










# Research Summary

## Key

ICON	MEANING	ICON	MEANING
	Research originating in the USA		Research originating in the UK & N. Ireland
	Research originating in Australia		Research originating in Sri Lanka
	Research originating in India		Research originating in Pakistan
	Research originating in Canada		Research originating in Sweden
	Research originating in Japan		

## 2021



### **“This person is still here with us today”: A Qualitative Follow-up with Mental Health First Aid First Nations Training Participants**

*Delaney, A., Auger, M., Woerd, K., & Crooks, C.V. (2021). “This person is still here with us today”: A qualitative follow-up with Mental Health First Aid First Nations training participants. Mental Health & Prevention 22. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mhp.2021.200199>*

#### **AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

First Nations people in Canada experience high rates of mental health disorders associated with colonial trauma. The international course Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) was redeveloped by the Mental Health Commission of Canada to be more culturally relevant for First Nations communities. This follow-up study is an exploration of participants’ experiences in applying first aid following their 2.5 day training in Mental Health First Aid First Nations (MHFAFN). MHFAFN course participants were invited to complete a follow-up survey at an average of 9 months (SD=3.3) after training. The online survey included questions about their experiences using MHFAFN skills and asked for a description of the scenario, response, and outcomes. Responses were gathered from 33 participants and qualitative analysis was completed using an inductive approach to develop overarching themes. The majority of

respondents personally experienced a situation where a mental health emergency or issue arose (n=25) and all but two reported they were able to respond using MHFAN skills. For the participants who responded to the situation, they perceived their actions helped. A valuable aspect of the training was inclusion of cultural content and historical context. Respondents indicated feelings of increased confidence in responding to mental illness situations. Respondents perceived reduced mental illness stigma in their communities or work. Most respondents can translate MHFAN content into everyday use to help a person experiencing a mental health problem. MHFAN may help mitigate barriers to accessing mental health care in First Nations contexts.



### **Evaluation of Mental Health First Aid Training for Family Members of Military Veterans with a Mental Health Condition**

*Evans, J., Romaniuk, M., & Theal, R. (2021). Evaluation of Mental Health First Aid training for family members of military veterans with a mental health condition. BMC Psychiatry 21, 128.*

<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-021-03139-9>

#### **AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

A concerning proportion of former Australian Defence Force (ADF) members meet criteria for a mental health condition. Mental health difficulties not only affect the individual veteran, they have also been found to negatively impact the mental health of family, with an increased likelihood for family members of veterans developing a mental health condition. The aim of this study was to evaluate whether participating in a Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) program improved family members of veterans mental health knowledge, reduced personal and perceived mental health stigma, reduced social distancing attitudes, and increased confidence and willingness to engage in MHFA helping behaviors. Additionally, the study measured participants' general mental health and levels of burnout. The study utilized an uncontrolled design with assessment at three time points (baseline, post-program, and three-month follow-up). Participants (N=57) were immediate and extended family members of former ADF members with a mental health condition, who took part in a two-day standard adult MHFA program. At each time point, participants completed self-report measures assessing mental health knowledge, personal and perceived mental health stigma, social distancing attitudes, confidence and willingness to engage in MHFA helping behaviors, general mental health, and burnout. Cochranes Q and repeated measures ANOVA was computed to measure the impact of time on the outcome variables. Results indicated significant improvements in MHFA knowledge and confidence in providing MHFA assistance. Significant reductions in personal mental health stigma (i.e., an individual's attitude toward mental health) for schizophrenia were observed and maintained at follow-up. High levels of perceived mental health stigma (i.e., the belief an individual holds about others' attitudes toward mental health) were reported with no significant changes observed following the MHFA program. Results did not indicate any significant benefit in

improving general psychological distress or burnout at follow-up. The participant sample had high levels of mental health difficulties with over half reporting a lifetime mental health diagnosis. The study is an important contribution to the international literature on MHFA. The provision of a MHFA program to family members of military veterans has not previously been evaluated. Implications of the findings are discussed with regards to future directions of MHFA research and implementing MHFA programs in this population.

## 2020



### **An assessment of the utility of the Youth Mental Health First Aid training: Effectiveness, satisfaction, and universality**

*Childs, K.K., Gryglewicz, K., & Elligson, R. (2020). An assessment of the utility of the Youth Mental Health First Aid training: Effectiveness, satisfaction, and universality. Community Mental Health Journal, 56, 1581-1591. doi: 10.1007/s10597-020-00612-9*

#### **AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) is a training program developed to educate child-serving professionals on how to properly identify and respond to mental health needs among children and adolescents. The current study tested the utility of the training by examining the effectiveness, satisfaction, and universality across child-serving occupations. Data collected from 893 child-serving professionals was used to compare training effectiveness and training experiences across four different occupational settings (child welfare, education, support services, and the justice system). Using a pretest/posttest survey design, strong support for the effectiveness of YMHFA (i.e., knowledge, confidence, preparedness, and intentions to intervene), satisfaction with the training program, and universality of effectiveness and satisfaction across the occupational groups was found. Results highlight the utility of YMHFA across different sectors of child-serving agencies and support its sustainability.



### **Training Spanish-speaking Latinx adults in Mental Health First Aid: A pilot feasibility trial**

*Corona, R., McDonald S.E., Hittl, S., Avila, M., Trujillo, M.A., Cox, J.R., Velazquez, E., Edgar, K., Hershner, L., Benzel, G.K., Matijczak, A., Gordon, C.A., Ascencio, I., Moreno, O., & Gonzalez, T. (2020). Training Spanish-speaking Latinx adults in Mental Health First Aid: A pilot feasibility trial. PSI CHI, Journal of Psychological Research, 25(3), 260-271. doi: 10.24839/2325-7342.JN25.3.260*

#### **AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

The dispersion of the Latinx population across the United States has resulted in mental health service gaps in communities that are experiencing rapid growth. We formed a community-academic

partnership to assess the feasibility of training Latinx residents in an evidence-based mental health intervention and to pilot outcome measures. Spanish-speaking Latinx adults were trained in Mental Health First Aid (MHFA), a program that provides participants with skills and knowledge about mental health issues. The MHFA training was well-received as evidenced by participants' reported satisfaction with the training and their engagement in the 2 days of training. Twenty-three participants attended the first day of training, and 20 participants attended the second day of training (including two participants who did not attend on Day 1). Results of a paired t test indicated significant mean differences in mental health knowledge and help-seeking self-efficacy after training ( $d=0.51$  and  $0.75$ , respectively). Focus group ( $n=13$ ) results provide further support that the training increased participants' mental health literacy and help-seeking behaviors. Focus group participants also discussed cultural stressors faced by their community that negatively affect mental health and agreed that offering more trainings such as MHFA could help promote mental health in the Latinx community. Training Latinx residents in mental health interventions is feasible and may help address mental health access barriers.



### **Using Mental Health First Aid to Promote Mental Health in Churches**

*Costello, J., Hays, K., & Gamez, A.M. (2020). Using Mental Health First Aid to promote mental health in churches. Journal of Spirituality in Mental Health. doi: 10.1080/19349637.2020.1771234*

#### **AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is an evidence-based intervention to increase knowledge about mental illness and self-efficacy in addressing mental health problems. This pilot study explored the implementation of MHFA for members and leaders of Christian church congregations. Twenty-seven church members completed the 8-hour manualized training. A preintervention and postintervention survey design was used, and results revealed significant improvement in mean scores for knowledge, beliefs, self-efficacy, and stigma following the training. These results suggest that MHFA is a promising intervention for congregants and may help address an existing gap in supportive services for individuals with mental and emotional health problems.



### **Culturally Appropriate Orientation Increases the Effectiveness of Mental Health First Aid Training for Bhutanese Refugees: Results from a Multi-state Program Evaluation**

*Gurung, A., Subedi, P., Zhang, M., Li, C., Kelly, T., Kim, C., & Yun, K. (2020). Culturally appropriate orientation increases the effectiveness of Mental Health First Aid training for Bhutanese refugees: Results from a multi-state program evaluation. Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health 22, 957-964. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10903-020-00986-8>*

#### **AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

Poor mental health remains a significant source of morbidity and mortality in the Bhutanese refugee community. Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is a promising intervention that has been used in other immigrant communities to prepare individuals to recognize and respond to mental health warning signs. This was a non-randomized program evaluation. Using pre- and post-training questionnaires developed for prior evaluations of MHFA, we examined the effectiveness of training offered with and without culturally appropriate orientation to mental health terminology and concepts (N=458). Pre- to post-training improvement in ability to recognize schizophrenia, ability to respond to schizophrenia and depression, and the overall mental health literacy was greater for Bhutanese refugees who attended orientation relative to other participants (P<0.05). In scaling up MHFA training for other immigrant communities, we recommend developing and systematically evaluating culturally appropriate orientation materials that introduce mental health vocabulary and contextualize mental health concepts.



### **Youth Mental Health First Aid: Initial outcomes of a statewide rollout in Ohio**

*Noltemeyer, A., Huang, H., Meehan, C., Jordan, E., Morio, K., Shaw, K., & Oberlin, K. (2020). Youth Mental Health First Aid: Initial outcomes of a statewide rollout in Ohio. Journal of Applied School Psychology, 36(1), 1-19. doi: [10.1080/15377903.2019.1619645](https://doi.org/10.1080/15377903.2019.1619645)*

#### **AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

Although mental health concerns are common among children and adolescents, youth-serving adults often feel underprepared in responding to these challenges. Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) is a training program designed to teach adults how to assist youths experiencing mental health or addiction challenges. This pilot program evaluation study examined the outcomes of YMHFA associated with adult knowledge, confidence, beliefs, and behaviors. Participants included 2,180 individuals in Ohio who attended a YMHFA training between January 2015 and August 2016; most participants were White women and represented professions in the field of education. Results revealed that YMHFA participants became more confident, willing to help, aware of support and resources, and accepting of individuals with mental health conditions three months post-training. A high percentage of YMHFA participants also reported applying YMHFA Action Steps at 3, 6, 9, and 12 months after the training. Demographic differences (by race, gender, age, and occupation) in the adult outcomes associated with YMHFA training did not emerge when removing the effects of other participant variables. Limitations, future directions for research, and implications for school psychology practice are discussed in this Service Delivery Brief.



