

SAMHSA Mental Health Awareness Training Grant (MHAT: SM-21-007) Toolkit

In December 2020, the federal government appropriated more than \$16.7 million in funding to be allocated to projects like Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) over a period of up to five years beginning in FY2021. **Mental Health Awareness Training (MHAT) grant applications are now available and are due February 5, 2021. Funds will be distributed September 30, 2021.**

MHAT grants will be vital tools for addressing the mental health crisis that has grown out of the COVID-19 pandemic. They'll allow you to bring MHFA to more communities — such as schools, first responders and veterans — increasing the numbers of people able to identify, understand and respond when a friend, coworker or neighbor is experiencing a mental health challenge.

The following provides an overview of MHFA, which is one of the eligible training programs that can be included in an application for SAMHSA's MHAT grant funding.

For more information:

- For questions related to the funding opportunity announcement, contact SAMHSA directly, as instructed here: <https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/grant-announcements/SM-21-007>].
- For questions about using Mental Health First Aid in a funding opportunity, contact MHFA: MHFA_SAMHSA@TheNationalCouncil.org.

Mental Health First Aid Background

The National Council for Behavioral Health (National Council), founded in 1969, is the unifying voice of America's health care organizations that deliver mental health and addiction treatment and services. Together with our 3,400 member organizations, which serve over 10 million adults, children, and families living with mental illnesses and addictions, the National Council is committed to all Americans having access to comprehensive, high-quality care that affords every opportunity for recovery. In addition to the direct-service community organizations within our membership, the National Council has 79 state association members and 57 affiliate members who represent allied industries such as health information technology, philanthropy and consulting.

In 2008, the National Council introduced Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) to the United States. Mental Health First Aid, an international, evidence-based public education program, introduces participants to risk factors and warning signs of mental health and substance use disorders, builds understanding of the importance of early intervention, and reviews common resources. MHFA originated in Australia in 2000, and its programs address adults helping adults, adults helping youth, and teens helping teens. Population-specific modules dig deeper into the needs of communities including law enforcement, older adults, veterans and higher education. Today, the U.S. program is active in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Marshall Islands, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Notably, MHFA USA was the first to pivot to virtual instruction in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since 2008, more than 2.5 million Americans have been trained in MHFA programs. MHFA introduces participants to risk factors and warning signs of mental health and substance use disorders, builds understanding of the importance of early intervention, and reviews common resources. The course teaches the 5-Step Mental Health First Aid Action Plan (ALGEE) as a way to approach an individual experiencing a mental health or substance use challenge or crisis:

- **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 goal of the Action Plan is to connect people to appropriate professional, peer, social and self-help care. MHFA also teaches common risk factors and warning signs of specific types of illnesses such as depressive disorders, anxiety, eating disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, bipolar disorder and psychotic disorders.

Just as learning physical first aid does not make someone a doctor, learning Mental Health First Aid does not qualify anyone to diagnose mental health challenges or provide therapy.

Efficacy

Research proves MHFA is effective. Peer-reviewed studies¹ show that individuals trained in MHFA:

- Increase their knowledge of signs, symptoms and risk factors of mental illnesses and addictions.
- Can identify multiple types of professional and self-help resources for individuals with a mental illness or addiction.
- Have increased confidence and are more likely to help an individual in distress.
- Show increased mental wellness themselves.

Likewise, teen MHFA training has proven to result in:

- Increased mental health literacy.
- Increased confidence.
- Increased positive view of mental health professionals.
- Decreased psychological distress.

MHFA offers a **vital response to access barriers**. Mental Health First Aiders learn to respond to individuals where they are, bridging the gap between the emergence of a crisis and its resolution with intervention and referral assistance. By providing tools, awareness, knowledge and links to services, MHFA creates a network of people who can support those who may have previously faced barriers to access. (The term “referral” can include clinical referrals as well as referrals to other supports, including self-help resources and other support strategies.) The tMHFA program explicitly stresses the importance of bringing a trusted, responsible adult into the situation for help and guidance.

¹The National Council for Behavioral Health. "Mental Health First Aid Efficacy: Research Summary." Mental Health First Aid. 2019. Accessed October 28, 2020. <https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/cs/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/2018-MHFA-Research-Summary.pdf>

First Aider Training Overview

First Aider Certification Process

The MHFA curriculum is offered in two core formats to participants 18 years and older, is available in Spanish and English, and can be delivered in person, virtually, or in a blended learning environment.

The [Adult Mental Health First Aid](#) course uses role-playing and simulations to demonstrate how to assess a mental health crisis, select interventions and provide initial help, and connect people to professional, peer and social supports as well as self-help resources.

