



NATIONAL COUNCIL
FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

MHFA for Essential Services

Employee Support Under Stressful Conditions

Part of a Special MHFA at Work Educational Series in Response to the
COVID-19 Pandemic

April 14, 2020

Welcome!

Presenters:



MENTAL
HEALTH
FIRST AID®
AT WORK



Jennifer Cox, MA
***National MHFA at
Work Trainer***
NCBH



**Linda Henderson-
Smith, PhD, LPC,**
Director of Children and
Trauma Informed
Services
NCBH

In The News



MENTAL HEALTH/PSYCHOLOGY

How Companies Teach Their Employees First Aid for Mental Health



BY **MANDY OAKLANDER**
 FEBRUARY 12, 2020

HEALTH | JOURNAL REPORTS: HEALTH CARE

Colleagues Become Confidants in the Age of Coronavirus

With millions of people stressed out and working from home, mental health takes center stage

By *Rachel Feintzeig*

April 2, 2020 8:10 am ET

SHARE TEXT

5

Are you OK? Your co-worker wants to know.

Companies are training employees to recognize when colleagues might be having mental-health struggles and to serve as a listening ear if needed. Some companies, such as Alphabet Inc.'s Google, are turning to the Mental Health First



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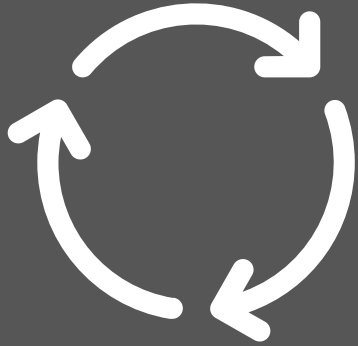
National Engagement



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF AMERICA**



TODAY'S AGENDA



- COVID-19 Stressors and Trauma
- Peer Support Responses
- Resilience Roadmap
- Recommended Resources
- Questions & Answers

2 Million

Mental Health First Aiders

Trained!



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MentalHealthFirstAid.org

National Council for Behavioral Health

NATIONAL COUNCIL
FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

We are the unifying voice of America's health care organizations that deliver mental health and addictions treatment and services.

The National Council is committed to all Americans having access to comprehensive, high-quality care that affords every opportunity for recovery.

The National Council introduced **Mental Health First Aid USA** in 2008.



Mental Health First Aid



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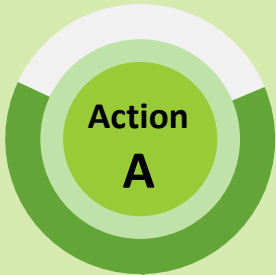
Mental Health First Aid is the help offered to a person developing thinking, emotional or behavioral symptoms or experiencing a crisis. The first aid is given until appropriate treatment and support are received or until the crisis resolves.

MHFA is provided within the context of your company's policies and procedures.



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MHFA Action Plan



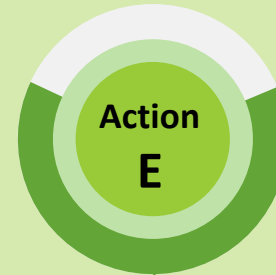
APPROACH,
acknowledge risk,
assist and ask the
question (if
applicable)



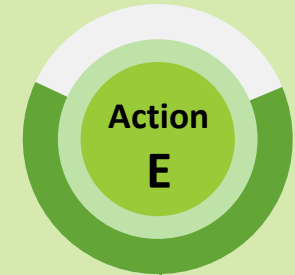
LISTEN
non-judgmentally



GIVE
reassurance and
information



ENCOURAGE
appropriate
professional help



ENCOURAGE
self-help and other
support strategies

Mental Health First Aiders/Ambassadors



What we are:

- Mental Health Ambassadors
- Resource Knowledgeable
- Caring Colleagues

What we are not:

- Treatment Providers
- Diagnosticians
- Emergency providers

Current Stressors/Trauma

COVID-19

COVID-19 Stressors

Vulnerable Populations

- Older people and people with chronic diseases who are at higher risk for COVID-19
- Children and teens
- People who are helping with the response to COVID-19, like doctors and other health care providers, first responders, grocery staff, construction, utilities services, essential industry workers
- People who have mental health conditions including problems with substance use



Stressors of Today

No contact with others

Worries about job and employment

Anticipation about the future and Unsure how long this will continue??

Constant doom and gloom (i.e. social media, news, etc.)

Working All the time

Everyone's in a different boat

Merged rolls and constant multitasking (employee, parent, spouse, managing families, schooling)

Lack of or no socialization with sick relatives, others in general

Lack of control over the situation

Trauma Defined

Trauma occurs when a person is overwhelmed by events or circumstances and responds with intense fear, horror, and helplessness.

Extreme stress overwhelms the person's capacity to cope.