### **Evaluation of participant reluctance, confidence, and self-reported behaviors since being trained in a pharmacy Mental Health First Aid initiative**

*Witry, M., Karamese, H., & Pudlo, A. (2020). Evaluation of participant reluctance, confidence, and*

*self-reported behaviors since being trained in a pharmacy Mental Health First Aid initiative. PLoS ONE, 15(5). doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0232627*

#### **AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

In the U.S., an estimated one in five individuals experience a mental illness annually which contribute to significant human and economic cost. Pharmacists serving in a public health capacity are positioned to provide first aid level intervention to people experiencing a mental health crisis. Research on pharmacy professionals (pharmacists, technicians, students) undergoing training in Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) can provide evidence of the potential benefits of such training. The objectives of this study were to 1) describe the reluctance and confidence to intervene in mental health crises of pharmacy professionals previously trained in MHFA, 2) describe their self-reported use of MHFA behaviors since becoming trained, and 3) describe participant open-ended feedback on their MHFA training. Materials and methods: An electronic survey was disseminated in May and June of 2019 using a four-email sequence to pharmacy professionals who had completed MHFA training from one of five pharmacist MHFA trainers throughout 2018. Domains included demographics, six Likert-type reluctance items, seven Likert-type confidence items for performing MHFA skills, and frequency of using a set of nine MHFA skills since being trained. Prompts collected open-ended feedback related to MHFA experiences and training. Descriptive statistics were used for scaled and multiple-choice items and a basic content analysis was performed on the open-ended items to group them into similar topics. Results: Ninety-eight out of 227 participants responded to the survey yielding a response rate of 44%. Participants reported high levels of disagreement to a set of reluctance items for intervening and overall high levels of confidence in performing a range of MHFA skills. Participant self-reported use of a set of MHFA skills ranged from 19% to 82% since being trained in MHFA. Almost half (44%) of participants had asked someone if they were considering suicide. A majority (61%) also had referred someone to resources because of a mental health crisis. Open-ended responses included positive experiences alongside important challenges to using MHFA in practice and recommendations including additional training focused on the pharmacy setting. Conclusions: Pharmacy professionals in this evaluation reported little reluctance and high confidence related to using MHFA training and reported use of MHFA skills since being trained.

## **2019**



### **How Do Mental Health First Aid Interventions Influence Patient Help-Seeking Behaviours? A Dilemma for Pharmacist Mental Health First Aid Responders**

*Chowdhary, A., Zlotnikova, V., Lucas, C., Lonie, J. (2019). How do Mental Health First Aid interventions influence patient help-seeking behaviours? A dilemma for pharmacist Mental Health First Aid responders. Research in Social and Administrative Policy, 15(1), 106-108. doi:*

10.1016/j.sapharm.2018.02.010

**AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

In any given year approximately 34% of the 130 million adults in the United States suffer from a mental health condition or disorder. Anxiety and depressive disorders are the most common followed by substance use disorder. Many people who suffer from a mental illness do not seek help. Studies have shown that the stigma of being perceived as having a mental illness prevents many adults from seeking help. Mental Health First Aid™ (MHFA) is an educational program geared toward educating MHFA responders to assist those who may be experiencing a mental health condition or disorder. Pharmacists are the most accessible health care professionals, and many are trained in delivering MHFA. The literature on MHFA suggests that it is an effective educational program for those that take the training course. What is lacking is evidence that MHFA interventions positively affect help-seeking behaviors after an intervention has occurred between a Mental Health First Aid responder and an individual requiring MHFA. This paper highlights this issue and provides suggestions for future research.



**Mental Health First Aid for the UK Armed Forces**

*Crone, D.M., Sarkar, M., Curran, T., Baker, C.M., Hill, D., Loughren, E.A., Dickson, T., & Parker, A. (2019). Mental Health First Aid for the UK armed forces. Health Promotion International, 35(1), 132-139. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/day112>*

**AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

Education programs in mental health literacy can address stigma and misunderstanding of mental health. This study investigated self-rated differences in knowledge, attitudes, and confidence around mental health issues following participation in a bespoke Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training course for the Armed Forces. The mixed methods approach comprised quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. A survey, administered immediately post-training (n=602) and again at 10-months post-attendance (n=120), asked participants to rate their knowledge, attitudes, and confidence around mental health issues pre- and post-training. Quantitative findings revealed a significant increase in knowledge, positive attitudes, and confidence from the post-training survey which was sustained at 10-months follow-up. Semi-structured telephone interviews (n=13) were conducted at follow-up, 6-months post-attendance. Qualitative findings revealed that participation facilitated an 'ambassador' type role for participants. This study is the first to have investigated the effect of MHFA in an Armed Forces community. Findings show participants perceived the training to increase knowledge regarding mental health and to enhance confidence and aptitude for identifying and supporting people with mental health problems. Results suggest that such an intervention can provide support for personnel, veterans and their families, regarding mental health in Armed Forces

communities.



**An Evaluation of the teen and Youth Mental Health First Aid Training with a CALD focus: An Uncontrolled Pilot Study with Adolescents and Adults in Australia**

*Uribe Guajardo, M.G., Kelly, C., Bond, K. et al. An evaluation of the teen and Youth Mental Health First Aid training with a CALD focus: An uncontrolled pilot study with adolescents and adults in Australia. Int J Ment Health Syst 13, 73 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13033-019-0329-0>*

**AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

Background: Australia is an ethnically diverse nation with one of the largest refugee resettlement programs world-wide. Evidence suggests that although the risk of developing mental disorders in culturally linguistically diverse (CALD) adolescents may be elevated, professional help-seeking in CALD youth is low. This study sought to evaluate

the face-to-face teen (tMHFA) and Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) training with a CALD focus, which aimed at improving mental health literacy (MHL) and skills in youth and adults assisting adolescents with mental health problems. Methods: An uncontrolled pre-, post-, and follow-up design was used to measure improvement in MHL measures in year 10 students and adults. Results: A total of 372 year 10 students from 2 high schools were trained; 308 responded to the pre-training questionnaire, 220 responded to the post-training questionnaire, and 256 completed the 3-month follow-up questionnaire. A total of 34 adults were trained, 32 responded to the pre-questionnaire and 31 responded to the post-training questionnaire and 20 completed the 3-month follow-up questionnaire. Following training, students were more likely to endorse 'helpful' adults as valid sources of help ( $p < 0.001$ ) and these gains were maintained at follow-up ( $p < 0.01$ ). Significantly higher levels of concordant (helpful) helping intentions were found after training ( $p < 0.01$ ), and this was maintained at follow-up ( $p < 0.05$ ). Significant lower levels of discordant (harmful) helping intentions were found after training ( $p < 0.001$ ), and this was maintained at follow-up ( $p < 0.01$ ). A significant improvement in adults' knowledge of youth mental health problems and Youth Mental Health First Aid was noted from pre- to post-training ( $p < 0.01$ ) and was maintained at follow-up ( $p < 0.01$ ). Confidence when helping a young person with mental health problems increased significantly after training ( $p < 0.001$ ) and this was maintained at follow-up ( $p < 0.05$ ). Conclusion: Our findings indicated the training led to an improvement in a number of measures of MHL and helpful intentions of both the adolescents and adults evaluated. These results indicate that CALD tMHFA and YMHFA are a recommended way of upskilling those trained and thereby leading to the improvement of youth mental health in areas with a high proportion of ethnically diverse groups.



**Nursing Students' Experiences of Mental Health First Aid Training: A Qualitative Descriptive Study**



*Hung, M. S. Y., Lam, S. K. K., & Chow, M. C. M. (2019). Nursing students' experiences of Mental Health First Aid training: A qualitative descriptive study. Collegian.*

<https://doi-org.ezproxy.umuc.edu/10.1016/j.colegn.2019.02.006>

**AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

Background: With the increasing prevalence of mental illnesses worldwide, nurses' competence and preparedness in addressing patients' mental health needs warrant particular attention. However, nurses who receive general nursing training may have inadequate knowledge and beliefs about mental health disorders. Although Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training is considered relevant in improving participants' mental health literacy, the benefits of incorporating the training into general nursing education have not yet been clearly defined in the literature. Aim: The present study aimed to explore undergraduate nursing students' perceptions and experiences of participating in MHFA training. Methods: The study adopted a qualitative descriptive method. Twenty-five nursing students in a Baccalaureate nursing program in Hong Kong who had completed a 12-h MHFA training course were recruited. Data were collected through semi-structured, face-to-face, individual interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis. Findings: Five overarching themes regarding the participants' experiences of the MHFA training were identified from the data: (1) reinforced knowledge and understanding, (2) enhanced techniques and skills, (3) rectified beliefs and values, (4) improved self-awareness of personal mental health status, and (5) a heightened sense of achievement and satisfaction. Discussion: In addition to enhancing nursing students' competence and readiness in managing individuals with mental health conditions, MHFA training could strengthen nursing students' awareness of their own mental health. Conclusion: The findings provide a greater understanding of the practical and experiential benefits of MHFA training for nursing students, and highlight the relevance of incorporating this training into the undergraduate general nursing curriculum.



**Effectiveness of Mental Health First Aid Training for Underserved Latinx and Asian American Immigrant Communities**

*Lee, O. E., & Tokmic, F. (2019). Effectiveness of Mental Health First Aid training for underserved Latinx and Asian American immigrant communities. Mental Health & Prevention, 13, 68–74.*

<https://doi-org.ezproxy.umuc.edu/10.1016/j.mhp.2018.12.003>

**AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

Introduction. Community collaboration is essential to achieving integrated care and improving mental health among immigrants in the United States. This uncontrolled pilot study evaluated the effectiveness of the Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) USA training program when administered to

advocates who serve Latinx and Asian American immigrant communities, with the goal of creating frontline workers to help immigrants with mental health challenges.

**Methods.** A total of 89 participants completed the 8-h MHFA training program. Assessments were conducted before and after the program to measure the impact of MHFA training. Both qualitative and quantitative assessments were used, including the Mental Health Literacy Scale and the Opening Minds Scale for Healthcare Providers. **Results.** The findings revealed a significant improvement in participants' mental health literacy and anti-stigma levels following the training. In addition, participants expressed more positive attitudes toward people with mental illness and held less-extreme views of social distance from them. **Conclusion.** Through this interactive training, participants built new knowledge, skills, and confidence to apply to their work of assisting community members who may be at risk of developing mental health or substance abuse problems.

## 2018



### **Re-development of Mental Health First Aid Guidelines for Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Who Are Experiencing Suicidal Thoughts and Behavior**

*Armstrong, G., Ironfield, N., Kelly, C., Dart, K., Arabena, K., Bond, K., . . . Jorm, A. (2018). Re-development of Mental Health First Aid guidelines for supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who are experiencing suicidal thoughts and behavior. BMC Psychiatry, 18(1), 228. doi:10.1186/s12888-018-1809-5*

#### **AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

Suicide is a leading cause of death among Indigenous Australians. Friends, family, and frontline workers (for example, teachers, youth workers) are often best positioned to provide initial assistance if someone is suicidal. Culturally appropriate expert consensus guidelines on how to provide mental health first aid to Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons who are experiencing suicidal thoughts or behavior were developed in 2009. This study describes the re-development of these guidelines to ensure they contain the most current recommended helping actions.