The course focuses on recognizing the patterns of thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and appearance that show there might be a challenge rather than on a specific disorder. Participants learn an action plan to apply to non-crisis and crisis scenarios. By the end of the course, they will be able to:

- Describe the purpose of Mental Health First Aid and the role of the Mental Health First Aider.
- Identify the impact of mental health challenges on the well-being of adults in the United States.
- Explain that recovery from a mental health challenge is possible.
- Describe the principles of safety and privacy for both the Mental Health First Aider and the person receiving Mental Health First Aid.
- Explain the 5 steps of the Mental Health First Aid Action Plan (ALGEE).
- Recognize the signs and symptoms of mental health challenges that may impact adults. Evaluate the impact of early intervention on mental health challenges.
- Apply the appropriate steps of the Mental Health First Aid Action Plan (ALGEE) when a person shows early signs of a mental health challenge.
- Apply the appropriate steps of the Mental Health First Aid Action Plan (ALGEE) when a person shows worsening signs of a mental health challenge.
- Apply the appropriate steps of the Mental Health First Aid Action Plan (ALGEE) to crisis situations.
- Choose appropriate methods for self-care following the application of Mental Health First Aid in a crisis or non-crisis situation.

[Youth Mental Health First Aid \(YMHFA\)](#) is primarily designed for adults who regularly interact with young people (age 12-18). The program teaches parents, family members, caregivers, teachers, school staff, peers, neighbors, health and human services workers, and other caring citizens how to help an adolescent who is experiencing a mental health or substance use challenge or is in crisis. Youth Mental Health First Aid introduces common mental health challenges for youth, reviews typical adolescent development, and teaches the 5-Step Mental Health First Aid Action Plan (ALGEE) to help young people in crisis and non-crisis situations.

Topics covered include anxiety, depression, substance use, disorders in which psychosis may occur, disruptive behavior disorders (including ADHD), trauma, the impact of social media and bullying, and eating disorders. When implementing MHFA or YMHFA, organizations should consider which course presents the most developmentally appropriate information for the selected population.



The Youth Mental Health First Aid course focuses on recognizing the patterns of thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and appearance that show there might be a challenge rather than on a specific disorder. First Aiders learn an action plan for non-crisis and crisis scenarios. By the end of the course, they are able to:

- Describe the purpose of Youth Mental Health First Aid and the role of the First Aider.
- Recognize the signs and symptoms of mental health challenges that may impact youth.
- Explain the impact of traumatic experiences and the role of resilience on adolescent development.
- Apply the appropriate steps of the YMHFA Action Plan (ALGEE) to non-crisis situations.
- Apply the appropriate steps of the YMHFA Action Plan (ALGEE) to crisis situations.
- Choose appropriate methods for self-care following the application of Youth Mental Health First Aid in a crisis or non-crisis situation

[teen Mental Health First Aid](#), the newest MHFA curriculum, 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. Schools are required to train an entire grade level, and youth-serving organizations must teach tMHFA to an entire group of teens in the program. Schools and organizations offering the training are also required to train at least 10% of adult staff in Youth Mental Health First Aid.

After the course, teens will be able to:

- Recognize early warning signs that a friend is developing a mental health challenge.
- Recognize warning signs that a friend may be experiencing a mental health crisis.
- Describe how to talk to a friend about mental health and seek 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 challenge or crisis.

The tMHFA Action Plan varies slightly from the Mental Health First Aid Action Plan (ALGEE):

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

Instructor-to-Participant Ratios

To ensure the safety of our online participants, Instructors of virtual courses are required to maintain and monitor a “Virtual Hallway” breakout room so participants can step out of the training. Requirements for staffing the course and monitoring the Virtual Hallway vary by course size. A non-participating mental health clinician or organization staff member may monitor the chat box and Virtual Hallway.



# PARTICIPANTS	STAFFING OPTIONS	FUNCTION
5-15	One MHFA Instructor	---
16-20	Two MHFA Instructors OR One MHFA Instructor and a non-participating mental health clinician or organization staff member	<i>The second Instructor will monitor the Virtual hallway and periodically private chat participants to see how they are feeling.</i>
21-30	Two MHFA Instructors AND One non-participating mental health clinician or organization staff member	<i>While the Virtual Hallway monitor does not need to actively participate in the training, they must be on call for the duration of the training.</i>

**Virtual courses must have at least five registered participants.*

First Aider Training Costs

For in-person courses, the participant manuals (printed copies) are \$18.95 per person. Materials for virtual Mental Health First Aid courses are up to \$28.95 per person (\$23.95 for year 1; \$28.95 for years 2-5) and include a digital manual, access to the 2-hour self-paced coursework through our learning management system, and access to resources. Certified Instructors order the course materials through an Instructor storefront in advance of their class. MHFA and YMHFA Instructors are required to teach at least 3 times per year to maintain their certification.