There is a direct correlation between trauma and physical health conditions such as diabetes, COPD, heart disease, cancer, and high blood pressure.

Impact of Trauma

- Perception of trauma varies among individuals
- It is a ***NORMAL response*** to an ***ABNORMAL experience***
- Trauma is something that **overwhelms our coping capacity**
 - Affects the whole self
 - Physical
 - Emotional
 - Intellectual
 - Spiritual



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Anxiety is a normal human response to a stressful situation



What might be causing other's "bad" behavior?

*Internal or external cause or stimuli
we have little control over*



An unmet need



Loss of personal
power and need
for control



External
activating stimuli
in the
environment



Internal activating
stimuli such as
intense anxiety or
fear

FLIGHT



FIGHT



FREEZE

Survival Mode Response



Normal Response to Traumatic Events

- Feelings become intense and sometimes unpredictable
- Thoughts and behavior patterns are affected
- Recurring emotional reactions are common
- Interpersonal relationships often become strained
- Physical symptoms may accompany the extreme stress





Peer Support during COVID-19 Response



Potential Signs & Symptoms

Signs

What we may see

Irritability

Changes in self-care/appearance

Tearfulness

Indecisiveness/confusion

Increased alcohol or drug use

Having a dramatic change in mood

Symptoms

What someone may feel

Sadness/anxiety

Low energy

Sleep /Appetite changes

Unexplained aches and pains

Hopelessness / Helplessness

Thoughts of death and suicide



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Get to know workers and check in regularly



Show that you are a Mental Health First Aider in your email signature, creative ways so they know who you are



Be Clear that you are there to support them & resources are available – Know how the person can contact HR, their line manager, or their EAP



Offer self-care tips – taking mini breaks every hour to stretch/ get water, go for a walk, meditating, keeping a schedule and eating well can be done from almost anywhere

Using MHFA at Work



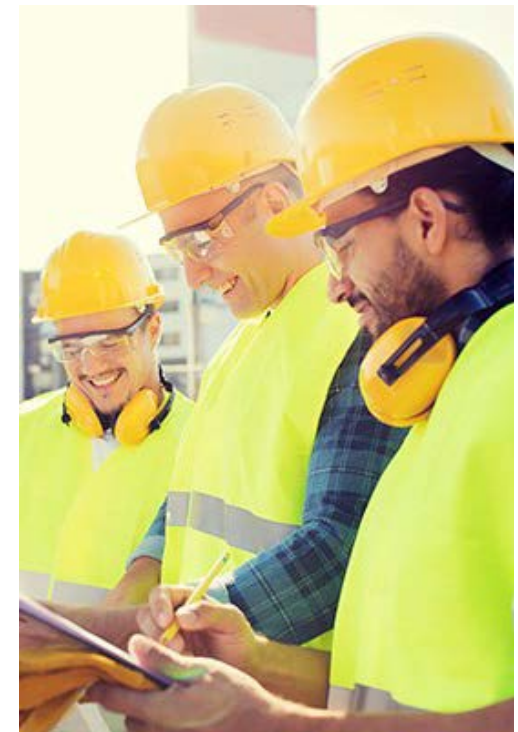
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How can you help?

Encourage your colleagues to:

- Tell others what they need
- Identify sources of support
- Take care of himself or herself
- Use coping strategies that have helped in the past
- Spend time somewhere in a safe and comfortable place
- Seek trained professional help for support

Encourage positive coping strategies.





Resilience Roadmap

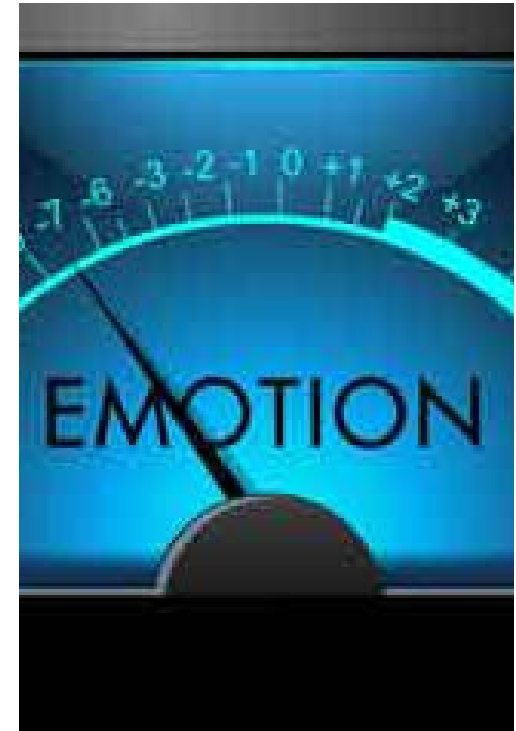
IN THE NEW WORK ENVIRONMENT

Roadmap for Regulation

Regulate – physical calming strategies needed for the brainstem and midbrain

Relate – focused on the relationship

Reason – focused on reasoning and solving problems



Van Horn, K. (2018).