### **Evaluation of Mental Health First Aid USA Using the Mental Health Beliefs and Literacy Scale**

*Banh, M., Chaikind, J., Robertson, H., Troxel, M., Achille, J., Egan, C., & Anthony, B. (2018). Evaluation of Mental Health First Aid USA using the Mental Health Beliefs and Literacy Scale. American Journal of Health Promotion. doi:10.1177/0890117118784234*

#### **ABBREV AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

This study assessed the impact of Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) in the United States with a

theoretically based and psychometrically sound measure, the Mental Health Beliefs and Literacy Scale (MBLS). The MLBS, based on the Unified Theory of Behavior Change framework, consists of attitudinal, social-, and skill-based constructs affecting the intention to perform and achievement of MHFA actions and reports of their actual completion. Significant short- and longer- term changes were found in internally consistent constructs tapping positive beliefs about MHFA actions, the confidence and intention to perform them as well as mental health literacy. The MBLS documented strong positive effects of MHFA training that were greater in individuals without prior mental health training, the intended targets of MHFA efforts.



**A Feasibility Trial of Mental Health First Aid First Nations: Acceptability, Cultural Adaptation, and Preliminary Outcomes**

*Crooks, C., Lapp, A., Auger, M., van der Woerd, K., Snowshoe, A., Rogers, B.J., Tsuruda, S., Caron, C. (2018). A feasibility trial of Mental Health First Aid First Nations: Acceptability, cultural adaptation, and preliminary outcomes. American Journal of Community Psychology 61, 459-471. doi: 10.1002/ajcp.12241*

**AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

The Mental Health First Aid First Nations course was adapted from Mental Health First Aid Basic to create a community-based, culturally safe, and relevant approach to promoting mental health literacy in First Nations contexts. Over 2.5 days, the course aims to build community capacity by teaching individuals to recognize and respond to mental health crises. This feasibility trial utilized mixed methods to evaluate the acceptability, cultural adaptation, and preliminary effectiveness of MHFAFN. Our approach was grounded in community-based participatory research principles, emphasizing relationship-driven procedures to collecting data and choice for how participants shared their voices. Data included participant interviews (n=89), and surveys (n=91) from 10 groups in four provinces. Surveys contained open-ended questions, retrospective pre-post ratings, and a scenario. We utilized data from nine facilitator interviews and 24 facilitator implementation surveys. The different lines of evidence converged to highlight strong acceptability, mixed reactions to the cultural adaptation, and gains in participants’ knowledge, mental health first aid skill application, awareness, and self-efficacy, and reductions in stigma beliefs. Beyond promoting individual gains, the course served as a community-wide prevention approach by situating mental health in a colonial context and highlighting local resources and cultural strengths for promoting mental well-being.



**A Pilot Randomised Controlled Study of the Mental Health First Aid eLearning Course with UK Medical Students**

*Davies, E.B., Beever, E., Glazebrook, C. (2018). A pilot randomized controlled study of the Mental Health First Aid eLearning course with UK medical students. BMC Medical Education 18(45). doi:*

10.1186/s12909-018-1154-x

**AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

Background: Medical students face many barriers to seeking out professional help for their mental health, including stigma relating to mental illness, and often prefer to seek support and advice from fellow students. Improving medical students' mental health literacy and abilities to support someone experiencing a mental health problem could reduce barriers to help seeking and improve mental health in this population. Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is an evidence-based intervention designed to improve mental health literacy and ability to respond to someone with a mental health problem. This pilot randomised controlled trial aims to evaluate the MHFA eLearning course in UK medical students. Methods: Fifty-five medical students were randomised to receive six weeks access to the MHFA eLearning course (n=27) or to a no-access control group (n=28). Both groups completed baseline (pre-randomisation) and follow-up (six weeks post-randomisation) online questionnaires measuring recognition of a mental health problem, mental health first aid intentions, confidence to help a friend experiencing a mental health problem, and stigmatising attitudes. Course feedback was gathered at follow-up. Results: More participants were lost follow-up in the MHFA group (51.9%) compared to control (21.4%). Both intention-to-treat (ITT) and non-ITT analyses showed that the MHFA intervention improved mental health first aid intentions ( $p < .001$ ) and decreased stigmatizing attitudes toward people with mental health problems ( $p = .04$ ). While ITT analysis found no significant Group x Time interaction for confidence to help a friend, the non-ITT analysis did show the intervention improved confidence to help a friend with mental health problems ( $p < .001$ ), and improved mental health knowledge ( $p = .003$ ). Medical students in the intervention group reported a greater number of actual mental health first aid actions at follow-up ( $p = .006$ ). Feedback about the MHFA course was generally positive, with participants stating it helped improve their knowledge and confidence to help someone. Conclusion: This pilot study demonstrated the potential for the MHFA eLearning course to improve UK medical students' mental health first aid skills, confidence to help a friend and stigmatising attitudes. It could be useful in supporting their own and others' mental health while studying and in their future health care careers.



**Enhancing Mental Health Literacy in Rural America: Growth of Mental Health First Aid Program in Rural Communities in the United States from 2008-2016**

*EL-Amin, T., Anderson, B., Leider, J., Satorius, J., & Knudson, A. (2018). Enhancing mental health literacy in rural America: Growth of Mental Health First Aid program in rural communities in the United States from 2008-2016. Journal of Rural Mental Health, 42(1), 20-31. doi:10.1037/rmh0000088*

**ABBREV AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

There is a significant shortage of behavioral health and mental health providers in rural America. This study examines the spread of Mental Health First Aid (MHFA), a program aimed at increasing mental health literacy, with a focus on rural areas across the country and within each state. Between 2008 and 2016, 47,660 MHFA courses were offered, training approximately 777,000 individuals nationwide. Twenty-two percent of courses over this time period were offered in rural areas. The number of courses in rural areas increased from 3 in 2008 to 528 in 2012 and 3,330 in 2016. Over 167,850 rural-based individuals received training from 2008 to 2016. The spread of the MHFA program varied significantly across states. Among states in which 50% or more of the population live in rural areas, the proportion of courses taught in rural areas ranged from 42% to 78%, and the proportion of the rural population who had received training in these states ranged from 15 people per 10,000 to 74.8 people per 10,000. Although the program has spread to many communities, there are a large number of rural and urban communities yet to be reached.



### **Assessing Mental Health First Aid Skills Using Simulated Patients**

*El-Den, S., Chen, T., Moles, R., & O'Reilly, C. (2018). Assessing Mental Health First Aid skills using simulated patients. American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education, 82(2), 185-193. doi:10.5688/ajpe6222*

#### **ABBREV AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

To evaluate Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) skills using simulated patients and to compare self-reported confidence in providing MHFA with performance during simulated patient roleplays. Pharmacy students self-evaluated their confidence in providing MHFA post-training. Two mental health vignettes and an assessment rubric based on the MHFA Action Plan were developed to assess students' observed MHFA skills during audio-recorded simulated patient roleplays. Self-evaluated confidence levels in providing MHFA did not always reflect observed performance. Students had difficulty addressing suicide, with only half passing the suicide vignette and many avoiding suicide-specific terminology. This indicates that both self-reported and observed behaviors should be used for post-training assessments.



### **An Evaluation of Youth Mental Health First Aid Training in School Settings**

*Gryglewicz, K., Childs, K., Soderstrom, M. (2018). An evaluation of Youth Mental Health First Aid in school settings. School Mental Health, 10(1). doi: 10.1007/s12310-018-9246-7*

#### **AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) is a training program designed to help adults working with children and adolescents identify and respond to youth who are experiencing mental health problems or are in crisis. YMHFA is being implemented in a number of educational, child welfare, and

juvenile justice settings across the country with little evidence of its effectiveness. As part of a broader mental health program implemented in five schools in a southeastern county in the USA, YMHFA was provided to school personnel over a 2-year period.

This study presents the results of a pretest/posttest evaluation of the YMHFA training. In general, results provide preliminary evidence of the effectiveness of the YMHFA training. More specifically, results highlight the importance of YMHFA training for personnel who have never received mental health training/education and for those who do not have experience working with vulnerable youth populations.



**Exploring Youth Mental Health First Aider Training Outcomes by Workforce Affiliation: A Survey of Project AWARE Participants**

*Haggerty, D., Carlson, J., McNall, M., Lee, K.S., Williams, S. (2018). Exploring Youth Mental Health First Aider training outcomes by workforce affiliation: A survey of Project AWARE participants. School Mental Health. doi: 10.1007/s12310-018-9300-5*

**AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) is a public education program designed to improve youth mental health outcomes by training adults to notice mental health problems and help youth in seeking treatment. This study used a pre–post 3-month follow-up design to explore whether mental health literacy (MHL), perceived mental health stigma (MHS), and confidence in helping behavior differed across time between Youth Mental Health First Aiders (i.e., involved in Project Advancing Wellness and Resilience in Education) who are and are not members of the mental health workforce. As expected at pretest, mental health workforce first aiders scored significantly higher than non-mental health workforce first aiders for MHL and confidence in helping behavior ( $p < .001$ ), but no differences were found for MHS. Non-mental health workforce aiders scored significantly better from pretest to posttest for MHL and confidence in helping behavior ( $p < .001$ ), to levels consistent with participants from the mental health workforce, who did not show improvements at posttest over relatively high pretest levels. With no additional training, non-mental health workforce participants were able to maintain the positive gains at the 3-month follow-up. Results suggest that YMHFA training is effective in increasing non-mental health workforce professionals’ MHL and confidence to a level similar to that of their mental health workforce colleagues. Study findings suggest that YMHFA training may be too basic for mental health workforce professionals, and alternative trainings should be provided for them.