Adult and Youth MHFA Instructor Training

The Instructor course models MHFA course content and delivery, summarizes adult learning styles and teaching strategies, and provides in-depth instruction on implementing and managing the program. The agenda includes the following topics:

- Adult Learning Principles
- What is Andragogy?
- How do Adults Learn?
- Presentation Basics
- The Role of the Facilitator
- How to Facilitate?
- Classroom Management
- Having Difficult Conversations
- Managing Unproductive or Off-task Behavior
- Creating a Positive Classroom Environment
- Working with a Co-Instructor

By the end of the MHFA Instructor Course, Instructors will be prepared to do the following:

- Teach all sections of the MHFA training in a virtual environment and in person.
- Implement the MHFA curriculum with fidelity.
- Create a safe and supportive learning environment to teach MHFA to diverse audiences.

Instructor candidates become certified when they complete an application and registration process, attend and participate fully in the pre-work and certification training, demonstrate mastery of the



program through a written exam, and successfully complete an evaluated presentation. Following their certification, the Instructors are permitted to teach the course and to certify Mental Health First Aiders. Participants may become certified to teach the Adult and/or Youth Curriculum. Certification must be renewed annually and requires presenting three courses during the year.

All Instructor trainings are currently conducted virtually.

MHFA Instructor Certification (Youth and Adult)

For their initial certification, Instructors participate in a 5-day or 3-day training that presents the Mental Health First Aid course and provides in-depth instruction on facilitating the curriculum. The training includes a written exam and evaluates each candidate's ability to present the Mental Health First Aid course to a variety of audiences. Instructor Candidates. (To maintain certification, Instructors must teach three classes per year.)

An organization that wants to conduct MHFA training in its community must start by identifying Instructors who have been certified by the National Council's National (Master) Trainers. They can engage the existing Instructor network, or they can identify and train staff or community members:

- **Train staff or community members as MHFA Instructors:** Send two or more qualified staff members to an MHFA Instructor certification training (in person or virtual) hosted by the National Council.
- **Host an on-site Instructor certification training:** Train a larger cohort of up to 16 (virtual) or 30 (in person) qualified participants in your community.

To begin their training journey, Candidates must submit an application using the Mental Health First Aid online application process. Applications are reviewed, and those that are accepted are added to the class on a rolling basis. Once a course roster is complete, Instructor Candidates are invited to participate in the training.

Curriculum Modules

Curriculum modules are sets of materials designed for Adult MHFA Instructors to use when training key audiences. There are several modules available to cater to special populations including:

- Law Enforcement
- Fire & EMS
- Veterans
- Higher Education
- Older Adults

To be certified in any of the curriculum modules, Adult MHFA Instructors will need to:

- Watch a 90-minute webinar
- Successfully pass a brief exam on the module content.
- Access the tailored PowerPoint presentation and digital teaching notes (incurs additional \$50 fee).

Course Fidelity

Mental Health First Aid is an established, evidence-based program with quality monitoring, technical assistance and support available to Instructors and implementation staff. The program uses the term 'fidelity' to describe the core elements of the original MHFA course kept intact in its adaptation for American cultures. Instructors must agree to preserve the fidelity of the program by following the National Council's guidelines and must deliver the Mental Health First Aid program three times each year to remain certified.

The standard Adult curriculum is divided into seven segments covering nine topic areas. For flexibility of discussion, the program is not scripted; however, Instructors are expected to present all non-optional slides, exercises and program videos in the order which they are presented in the associated Teaching Notes. Additional content for local purposes is limited to helpful resources and minimal tailoring for audiences in exercises. To further ensure fidelity, modifications or supplements to the curriculum slides are not permitted.

Virtual Training

Currently, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, all Instructor training is being conducted virtually.

Instructor Candidates must complete approximately eight hours of pre-work *before* the first day of training. Pre-work includes an online course that includes a series of MHFA modeling videos. This is a self-paced assignment Candidates will receive one week before their first day of training..

Once they confirm their registration, Instructor Candidates will order the necessary materials for the training. There will be no additional charges for course materials.

The online course lasts three days, with six to eight hours of content each day. This is a live, interactive course taught by MHFA National Trainers. About two to three weeks after the live training, participants will complete approximately two hours of post-work that includes information on using the learning management system and accessing the self-paced portion of the First Aider course.



