train a large number of teen Mental Health First Aid Instructors, the National Council for Behavioral Health can conduct a private virtual Instructor training for up to 16 Instructors at a cost of

**\$45,000**

*(\$40,500 for National Council members).*

## **Training Manuals:**

Each young person taking teen Mental Health First Aid is required to receive their own copy of a training manual. The school or organization is responsible for purchasing and providing all teens with them. The cost associated is approximately

**\$8.95** per manual.

## CONTACT US

Reach out to us for more information about teen Mental Health First Aid in relation to your specific school or organization. Call **888-244-8980, ext. 5**, email [TeenMHFA@TheNationalCouncil.org](mailto:TeenMHFA@TheNationalCouncil.org), or visit [www.MHFA.org/teens](http://www.MHFA.org/teens).



NATIONAL COUNCIL  
FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

BORN THIS WAY/  
FOUNDATION