**Helping Adolescents to Better Support Their Peers with a Mental Health Problem: A Cluster-Randomised Crossover Trial of teen Mental Health First Aid**

*Hart, L., A., Rossetto, A., Kelly, C., Mackinnon, A., Jorm, A. (2018). Helping adolescents to better*

*support their peers with a mental health problem: A cluster-randomised crossover trial of teen Mental Health First Aid. Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry, 52(7). doi: 10.1177/0004867417753552*

**AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

Background: teen Mental Health First Aid (tMHFA) is a classroom-based training program for students aged 15-18 years to improve supportive behaviors toward peers, increase mental health literacy, and reduce stigma. This research evaluated tMHFA by comparing it to a matched emergency Physical First Aid (PFA) training program. Methods: A cluster-randomised crossover trial matched four public schools in two pairs and then randomised each to first receive tMHFA or PFA for all Year 10 students. In the subsequent calendar year, the new Year 10 cohort received the opposite intervention, giving eight cohorts. Online surveys were administered at baseline and 1 week post-training, measuring quality of first aid intentions, mental health literacy, problem recognition, and stigmatizing beliefs toward fictional adolescents with depression and suicidality (John) and social anxiety (Jeanie). Results: A total of 1,942 students were randomised (979 received tMHFA, 948 received PFA), 1,605 (84%) analyzed for the John vignette at baseline and 1,116 (69% of baseline) provided post-training data. The primary outcomes, 'helpful first aid intentions' toward John/Jeanie, showed significant group-by-time interactions with medium effect sizes favoring tMHFA ( $d_s=0.50-0.58$ ). Compared to PFA, tMHFA students also reported significantly greater improvements in confidence supporting a peer ( $d_s=0.22-0.37$ ) and number of adults rated as helpful ( $d_s=0.45-0.46$ ) and greater reductions in stigmatising beliefs ( $d_s=0.12-0.40$ ) and 'harmful first aid intentions' toward John/Jeanie ( $d_s=0.15-0.41$ ). Conclusions: tMHFA is an effective and feasible program for increasing supportive first aid intentions and mental health literacy in adolescents in the short term. tMHFA could be widely disseminated to positively impact on help seeking for adolescent mental illness.



**Associations of Training to Assist a Suicidal Person with Subsequent Quality of Support: Results from a National Survey of the Australian Public**

*Jorm, A., Nicholas, A., Pirkis, J., Rossetto, A., & Reavley, N. (2018). Associations of training to assist a suicidal person with subsequent quality of support: Results from a national survey of the Australian public. BMC Psychiatry, 18(132). doi:10.1186/s12888-018-1722-y*

**ABBREV AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

When a person is in severe distress, people in their social network can potentially take action to reduce the person's suicide risk. The present study used data from a community survey to examine whether people who had received training in how to assist a person at risk of suicide had higher quality intentions and actions to provide support. Responses covered ten intentions/actions that were recommended in guidelines for the public on how to support a suicidal person and five that

were recommended against in the guidelines. Scales were created to measure positive and negative intentions to act and positive and negative actions taken. All three types of training were associated with greater positive intentions and actions, and with lesser negative intentions. These associations were largely due to a greater willingness of those trained to talk openly about suicide with a person in distress.



**Cross-Cultural Generalizability of Suicide First Aid Actions: An Analysis of Agreement Across Expert Consensus Studies From a Range of Countries and Cultures**

*Jorm, A., Ross, A., & Colucci, E. (2018). Cross-cultural generalizability of suicide first aid actions: An analysis of agreement across expert consensus studies from a range of countries and cultures. BMC Psychiatry, 18, 58. doi:10.1186/s12888-018-1636-8*

**ABBREV AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

A number of Delphi expert consensus studies have been carried out with different countries and cultural groups to develop guidelines on how a member of the public should provide assistance to a person who is suicidal. The present study aimed to determine whether cross-culturally generalizable suicide first aid actions are possible by comparing agreement across these Delphi studies. There is broad agreement across the diverse expert panels about what are appropriate suicide first aid actions for members of the public, indicating that cross-cultural generalizability is possible. However, there is also some cultural specificity, indicating the need for local tailoring.



**Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Mental Health First Aid Training: Effects on Knowledge, Stigma, and Helping Behaviour**

*Morgan, A., Ross, A., & Reavley, N. (2018, May 31). Systematic review and meta-analysis of Mental Health First Aid training: Effects on knowledge, stigma, and helping behaviour. PLoS One, 13(5). doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0197102*

**ABBREV AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

To provide an up-to-date assessment of the effectiveness of the Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training program on improving mental health knowledge, stigma, and helping behavior. A systematic search of electronic databases was conducted in October 2017 to identify randomised controlled trials or controlled trials of the MHFA program. This review supports the effectiveness of MHFA training in improving mental health literacy and appropriate support for those with mental health problems up to 6 months after training.



**Development of a 2-H Suicide Prevention Program for Medical Staff Including Nurses and Medical Residents: A Two-Center Pilot Trial**



*Nakagami, Y., Sugihara, G., Murai, T., Kubo, H., Katsuki, R., Hayakawa, K., . . . Matsumura, Y. (2018, Jan 1). Development of a 2-h suicide prevention program for medical staff including nurses and medical residents: A two-center pilot trial. Journal of Affective Disorders, 225, 569-576. doi:10.1016/j.jad.2017.08.074*

**ABBREV AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

Suicide is a crucial global health concern and effective suicide prevention has long been warranted. Mental illness, especially depression, is the highest risk factor of suicide. Suicidal risk is increased in people not only with mental illness but also with physical illnesses, thus medical staff caring for physically ill patients are also required to manage people with suicidal risk. In the present study, we evaluated our newly developed suicide intervention program among medical staff. We developed a 2-h suicide intervention program for medical staff, based on the Mental Health First Aid (MHFA), which had originally been developed for the general population. We conducted this program for 74 medical staff members from 2 hospitals. Changes in knowledge, perceived skills, and confidence in early intervention of depression and in suicide prevention were evaluated using self-reported questionnaires at 3 points; pre-program, immediately after the program, and 1 month after program.



**"We don't want to be judged": Perceptions about professional help and attitudes toward help-seeking among pregnant and postpartum Mexican-American adolescents**

*Recto, P., & Champion, J. (2018). "We don't want to be judged": Perceptions about professional help and attitudes toward help-seeking among pregnant and postpartum Mexican-American adolescents. Journal of Pediatric Nursing, 42, 111-117. doi:10.1016/j.pedn.2018.04.010*

**ABBREV AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

The purpose of this qualitative study is to understand how depression is recognized, as well as perceptions of professional help and attitudes concerning perinatal depression among pregnant and postpartum (perinatal) Mexican-American adolescents. Active engagement and collaboration with Mexican-American adolescents are indicated in identification and treatment of perinatal depression. Integration of mental health services in primary care settings is suggested to facilitate help-seeking for perinatal depression. Mental Health First Aid may be utilized to improve knowledge and decrease stigma concerning perinatal depression among Mexican-American adolescents.



**Improving the capacity of community-based workers in Australia to provide initial assistance to Iraqi refugees with mental health problems: An uncontrolled evaluation of a mental health literacy course**

*Uribe Guajardo, M., Slewa-Younan, S., Jorm, A., Kitchener, B., Mannan, H., & Mohammad, Y. (2018,*

Jan 15). *Improving the capacity of community-based workers in Australia to provide initial assistance to Iraqi refugees with mental health problems: An uncontrolled evaluation of a mental health literacy course. International Journal of Mental Health Systems, 12(2). doi:10.1186/s13033-018-0180-8*

**ABBREV AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

Australia is a multicultural nation with a humanitarian program that welcomes a large number of Iraqi refugees. Despite the high prevalence of trauma related disorders, professional help-seeking in this group is very low. This study sought to evaluate a face-to-face mental health literacy (MHL) course that teaches community-based workers how to provide initial help to Iraqi refugees with depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) related problems.

## 2017



**Helping intentions of undergraduates towards their depressed peers: A cross-sectional study in Sri Lanka**



*Amarasuriya, S., Reavley, N., Rossetto, A., & Jorm, A. (2017). Helping intentions of undergraduates towards their depressed peers: A cross-sectional study in Sri Lanka. BMC Psychiatry, 17(40). doi:10.1186/s12888-017-1192-7*

**ABBREV AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

Despite showing high rates of depression, university students prefer to seek assistance for their depression from informal sources, such as their friends, rather than seeking professional assistance. Therefore, the helping behaviors of those who provide informal help to these students need examination. This study examines the helping intentions of undergraduates in Sri Lanka toward their depressed peers and the correlates of their helping intentions.



**Re-development of Mental Health First Aid Guidelines for Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who are Engaging in Non-Suicidal Self-Injury**

*Armstrong, G., Ironfield, N., Jorm, A., Kelly, C., Dart, K., Bond, K., & Arabena, K. (2017). Re-development of Mental Health First Aid guidelines for supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who are engaging in non-suicidal self-injury. BMC Psychiatry, 17(300). doi:10.1186/s12888-017-1465-1*

**ABBREV AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

Non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI) disproportionately affects Indigenous Australians. Friends, family, and

frontline workers (for example, teachers, youth workers) are often best positioned to provide initial assistance if someone is engaging in NSSI. Culturally appropriate expert consensus guidelines on how to provide Mental Health First Aid to Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who are engaging in NSSI were developed in 2009. This study describes the re-development of these guidelines to ensure they contain the most current recommended helping actions.



### **What's Wrong With John? A Randomised Controlled Trial of Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Training with Nursing Students**

*Burns, S., Crawford, G., Hallett, J., Hunt, K., Chi, H., & Tilley, P. (2017). What's wrong with John? A randomised controlled trial of Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training with nursing students. BMC Psychiatry, 17(111). doi:10.1186/s12888-017-1278-2*

#### **ABBREV AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

The prevalence of mental health problems have been found to be higher among university students compared to their non-student peers. Nursing students in particular face a range of additional stressors which may impact their undergraduate performance and their careers. Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) aims to increase mental health literacy and to reduce stigma and may positively impact on the student population. This paper describes a MHFA randomised controlled trial targeting nursing students at a large Australian university. This study aimed to measure the impact of the MHFA course on mental health literacy, mental health first aid intentions, confidence in helping someone with a mental health problem, and stigmatizing attitudes including social distance.



### **Interacting with the Mental Health Crisis Victim**

*Concialdi, M. (2017, Sep. 5). Interacting with the mental health crisis victim. EMS World (September 2017). Retrieved from <https://www.emsworld.com/article/218581/interacting-mental-health-crisis-victim>*

#### **ABSTRACT:**

EMS providers are jacks-of-all-trades in the field of medicine. We are trained in cardiology, pulmonology, gastroenterology, neurology, gerontology, pediatrics, trauma, and pharmacology. However, very little of our training is in mental health or psychology. Out of 72 specific primary provider impressions derived from NEMSIS criteria between 2011-2015, behavioral/psychiatric was the second-most-used primary impression for providers, trailing only traumatic injuries. In 2015 data analyzing primary provider impressions, approximately 15% of EMS patient contacts related to substance abuse (alcohol and drugs), overdoses, and behavioral/psychiatric cases. The data that was analyzed for behavioral cases saw an increase from 16,511 contacts in 2011 to 40,572 EMS encounters in 2015—an increase of 146%.