How Do We Regulate?

By using learning to incorporate the **6 R's**

Rhythmic

Repetitive

Relevant

Rewarding

Relational

Respectful



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Simple Ways to take care of Ourselves and Others

Exercise

Laugh

Learn to Say No

Spend time with
your pet

Consider
Supplements

Spend Virtual
Time with Friends
and Family

Learn to avoid
procrastination

Deep breathing

Light a Candle

Chew Gum

Take a yoga class

Listen to soothing
music

Reduce your
caffeine Intake

Write it Down

Practice
mindfulness

Cuddle





Resources

National Council Resources



Resources and Tools for Addressing Coronavirus (COVID-19)

<https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/covid19/>

Encourage Appropriate Professional Help

Types of Professionals

- Employee Assistance Program
- Doctors (primary care physicians)
- Nurse Practitioners
- Psychiatrists
- Psychologists, social workers, counselors, and other mental health professionals
- Certified peer specialists
- Certified drug and alcohol counselors

Types of Professional Help

- “Talk” therapies
- Medication
- Group therapy
- Other professional supports (complimentary medicine)
- EMDR (for trauma)

Leverage Your Corporate Resources

- **Know how to access corporate resources**
(i.e. websites, HR, EAP, etc.)
- **Keep the numbers handy for quick use during conversations**
- **Share links and resource information in a variety of ways**
(i.e. via daily email communication, Online resources/Wellness websites, social media, etc.)
- **Be visible and available**

COVID-19 External Resources

If you, or someone you care about, are feeling overwhelmed with emotions like sadness, depression, or anxiety, or feel like you want to harm yourself or others call:

Disaster Distress Helpline - 1-800-985-5990 and TTY 1-800-846-8517

Text “TalkWithUs” to 66746

National Domestic Violence Hotline or call 1-800-799-7233 and TTY 1-800-787-3224

Local / State online websites and resources



Emergency/Crisis External Resources

If you or someone you know tried to hurt themselves, get help immediately by calling 911

Call 911 – Ask for a Wellness Check and CIT trained responder

If you or someone you know is having suicidal thoughts and needs to talk to a crisis counselor, please take advantage of these **free** resources:

- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** 800-273-8255 (TALK)
- **Crisis Textline:** Text “MHFA” to 741741
- **Suicide Prevention Chat Services (NSPL)**
- **Call 988**



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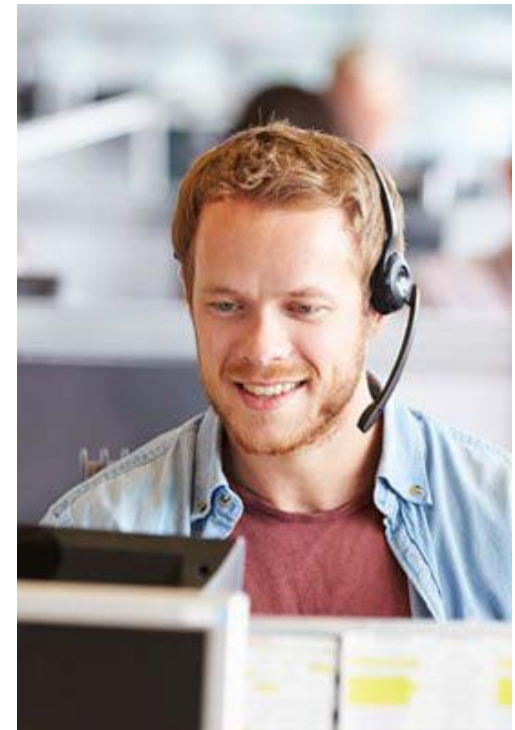
A New Response to Crisis

ACKNOWLEDGE

GRATITUDE

KINDNESS

CONNECTION





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EVERYONE REACTS
DIFFERENTLY TO
STRESSFUL
SITUATIONS



TAKE CARE OF
YOURSELF AND
YOUR
COMMUNITY



KNOW THE FACTS
TO HELP REDUCE
STRESS



TAKE CARE OF
YOUR MENTAL
HEALTH

Remember



Questions & Answers

THANK YOU!

April Webinars



Resourceful, Resilient and Remote: Mental Health First Aid in the New Work Environment

Thursday, April 16, 12 – 1:30 p.m. ET

Explore MHFA tools, resources and best practices as we honor recommendations for physical distancing.

Register Now!



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#BeTheDifference

For more information about MHFA at Work

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 @NationalCouncil @MHFirstAidUSA

www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org

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