SCHEDULE



PREP WORK:

- Self-paced Course (MHFA Intro)
- Instructional Videos
- MHFA Instructor Processing Guide (IPG)



Day 1

HUDDLE 1:

- Welcome
- MHFA at a Glance
- Unpacking the Curriculum

HUDDLE 2:

- Virtual Skills Practice Packet: Group Practice
- Teachback Assignments

HOMEWORK:

- Review Assignment
- Work on Virtual Skills Practice Packet



Day 2

HUDDLE 3:

- Andragogy
- In-person vs Virtual
- Presentation Tips

HUDDLE 4:

- Rubric Review
- Teachback Resources
- Coaching Format Overview
 - Meet with Assignment Buddy
 - 30-Minute Blocks with NT
- Office Hours
 - Work on Virtual Skills Practice

HOMEWORK:

- Prepare for Teachback
- Watch virtual administration of your assigned section



Day 3

TEACHBACKS & FEEDBACK:

- 35-Minute Blocks
 - 15-minute teachback
 - 10-minute group feedback
 - 10-minute feedback with National Trainer

HUDDLE 5:

- Segment 6 Strategies

FINAL HUDDLE:

- The 3 P's
- Call to Action
- The MHFA Movement
- Graduation

Outline of three-day Adult and Youth MHFA Instructor Training

In-person Instructor Training

- Courses may be three or five days; each day includes six to eight hours of training.
- Each Instructor Candidate will present and teach an assigned portion of the MHFA course to the group.
- Each Instructor Candidate will provide a peer review for their colleagues.
- National Trainers will conduct an individual evaluation of and provide feedback to each candidate.

On-site Instructor Certification

The National Council for Behavioral Health conducts private Mental Health First Aid Instructor certification trainings for organizations wishing to train Instructors onsite. Organizations that host onsite Instructor certification trainings are responsible for application review and Instructor candidate selection.

Pricing for Adult and Youth Instructor Training

The **3-day virtual Instructor course** (Adult or Youth) can accommodate **six to 16 participants** and costs **\$26,000 per course** (\$24,000 per course for National Council Members). In addition to pre-program planning and assistance, the cost of hosting a private training for our organization includes the following direct costs:

- Pre-program planning and assistance.
- Trainer fees for two National Trainers.

- Program materials for each participant (participant manual, Teaching Notes, flash drive with program PowerPoint slide deck, handouts and other related program materials, and a stuffed koala mascot).
- Printing, shipping, and processing of training materials to participants.
- Access to free virtual Instructor certification for one year after becoming certified (\$150/person value for current certified Instructors).
- Ongoing technical assistance and access to resources for certified Instructors

Costs for Instructor training and certification includes incorporating newly certified Instructors into MHFA USA’s national instructor network, adding them to the listserv, providing technical assistance so they can see and post publicly available Instructor listings, and ongoing direct support (provided they maintain their certification).

Please review this table for Instructor training course and participant materials pricing.

[The Certification Process: How to Become an Instructor](#)

UNIT PRICE*	TRAINING / MATERIALS	FORMAT	QUANTITY
\$2,200*	Instructor Training Tuition <i>(one participant at a National Council open access training + materials)</i>	3-day virtual	1 participant
\$ 2,000*	Expedited Instructor <i>(Certified Instructor seeking dual certification)</i>	3-day virtual	1 participant
\$26,000*	Host Site Instructor Training <i>(Onsite cohort training model)</i>	3-day virtual	16 participants
\$19.95	Physical copy of virtual/blended Instructor teaching notes <i>(for existing instructors)</i>	Physical copy of teaching notes	1 copy
\$23.95 (year 1) or \$28.95 (years 2-5)	MHFA Participant Materials <i>(virtual delivery)</i>	MHFA Digital Manuals and 2-Hour eLearning Course	1 participant
	MHFA Participant Materials <i>(in-person delivery)</i>	Physical manual	
\$150	Certification for Current Instructors to teach both the blended and virtual delivery models	Self-paced virtual class	1 participant
\$50	Additional Module Certification for Current Certified Adult Instructors	Self-paced virtual class	1 participant

**National Council members receive discounted pricing. Visit MHFA.org for details.*

teen MHFA Training Overview

The Instructor course models teen MHFA course content and delivery, summarizes student learning styles and teaching strategies, and provides in-depth instruction on implementing and managing the program. The course covers the following topics:

- The evidence for tMHFA.
- The development of tMHFA.
- Unpacking the curriculum.