### **Promoting Mental Health First Aid Literacy in Secondary Schools**

*Glasper, A. (2017). Promoting Mental Health First Aid literacy in secondary schools. British Journal of Nursing, 26(16), 944-945. doi:10.12968/bjon.2017.26.16.944*

#### **AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

Emeritus Professor Alan Glasper from the University of Southampton discusses a new initiative designed to help teachers in secondary schools better understand and identify mental health issues in children.



### **Embedding Mental Health Literacy on Depression and Suicidal Ideation in Social Work Education**

*Martin, J. (2017). Embedding mental health literacy on depression and suicidal ideation in social work education. Current Neurobiology, 8(3), 68-75. Retrieved from <http://currentneurobiology.org/neurobiology/embedding-mental-health-literacy-on-depression-and-suicidal-ideation-in-social-work-education.pdf>*

#### **AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

Increasingly there is an emphasis on the mental health literacy of the general population as well as the health and human services workforce including social workers. The research reported in this article aimed to understand the mental health literacy rates of social work students in relation to depression and suicidal ideation. Surveys were administered to third year social work students at an Australian university before and after coursework on Youth Mental Health First Aid. Both surveys included identical questions in relation to a vignette of a young man who was experiencing depression and suicidal ideation. The study findings reveal that respondents had high levels of recognition of depression before and after their studies in youth mental health literacy. However, recognition of suicidal ideation was much lower and decreased following studies in youth mental health literacy. The findings highlight the significance of suicidal thoughts for young people experiencing depression and the importance of recognizing this to provide appropriate professional interventions as well as acknowledging the importance of informal support from family and friends.



### **Military Mental Health First Aid: Development and Preliminary Efficacy of a Community Training for Improving Knowledge, Attitudes, and Helping Behaviors**

*Mohatt, N. V., Boeckmann, R., Winkel, N., Mohatt, D. F., & Shore, J. (2017). Military Mental Health First Aid: Development and preliminary efficacy of a community training for improving knowledge, attitudes, and helping behaviors. Military Medicine, 182(1), e1576-e1583. doi:10.7205/MILMED-D-*

16-00033.

**AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

Persistent stigma, lack of knowledge about mental health, and negative attitudes toward treatment are among the most significant barriers to military service members and veterans seeking behavioral health care. With the high rates of untreated behavioral health needs among service members and veterans, identifying effective programs for reducing barriers to care is a national priority. This study adapted Mental Health First Aid (MHFA), an evidence-based program for increasing mental health knowledge, decreasing stigma, and increasing laypeople's confidence in helping and frequency of referring people in need, for military and veteran populations and pilot tested the adapted training program with four Army National Guard armories.



**Do Mental Health First Aid™ Courses Enhance Knowledge?**

*Morrissey, H., Moss, S., Alexi, B., Ball, P. (2017). Do Mental Health First Aid™ courses enhance knowledge? The Journal of Mental Health Training, Education and Practice, 12(2). doi: 10.1108/JMHTEP-01-2016-0003*

**ABBREV AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

**Purpose:** Biased assumptions and unhelpful tendencies in human nature can lead people who are experiencing mental illness to shun help and support. Mental illness is often perceived as immutable and/or a sign of weakness. Even those seeking support may not receive the assistance they need. Advice may be unsuitable or people feel too nervous and challenged to help. The Mental Health First Aid™ courses, like general first aid, are designed to enhance community knowledge and thereby support appropriate assistance. The purpose of this paper is to evaluate the extent to which this is achieved. **Design/methodology/approach:** An educational audit based upon a short quiz administered anonymously to 162 tertiary students from a range of disciplines, before and after delivery of the standard 12 hour Mental Health First Aid™ course. This was used to examine assumptions and proposed actions before and after training.

**Findings:** Analysis of the 162 responses found that the Mental Health First Aid™ courses significantly improve knowledge. This has the potential to increase understanding and support for those suffering mental illness. **Research limitations/implications:** This educational audit looked only at knowledge improvement. Whether this really does translate into improved outcomes requires further investigation. **Practical implications:** Tertiary students who are enrolled in health courses and others which involve human interaction as provision of services will be empowered with skills that enable them to interact with those who they will be serving at well-informed level and equity.



**Mental Health First Aid as a Tool for Improving Mental Health and Well-Being**

*Richardson, R., Dale, H., Wellby, G., McMillan, D., & Churchill, R. (n.d.). Mental Health First Aid as a tool for improving mental health and well-being. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, 3. doi:10.1002/14651858.CD013127*

**AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

Our primary objective is to examine mental health and well-being, mental health service usage, and adverse effects of Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training on recipients of the intervention. We have three secondary objectives: 1. To examine the effects of MHFA training on recipients of the trainees' intervention, in terms of their knowledge about mental health and attitudes toward mental health problems. 2. To examine the effects of MHFA training on trainees' knowledge about mental health, attitudes toward mental health problems, number of encounters with people with mental health problems, and their own mental health and well-being.

3. To examine the effects on organizations, looking at measures of absenteeism and productivity at work.



**Universities and Third Sector Working in Partnership to Co-Deliver Accredited, Community Mental Health Training**

*Richardson, M., Jones, O., Wallace, C., & Williams, S. (2017). Universities and third sector working in partnership to co-deliver accredited, community mental health training. Widening Participation & Lifelong Learning, 19(1), 77-94. doi:10.5456/WPLL.19.1.77*

**ABBREV AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is an internationally recognized training package, originally designed for tackling stigma and for promoting awareness of mental health across communities. Despite the international popularity of the program, charges for delivery in Wales of what is otherwise an education program means the MHFA (Wales) is often an option only to those working in organizations or those who can pay. This seems to defeat the original vision of Mental Health First Aid Australia of "a community where everyone has the first aid skills to support people with mental health problems" (Mental Health First Aid Foundation, Australia 2015). Recognizing this as a widening participation (WP) issue, the University of South Wales (USW) along with its outreach initiative the University Heads of the Valleys (UHOVI) and third sector partner, Training in Mind (TiM), developed the first-ever level four accredited version of the MHFA (Wales). The five-credit module, through a bursary offered by UHOVI, now offers funded opportunities for local community participants who are living in what are otherwise termed 'hard- to-reach' areas to access the training. The training is delivered exclusively through TiM where access to the MHFA (Wales) training remains committed to tackling stigma, discrimination as well as helping to build community resilience while equally

supporting wider knowledge of community widening participation in learning.



**Effectiveness of Youth Mental Health First Aid USA for Social Work Students**

*Rose, T., Leitch, J., Collins, K.S., Frey, J.J., Osteen, P.J. (2017, Sep 8). Effectiveness of Youth Mental Health First Aid USA for social work students. Research on Social Work Practice. doi: 10.1177/1049731517729039*

**ABBREVIATED AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

Adolescent mental health is a public health priority. Considered an early intervention approach, Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) trains adults to provide initial assistance to adolescents experiencing a mental health problem or crisis. This study evaluated the effectiveness of the U.S. version of YMHFA (YMHFA-USA) among graduate social work students.

Statistically significant improvements in attitudes, beliefs, self-confidence, and knowledge were observed among intervention group students. At 5 months, these students had significantly better attitudes and greater knowledge and self-confidence than the comparison group. Results indicate YMHFA-USA may improve factors related to master’s level social work students’ abilities to engage with youth experiencing mental health problems.

**2016**



**Evaluation of Youth Mental Health First Aid: A Program to Assist Young People in Psychological Distress**

*Aakre, J., Lucksted, A., Browning-McNee, L. 2016. Evaluation of Youth Mental Health First Aid: A program to assist young people in psychological distress. Psychological Services 13 (2): 121-126. doi: 10.1037/rmh0000088*

**SUMMARY:**

To address the research gap on Youth Mental Health First Aid USA, the authors assessed the ability of Youth Mental Health First Aiders to apply ALGEE, the 5-step action plan to help a person experiencing a mental health problem, by constructing a written response to a hypothetical scenario. Scenarios were distributed to the study population at the start and end of the course. The study population were employees of a social services agency, and most participants had a postsecondary education. Participants demonstrated a significant increase in their ability to assess for risk of suicide or self harm, listen empathetically, and encourage appropriate professional and peer support. The study also demonstrated that participants were significantly more confident in their ability to help a person experiencing psychological distress.



### **Providing Mental Health First Aid in the Workplace: A Delphi Consensus Study**

*Bovopoulos, B., Jorm, A., Bond, K., LaMontagne, A., Reavley, N., Kelly, C., . . . Martin, A. (2016). Providing Mental Health First Aid in the workplace: A Delphi consensus study. BMC Psychology, 4(41). doi:10.1186/s40359-016-0148-x*

#### **ABBREV AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

Mental health problems are common in the workplace, but workers affected by such problems are not always well supported by managers and co-workers. Guidelines exist for the public on how to provide mental health first aid, but not specifically on how to tailor one's approach if the person of concern is a co-worker or employee. A Delphi consensus study was carried out to develop guidelines on additional considerations required when offering mental health first aid in a workplace context. A systematic search of websites, books, and journal articles was conducted to develop a questionnaire with 246 items containing actions that someone may use to offer mental health first aid to a co-worker or employee. The guidelines outline strategies for a worker to use when they are concerned about the mental health of a co-worker or employee. They will be used to inform future tailoring of Mental Health First Aid training when it is delivered in workplace settings and could influence organizational policies and procedures.



### **Suicide First Aid Guidelines for Sri Lanka: A Delphi Consensus Study**



*De Silva, S., Colucci, E., Kelly, C., Jorm, A., & Minas, H. (2016, Aug 30). Suicide first aid guidelines for Sri Lanka: A Delphi consensus study. International Journal of Mental Health Systems, 10(1), PMID: 27579055. doi:10.1186/s13033-016-0085-3*

#### **ABBREV AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

Sri Lanka has one of the highest suicide rates in the world. Gatekeeper programs aimed at specific target groups could be a promising suicide prevention strategy in the country. The aim of this study was to develop guidelines that help members of the public to provide first aid to persons in Sri Lanka who are at risk of suicide. The Delphi method was used to elicit consensus on potential helping statements to include in the guidelines. These statements describe information members of the public should have and actions they can take to help a person who is experiencing suicidal thoughts. By engaging Sri Lankans who are experts in the field of mental health or suicide this research developed culturally appropriate guidelines for providing mental health first aid to a person at risk of suicide in Sri Lanka. The guidelines may serve as a basis for developing training for members of the public to provide Mental Health First Aid to persons at risk of suicide as part of Sri Lanka's suicide prevention strategy.





### **Mental Health First Aid: Equipping the Nurses of the Future**

*Fessey, V., James, G., & Pengelly, T. (2016, Aug 13). Mental Health First Aid: Equipping the nurses of the future. British Journal of Nursing, 25(15), 858-859. doi:10.12968/bjon.2016.25.15.858*

#### **AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

The current provision of mental health content within Pre-registration Nursing for those not undertaking this field of practice is variable; it does not guarantee that each student nurse will receive the guidance on how to support those with mental health needs. Coventry University is addressing this shortfall by ensuring that those not undertaking mental health nursing are given the opportunity of undertaking a MHFA Lite course in their second year of training. The evaluations indicate that many students lacked both knowledge and confidence and that participation has resulted in them feeling more able to sign post and support those with mental health needs.



### **Effectiveness of Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper-Training for University Administrative Staff in Japan**

*Hashimoto, N., Suzuki, Y., Kato, T., Fujisawa, D., Sato, R., Aoyama-Uehara, K., . . . Otsuka, K. (2016). Effectiveness of suicide prevention gatekeeper-training for university administrative staff in Japan. Psychiatry and Clinical Neuroscience, 70(1), 62-70. doi:10.1111/pcn.12358*

#### **AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

**AIMS:** Suicide is a leading cause of death among Japanese college and university students. Gatekeeper-training programs have been shown to improve detection and referral of individuals who are at risk of suicide by training non-mental-health professional persons. However, no studies have investigated the effectiveness of such programs in university settings in Japan. The aim of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of the gatekeeper-training program for administrative staff in Japanese universities. **METHODS:** We developed a 2.5-h gatekeeper-training program based on the Mental Health First Aid program, which was originally developed for the general public. Seventy-six administrative staff at Hokkaido University participated in the program. Competence and confidence in managing suicide intervention, behavioral intention as a gatekeeper, and attitude while handling suicidal students were measured by a self-reported questionnaire before, immediately after and a month after the program.

**RESULTS:** We found a significant improvement in competence in the management of suicidal students. We also found improvements in confidence in management of suicidal students and behavioral intention as a gatekeeper after training, though questionnaires for those secondary outcomes were not validated. These improvements continued for a month. About 95% of the participants rated the program as useful or very useful and one-third of the participants had one or

more chances to utilize their skills within a month. CONCLUSIONS: The current results suggest the positive effects of the training program in university settings in Japan. Future evaluation that includes comparison with standard didactic trainings and an assessment of long-term effectiveness are warranted.



### **Predictors of Adults' Helping Intentions and Behaviors towards a Person with a Mental Illness: A Six-Month Follow-Up Study**

*Rossetto, A., Jorm, A., & Reavley, N. (2016). Predictors of adults' helping intentions and behaviours towards a person with a mental illness: A six-month follow-up study. Psychiatry Research, 240, 170-176. doi:10.1016/j.psychres.2016.04.037*

#### **AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

Little is known about the relationship between adults' intentions to assist a hypothetical person experiencing a mental illness and their subsequent first aid actions in reality. This study examines whether the quality of respondents' stated first aid intentions predicts the quality of their helping behavior toward a person they know in real life. A convenience sample of 820 Australian adults completed two surveys six months apart which asked questions about a hypothetical person experiencing depression with suicidal thoughts, and how they had assisted someone with a similar problem in their lives. The quality of helping intentions at baseline predicted the quality of mental health first aid behaviors at follow-up, as did the quality of past behaviors. In particular, people who intended to assess and assist with the crisis situation in the vignette were five times more likely to perform the same action when helping someone they knew. The quality of past intentions and behavior, and confidence in helping, were the most significant predictors of behavior at follow-up. These findings suggest that adults' Mental Health First Aid intentions can be used to predict their subsequent behaviors, therefore, educating communities about effective first aid responses may increase future rates of appropriate help.



### **Dignity & First Aid in Mental Health**

*Sagar, R., & Prakash, S. (2016, Oct). Dignity & first aid in mental health. Indian Journal of Medical Research, 496-498. doi:10.4103/0971-5916.200883*

#### **AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

Dignity in mental health is a very important issue to be addressed. The medical fraternity has made vast progress over the last century and psychiatry is no exception. However, large sections of the world's population are still struggling to get even the basic mental health care. Even the sections who manage to get care are stigmatized and often receive treatment in a setup that may be perceived as stigmatizing. Thus, there is an urgent need to focus on making mental health care available to all,

while at the same time ensuring the dignity of the suffering people.



### **Dignity in Mental Health Practice & Research: Time to Unite on Innovation, Outreach & Education**

Ziedonis, D., Larkin, C., & Appasani, R. (2016, Oct). *Dignity in mental health practice & research: Time to unite on innovation, outreach & education. Indian Journal of Medical Research, 144(4), 491-495. doi:10.4103/0971- 5916.200885*

#### **AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

Dignity has been described as ‘the inherent and inalienable worth of all human beings irrespective of social status such as race, gender, physical or mental state’. Dignity is, therefore, at the core of psychological well-being, social connection, and humanity. Mental health interventions that explicitly promote and preserve dignity for people experiencing mental distress are growing in clinical practice and research in the USA, India, Europe, and elsewhere. However, there is a need for more research and policy supporting the implementation and evaluation of these initiatives. Here, we highlight some of these programs and make recommendations on how to further integrate dignity in mental health research, practice, outreach, and education in India and the world.

## 2015



### **Teaching Mental Health First Aid: Experience at Aman Foundation**

Ahmed, M., Khurram, F., & Quraishy, S. (2015). *Teaching Mental Health First Aid: Experience at Aman Foundation. Journal of Pakistan Psychiatric Society, 12(1), 67-68. Retrieved from <http://web.b.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail/detail?vid=0&sid=9855398c-bf95-4a2d-ab2d-819ef4a087fd%40sessionmgr103&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#AN=108584867&db=aph>*

#### **AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

**OBJECTIVE** To study the effectiveness of the program in improving knowledge of and changing attitudes toward mental illness. **DESIGN** Descriptive study. **SUBJECTS AND METHODS** The Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) program, originally developed in Australia, shows promise for a country facing such challenges in the mental health field. The MHFA course was developed to equip laypersons with the knowledge and skills to provide initial help to someone developing mental health problems of depression, anxiety, psychosis and substance abuse disorder, as well as dealing with crisis situations associated with these disorders. **RESULT** This paper presents the effectiveness of the course in Pakistan using the data from 361 of the participants (out of 91 trainees). The Standard MHFA program was delivered as a 12-hour standard course over 2 days or 4 days. The effectiveness

of this course was measured on three parameters: knowledge acquisition, change in stigmatizing attitudes, and change in helping attitudes using self-reported evaluation questionnaires before and after the training. The questionnaire used was the standardized version used by MHFA International, with a few minor changes to contextualize for Pakistan. The courses were conducted for employees of the AMAN Foundation. The participants included senior and middle management as well as members of the field team, with varying levels of experience and education. The results reflect changes, if any, in the participants' ability to recognize mental disorders described in vignettes and in their beliefs about treatment compared to those of health professionals. The results, which are being finalized, may also reflect changes in social distance from people with mental disorders and confidence to help people with mental disorders. **CONCLUSION** The Mental Health First Aid program presents a low-cost, high-impact solution to increase mental health literacy, improve helping attitudes, and decrease stigma toward individuals with mental health disorders in Pakistan.



### **Evaluation of Mental Health First Aid**

*Anthony, B., Banh, M., Goldman, S., Yoon. I. Evaluation of Mental Health First Aid – Summary of Psychometric Study. Georgetown Center for Child and Human Development, 2015.*

#### **SUMMARY:**

The Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development and its National Technical Assistance Center for Children’s Mental Health in collaboration with the National Council for Behavioral Health conducted a nationwide research project, creating tools to evaluate the immediate and long-term impact on attitudes and behavior of individuals trained in MHFA. Four different tools were used: pretraining questionnaire, post-training questionnaire, and two follow-up questionnaires (3 and 6 months). Preliminary results suggest significant increase in knowledge, increased participant self-efficacy and confidence in performing MHFA actions, and 17%-58% reported using MHFA when encountering individuals with mental health problems.



### **Assisting Australians with Mental Health Problems and Financial Difficulties: A Delphi Study to Develop Guidelines for Financial Counsellors, Financial Institution Staff, Mental Health Professionals and Carers**

*Bond, K., Chalmers, K., Jorm, A., Kitchener, B., & Reavley, N. (2015). Assisting Australians with mental health problems and financial difficulties: a Delphi study to develop guidelines for financial counsellors, financial institution staff, mental health professionals and carers. BMC Health Services Research, 15(218). doi:10.1186/s12913-015-0868-2*

#### **ABBREV AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

There is a strong association between mental health problems and financial difficulties. Therefore,

people who work with those who have financial difficulties (financial counsellors and financial institution staff) need to have knowledge and helping skills relevant to mental health problems. Conversely, people who support those with mental health problems (mental health professionals and carers) may need to have knowledge and helping skills relevant to financial difficulties. The Delphi expert consensus method was used to develop guidelines for people who work with or support those with mental health problems and financial difficulties.



**Mental Health First Aid Training for Nursing Students: A Protocol for a Pragmatic Randomised Controlled Trial in a Large University**

*Crawford, G., Burns, S., Chih, H., Tilley, P., Hallet, J., Coleman, K., & Smith, S. (2015, Feb 19). Mental Health First Aid training for nursing students: A protocol for a pragmatic randomised controlled trial in a large university. BMC Psychiatry, 15(26). doi:10.1186/s12888-015-0403-3*

**ABBREV AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

The impact of mental health problems and disorders in Australia is significant. Mental health problems often start early and disproportionately affect young people.

Poor adolescent mental health can predict educational achievement at school and educational and occupational attainment in adulthood. Many young people attend higher education and have been found to experience a range of mental health issues. The university setting therefore presents a unique opportunity to trial interventions to reduce the burden of mental health problems. Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) aims to train participants to recognize symptoms of mental health problems and assist an individual who may be experiencing a mental health crisis. Training nursing students in MHFA may increase mental health literacy and decrease stigma in the student population. This paper presents a protocol for a trial to examine the efficacy of the MHFA training for students studying nursing at a large university in Perth, Western Australia.