- Creating a safe learning environment for students.
- Principles of pedagogy.
- Best practices for engaging students.
- Classroom management.
- Implementation guidance.
- Scheduling.
- Engaging parents and caregivers.
- Student safety protocols.
- Orienting site staff.
- Preparing students for training.

By the end of the tMHFA Instructor Course, Instructors are prepared to:

- Explain the purpose of tMHFA to teens, parents, and staff.
- Teach all sections of the tMHFA training.
- Implement the tMHFA curriculum with fidelity.
- Create a safe and supportive learning environment to teach tMHFA to diverse teen audiences.

Instructor candidates become certified when they complete an application and registration process, attend and participate fully in the pre-work and certification training, and successfully complete an evaluated presentation. Following their certification, the Instructors are permitted to teach the course at the registered implementing site to certify teen Mental Health First Aiders.

Virtual/ Blended tMHFA Training

Once certified in the in-person delivery format, Instructors seeking the virtual/ blended certification will be enrolled in the fourth day of tMHFA Instructor training. This training will require pre-work that includes taking the student self-paced course, watching Instructor modeling videos, and reviewing your sites safety protocols. The final day of training includes an overview of the virtual/ blended course, reviews virtual-learning best practices and pedagogy, and details the safety protocols that sites must have in place to teach the course.

tMHFA Instructors receive support from MHFA USA before, during and after the Instructor training. This support includes the curriculum materials (teaching notes, presentation slides, curriculum films) that allow Instructors to successfully teach the course as well as materials to implement the full tMHFA program in a school or organization with fidelity. Implementation resources include sample information letters to disseminate to students and parents about tMHFA; sample presentations for students, parents, and staff; and a toolkit to help schools and organizations communicate about tMHFA with the community. tMHFA Instructors also have access to monthly tMHFA virtual “office hour” sessions, which provide an exclusive opportunity to ask questions about the curriculum, learn model implementation practices, address any teaching challenges, and connect with other tMHFA Instructors to share best practices. They may also request ongoing technical assistance from the MHFA USA team.

t TRAINING-AT-A-GLANCE



PREP WORK:

- Instructional Videos
- Instructor Prep Workbook
- Roll Call Meeting



Day 1

HUDDLE 1:

- Welcome
- The Movement tMHFA

----- BREAK -----

HUDDLE 2:

- Creating a Safe Learning Environment

----- BREAK -----

HUDDLE 3:

- Teach-back Guidance and Preparation
- Teach-back Assignments

HOMEWORK:

- Review Assignment & Prepare for Coaching



Day 2

HUDDLE 4:

- Rubric Review
- Coaching Overview

----- BREAK -----

BREAKOUT ROOMS:

- Meet with Assignment buddy

----- BREAK -----

COACHING:

- 30-Minute Blocks

HOMEWORK:

- Teach-back Prep
- Implementation Guide



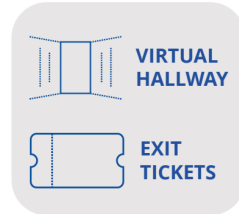
Day 3

TEACH-BACKS & FEEDBACK:

- 40-45 Minute Blocks

FINAL HUDDLE:

- Implementation Guide
- The 3 P's
- The MHFA Movement
- Graduation



Outline of three-day teen MHFA Instructor training

Pricing for teen Instructor Training

Please review this table for Instructor training course and participant materials pricing.

UNIT PRICE*	TRAINING / MATERIALS	FORMAT	QUANTITY
\$3,200*	Instructor Training Tuition <i>(one participant at a National Council open access training. Instructors certified for in-person + virtual delivery)</i>	4-day virtual	1 participant
\$41,500*	Host Site Instructor Training <i>(Onsite cohort training model. Instructors certified for in-person delivery.)</i>	3-day virtual	16 participants
\$45,000*	Host Site Instructor Training <i>(Onsite cohort training model. Instructors certified for in-person delivery and virtual delivery.)</i>	4-day virtual	16 participants
\$19.95	Physical copy of virtual/blended Instructor teaching notes <i>(for existing Instructors)</i>	Physical copy of teaching notes	1 copy
\$9.95	MHFA teen Participant Materials <i>(in-person delivery)</i>	Physical manual shipped to one location; sites then distribute manuals accordingly	1 copy
\$9.95	MHFA teen Participant Materials <i>(virtual)</i>	Digital Manual and Virtual Seat	1 participant
\$12.95	MHFA teen Participant Certification and Materials <i>(blended)</i>	Physical Manual, Digital Manual and Virtual Seat	1 participant

*National Council members receive discounted prices.



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