**Dissemination Challenges Associated with Mental Health First Aid in New Mexico: Insights from Instructors**

*Crisanti, A., Pasko, D., Pyeatt, C., Silverblatt, H., & Anastasoff, J. (2015). Dissemination challenges associated with mental health first aid in New Mexico: Insights from instructors. Journal of Rural Mental Health, 39(1), 13- 21. doi:10.1037/rmh0000013*

**AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) has the potential to addresses health disparities, especially within rural communities that are underserved with respect to behavioral health services, through increasing mental health literacy among key community members.

Because MHFA instructors play a key role in the dissemination of MHFA, their views on the challenges in delivering the MHFA course are important. The purpose of this study was to identify the type and extent of challenges that MHFA instructors have experienced, or expect to experience, when disseminating MHFA in New Mexico. An online survey on challenges encountered, or expected to be encountered, in the dissemination of MHFA was completed by 31 MHFA instructors. Challenges were classified into costs associated with the training, MHFA-specific issues, community-related issues, and implementation issues. Among 22 potential challenges, those related to costs were the challenges most likely to be identified by instructors. These costs include MHFA books for those being trained, snacks for the training, and instructor-related travel expenses. An understanding of the challenges will help increase the dissemination of MHFA in New Mexico as well as in other states. Further exploration of the value of instructor support (e.g., administrative, organizational, and financial) and importance of prerequisite skills (e.g., mental health expertise and training experience) in the dissemination process is warranted.



**An Evaluation of the Initial Impact of Using Educational Psychologists to Deliver NHS Scotland’s “Scottish Mental Health First Aid: Young People” Training Programme**

*Currie, R., & Davidson, K. (2015). An evaluation of the initial impact of using educational psychologists to deliver NHS Scotland's 'Scottish Mental Health First Aid: Young People' training programme. Educational and Child Psychology, 32(1), 42-48.*

**AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

The Scottish Mental Health First Aid: Young People (SMHFA:YP) training program is a 14-hour, evidence-based, blended learning course developed by NHS Health Scotland for adults who are in contact with young people between the ages of 11 to 17. The course is intended to increase the capacity of participants to preserve life and promote resilience and recovery. City of Edinburgh Council Psychological Services has supported the national pilot and is now delivering training to relevant adults across the city. This article reports on the initial impact of the training in Edinburgh as measured by immediate and long term (six-month) evaluations and in relation to qualitative feedback received over the six-month period. On-the-day evaluation of the training has been overwhelmingly positive and impact is sustained six months later. There have been several instances of unsolicited positive feedback relating to the following broad themes: training having been since used in real-life practice; impact on practitioners' confidence and skill in asking young people about suicide; and the EP role within the secondary sector.



**Quality and Predictors of Adolescents’ First Aid Intentions and Actions towards a Peer with a Mental Health Problem**

*Mason, R., Hart, L., & Jorm, A. (2015, Jul 30). Quality and predictors of adolescents' first aid*

*intentions and actions towards a peer with a mental health problem. Psychiatry Research, 31-38. doi:10.1016/j.psychres.2015.03.036*

**AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

While peers are a common source of informal help for young people with a mental health problem, evidence suggests that the help they provide is inadequate. By examining predictors of the quality of mental health first aid provided by adolescents to their peers, future interventions can be targeted to adolescents most at risk of providing poor help. Students (n=518) from Australian secondary schools were presented with two vignettes, depicting persons experiencing depression with suicidal thoughts, and social phobia. Participants were asked what they thought was wrong with the person and how they would help them. Stigma toward the person was also assessed. Additionally, participants were asked if they had recently helped anyone in their own lives with a mental health problem, and, if so, what they did. The overall quality of help reported in response to the vignettes or an actual person was low; a particular inadequacy was the low rate of engaging the help of an adult. Being female, and believing that the person is sick rather than weak, consistently predicted better help-giving.



**Mental Health First Aid Training for the Bhutanese Refugee Community in the United States**

*Subedi, P., Li, C., Gurung, A., Bizune, D., Dogbey, M. C., Johnson, C. C., & Yun, K. (2015). Mental Health First Aid training for the Bhutanese refugee community in the United States. International Journal Of Mental Health Systems, 9 doi:10.1186/s13033-015-0012-z*

**SUMMARY:**

Approximately 78,000 Nepali-speaking people from Bhutan have taken refuge in the United States since the early 1990s. This population has a higher rate of mental illness and suicide than global and U.S. averages. This uncontrolled study aimed to measure the impact of Mental Health First Aid on the refugee community. The study population was comprised mostly of college educated, male, Nepali-speaking refugees in 13 states. Results demonstrated an increase in participant's ability to recognize the signs and symptoms of depression and their confidence in providing help to a person showing signs of depression.



**Experiences of a Mental Health First Aid Training Program in Sweden: A Descriptive Qualitative Study**

*Svensson, B., Hansson, L., & Stjernswärd, S. (2015). Experiences of a Mental Health First Aid training program in Sweden: A descriptive qualitative study. Community Mental Health Journal, 51(4), 497-*

503. doi:10.1007/s10597-015-9840-1

**AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

Restricted mental health literacy and stigma are barriers to treatment of mental disorders. A Mental Health First Aid training program was tested for implementation in Sweden among employees in the public sector. The aim of the present qualitative study was to explore participants' experiences of the program in more depth, in conjunction with a randomized controlled study. Twenty-four persons participated in a total of six focus groups 6-8 months after program participation. Data were analyzed using content analysis. The analysis resulted in five categories illustrating the participants' experiences of the course: increased awareness, knowledge, and understanding; influence on attitude and approach; tool box and confidence; feedback on content and layout; and tangible examples of applied knowledge. The most central finding is the fruitfulness of the program's practical focus and use, the increased confidence and inclination to act following program participation, and the importance of experienced instructors.



**Reviewing the Evidence Base for Mental Health First Aid**

Wong, E., Collins, R., & Cerully, J. (2015, Jul 15). *Reviewing the evidence base for Mental Health First Aid*. *Rand Health Quarterly*, 5(1), PMID: PMC5158252. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5158252/>

**AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

This article reviews the current state of evidence for Mental Health First Aid's effectiveness in key target populations, to help the California Mental Health Services Authority's planning for future prevention and early intervention activities.

**2014**



**Providing Culturally Appropriate Mental Health First Aid Training to an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Adolescent: Development of Expert Consensus Guidelines**

Chalmers, K., Bond, K., Jorm, A., & Kelly, C. (2014). *Providing culturally appropriate Mental Health First Aid to an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander adolescent: Development of expert consensus guidelines*. *International Journal of Mental Health Systems*, 8(6). doi:10.1186/1752-4458-8-6

**ABBREV AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

It is estimated that the prevalence of mental illness is higher in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adolescents compared to non-Aboriginal adolescents. Despite this, only a small proportion of Aboriginal youth have contact with mental health services, possibly due to factors such as



remoteness, language barriers, affordability, and cultural sensitivity issues. This research aimed to develop culturally appropriate guidelines for anyone who is providing first aid to an Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander adolescent who is experiencing a mental health crisis or developing a mental illness.



**Mental Health First Aid is an Effective Public Health Intervention for Improving Knowledge, Attitudes, and Behaviour: A Meta-Analysis**

*Hadlaczky, G., Hökby, S., Mkrtchian, A., Carli, V., & Wasserman, D. (2014). Mental Health First Aid is an effective public health intervention for improving knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour: A meta-analysis. International Review of Psychiatry, 26(4), 467-475. doi:10.3109/09540261.2014.924910*

**AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is a standardized, psycho-educational program developed to empower the public to approach, support, and refer individuals in distress by improving course participants' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to mental ill-health. The present paper aims to synthesize published evaluations of the MHFA program in a meta-analysis to estimate its effects and potential as a public mental health awareness-increasing strategy. Fifteen relevant papers were identified through a systematic literature search.

Standardized effect sizes were calculated for three different outcome measures: change in knowledge, attitudes, and helping behaviors. The results of the meta-analysis for these outcomes yielded a mean effect size of Glass's  $\Delta=0.56$  (95% CI=0.38 - 0.74;  $p < 0.001$ ), 0.28 (95% CI = 0.22 - 0.35;  $p < 0.001$ ) and 0.25 (95% CI=0.12 - 0.38;  $p < 0.001$ ), respectively. Results were homogenous, and moderator analyses suggested no systematic bias or differences in results related to study design (with or without control group) or 'publication quality' (journal impact factor). The results demonstrate that MHFA increases participants' knowledge regarding mental health, decreases their negative attitudes, and increases supportive behaviors toward individuals with mental health problems. The MHFA program appears recommendable for public health action.



**Evaluating the Effectiveness of Mental Health First Aid Training among Student Affairs Staff at a Canadian University**

*Massey, J., Brooks, M., Burrow, J. Evaluating the effectiveness of Mental Health First Aid training among student affairs staff at a Canadian university. Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice, 2014; 51:3; 323–336.*

**AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

This study evaluated the effectiveness of providing the Mental Health First Aid training program to

student affairs staff. The objective of the training was to increase knowledge of mental health, enhance sensitivity, and raise confidence to intervene and assist individuals experiencing a mental health issue. Results demonstrated that the training successfully met its objectives and offers great potential to student affairs practitioners.



### **Promoting Well-Being and Reducing Stigma about Mental Health in the Fire Service**

*Moffitt, J., Bostock, J., & Cave, A. (2014). Promoting well-being and reducing stigma about mental health in the fire service. Journal of Public Mental Health, 13(2), 103-113.*

#### **ABBREV AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

Workplace stress is a particular issue in the fire service. Research suggests this is related to excessive demands, relationships with senior managers, changing roles, and exposure to traumatic events. The purpose of this paper is to evaluate the impact on managers of three mental health promotion interventions. First, a locally developed course entitled “Looking after Wellbeing at Work” (LWW); second, an internationally developed training course: Mental Health First Aid (MHFA); third, an hour-long leaflet session (LS). The results from this study indicate that providing training in mental health awareness and promotion was considered helpful, by managers in the fire service and had positive outcomes for attitudes and understanding about mental health. While there are limitations, initial results of training in mental health promotion are promising. Such training has the potential to promote the public's mental health and well-being and improve the quality of life for people with mental health problems.



### **A Multifaceted Intervention to Improve Mental Health Literacy in Students of a Multicampus University: A Cluster Randomised Trial**

*Reavley, N., McCann, T., Cvetkovski, S., & Jorm, A. (2014). A multifaceted intervention to improve mental health literacy in students of a multicampus university: A cluster randomised trial. Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology, 49(10), 1655-1666. doi:10.1007/s00127-014-0880-6*

#### **AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

**Purpose.** The aim of the current study was to assess whether a multifaceted intervention could improve mental health literacy, facilitate help seeking, and reduce psychological distress and alcohol misuse in students of a multicampus university in Melbourne, Australia. **Methods.** In this cluster randomized trial, nine university campuses were paired (some pairs included more than one campus), with one of each pair randomly assigned to either the intervention or control condition. The interventions were designed to be whole-of-campus and to run over 2 academic years with their effectiveness assessed through recruitment of a monitoring sample of students from each campus. Interventions included emails, posters, campus events, factsheets/booklets and Mental Health First

Aid training courses. Participants had a 20-min telephone interview at baseline and at the end of academic years 1 and 2. This assessed mental health literacy, help seeking, psychological distress, and alcohol use. The primary outcomes were depression and anxiety levels and alcohol use and pertained to the individual level. Results. There were no effects on psychological distress and alcohol use. Recall of intervention elements was greater in the intervention group at the end of year 2. Students in the intervention group were more likely to say they would go to a drug and alcohol centre for alcohol problems at the end of

6 months. Conclusion. Although education and awareness may play a role in improving mental health literacy, it is likely that, to achieve changes in psychological distress, interventions would need to be more personalized and intensive.



### **Re-development of Mental Health First Aid Guidelines for Suicidal Ideation and Behavior: a Delphi Study**

*Ross, A., Kelly, C., & Jorm, A. (2014). Re-development of Mental Health First Aid guidelines for suicidal ideation and behaviour: A Delphi study. BMC Psychiatry, 14(241). doi:10.1186/s12888-014-0241-8*

#### **ABBREV AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

Suicide continues to be a leading cause of death globally. Friends and family are considered best positioned to provide initial assistance if someone is suicidal.

Expert consensus guidelines on how to do this were published in 2008. Re-developing these guidelines is necessary to ensure they contain the most current recommended helping actions and remain consistent with the suicide prevention literature.



### **Examining Predictors of Help Giving toward People with a Mental Illness: Results from a National Survey of Australian Adults**

*Rossetto, A., Jorm, A., & Reavley, N. (2014, May 30). Examining predictors of help giving toward people with a mental illness: Results from a national survey of Australian adults. Sage Open, 4(2). doi:10.1177/2158244014537502*

#### **AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

Little is known about factors influencing helping behaviors toward a person with mental illness. This study explored a range of predictors of helping intentions and behaviors using data from a national survey of Australian adults. Participants (n=6,019) were randomly assigned one of six vignettes and asked how they would help the character if it was someone they knew and cared about, and asked whether and how they had helped a person in real life with a similar problem. Responses were scored

using a system based on the Mental Health First Aid action plan. Regression analyses examined predictors of high helping scores in relation to type of disorder and respondent demographics, mental health literacy, and experiences with mental illness. Predictors of harmful responses and seeking advice on how to help appropriately were also assessed. Significant predictors varied by vignette, with the only consistent predictor being female gender. Participants aged under 30 provided less helpful responses to people with social phobia.

Mental health literacy variables were inconsistently related to helping, whereas more stigmatizing attitudes significantly predicted harmful responses and poor helping scores. Targeting males and young people may improve rates of helpful responses. Education campaigns aiming to reduce stigma and increase knowledge of schizophrenia may also minimize potentially harmful actions.



### **Quality of Helping Behaviours of Members of the Public Towards a Person with a Mental Illness: A Descriptive Analysis of data from an Australian National Survey**

*Rossetto, A., Jorm, A., & Reavley, N. (2014, Jan 30). Quality of helping behaviours of members of the public towards a person with a mental illness: A descriptive analysis of data from an Australian national survey. Annals of General Psychiatry, 13(1). doi:10.1186/1744-859X-13-2*

#### **AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

**Background.** Courses such as Mental Health First Aid equip members of the public to perform appropriate helping behaviors toward people experiencing a mental illness or mental health crisis. However, studies investigating the general public's knowledge and skills in relation to assisting a person with a mental illness are rare. This study assesses the quality of Mental Health First Aid responses by members of the Australian public using data from a national survey. **Methods.** Participants in a national survey of mental health literacy were assigned one of six vignettes (depression, depression with suicidal thoughts, early schizophrenia, chronic schizophrenia, social phobia, or post-traumatic stress disorder) and asked an open-ended question about how they would help the character in the vignette. The 6,019 respondents were also asked if and how they had helped a person in real life with a similar problem. Responses to these questions were scored using a system based on an action plan developed from expert consensus guidelines on Mental Health First Aid. **Results.** The quality of responses overall was poor, with participants scoring an average of 2 out of 12. The most commonly reported actions for both questions were listening to the person, providing support and information and encouraging them to seek appropriate professional help. Actions such as assessing and assisting with crisis were rarely mentioned, even for the depression with suicidal thoughts vignette. **Conclusions.** The quality of the Australian public's Mental Health First Aid knowledge and skills requires substantial improvement. Particular attention should be given to helping people recognize that anxiety disorders such as social phobia require professional help and to improving responses to a suicidal person.



### **Effectiveness of MHFA Training in Sweden, an RCT with a 6-month and 2-year follow-up**

*Svensson, B., Hansson, L. Effectiveness of Mental Health First Aid Training in Sweden. A randomized controlled trial with a six-month and two-year follow-up. PLoS ONE, 2014; 9; 1-8.*

#### **SUMMARY:**

This study, a randomized controlled trial, investigates if MHFA training in a Swedish context provides a sustained improvement in knowledge about mental disorders and a better ability to be helpful in contacts with people who are ill, and if it changes attitudes in a positive direction. Participants were mainly public-sector employees from a county in the west of Sweden. The study included an experiment group (n=199) and a control group (n=207) placed on a waiting list during a 6-month follow-up. At a two-year follow-up, findings demonstrated that the intervention group improved in knowledge and confidence in providing help for someone in need, with improvements maintained to a great extent.

## **2013**



### **Mental Health First Aid USA in a rural community: Perceived impact on knowledge, attitudes and behavior**

*Mendenhall, A.N., Jackson, S.C., Hase, S. Mental Health First Aid USA in a rural community: Perceived impact on knowledge, attitudes and behavior. Social Work in Mental Health, 2013; 11:6; 563-577.*

This study investigated the perceived impact of Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) on individuals who took the class through a community mental health center in rural Kansas. One hundred seventy-six MHFA graduates completed an online survey assessing their perception of the impact of completing the MHFA course. Findings corresponded with previous Australian MHFA studies that found outcomes including improved mental health literacy and changed attitudes and behaviors, but the study sample limits generalizability.



### **Social and Emotional Wellbeing in Indigenous Australians: Identifying Promising Interventions**

*Day, A., Francisco, A. Social and emotional wellbeing in Indigenous Australians: Identifying promising interventions. Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health, 2013; 37; 350-355; doi:10.1111/1753- 6405.12083.*

This article reviews evidence that supports a range of psycho-social interventions implemented to improve social and emotional well-being in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and

communities. A systematic review of the available literature was conducted with relevant evaluations classified using the Maryland Scientific Methods Scale. Sixteen interventions are reviewed and scored for strength of scientific evidence. Mental Health First Aid tops the list as having the strongest evidence in terms of scientific rigor, with a score of 5 out of 5.



### **Evaluation of Youth Mental Health First Aid Training in the North-East of England**

*Borrill, J., Kuczynska, P. (2013). Evaluation of Youth Mental Health First Aid Training in the North-East of England. December 2013. Available online at:*

[http://mhfaengland.org/files/1813/9057/6593/NE\\_Youth\\_2013\\_Evaluation.pdf](http://mhfaengland.org/files/1813/9057/6593/NE_Youth_2013_Evaluation.pdf)

The Youth Mental Health First Aid training was delivered to 224 individuals regularly interacting with adolescents across 18 venues in North-East England. Results from phase one demonstrated that almost all participants reported increased levels of knowledge and confidence after they attended the training. The second phase of the evaluation focused on the impact an implementation of the training in practice 3-6 months after the training. The response rate was low, indicating that participants did not respond to the follow-up because they have not yet found the time or opportunity to put their learning into practice. Examples that were shared in phase two indicated a high level of enthusiasm to continue the program, and participants felt more confident in taking this further as a result of the training.

## **2012**

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### **Evaluation of Mental Health First Aid training in a diverse community setting**

*Morawska, A., Fletcher, R., Pope, S., Heathwood, E., Anderson, E., McAuliffe, C. Evaluation of Mental Health First Aid training in a diverse community setting. International Journal of Mental Nursing, 2013; 22:1; 85-92.*

The present study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) in multicultural communities. A total of 458 participants, who were recruited from multicultural organizations, participated in a series of MHFA training courses. Participants completed questionnaires pre and post the training course, and 6-month follow-up interviews were conducted with a subsample of participants. Findings suggested that MHFA training increased participant recognition of mental illnesses, concordance with primary care physicians about treatments, confidence in providing first aid, actual help provided to others, and a reduction in stigmatizing attitudes. A 6-month follow up also yielded positive long-term effects of MHFA.



### **MHFA Guidelines: An evaluation of impact following download from World Wide Web**

*Hart, L.M., Jorm, A.F., Paxton, S.J., Cvetkovski, S. MHFA Guidelines: An evaluation of impact following*

*download from the World Wide Web. Early Intervention Psychiatry, 2012; 6; 399-406.*

The aim of this study was to evaluate the usefulness and impact of the MHFA Guidelines on web users who download them. Web users who downloaded the documents were invited to respond to an initial demographic questionnaire, then a follow-up about how the documents had been used, their perceived usefulness, whether first aid situations had been encountered, and if these were influenced by the documents. A majority of those who provided first aid reported feeling that they had been successful in helping the person, that they had been able to assist in a way that was more knowledgeable, skillful, and supportive, and that the guidelines had contributed to these outcomes. Findings supported the conclusion that information made freely available on the Internet, about how to provide Mental Health First Aid to someone who is developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis, is associated with more positive, empathic, and successful helping behaviors.



**Development of key messages for adolescents on providing basic Mental Health First Aid to peers: A Delphi consensus study**

*Ross, A.M., Hart, L.M., Jorm, A.F., Kelly, C.K., Kitchener, B.A. Development of key messages for adolescents on providing basic mental health first aid to peers: a Delphi consensus study. Early Intervention Psychiatry, 2012; 6; 229- 238; doi: 10.1111/j.1751-7893.2012.00345.x.*

This article describes key messages about knowledge and actions to form the basis of a basic MHFA course for adolescents to increase recognition of and help seeking for mental health problems by teaching the best knowledge and helping actions a young person can undertake to support a peer with a mental health problem. The Delphi method was used to achieve consensus among Australian and Canadian youth mental health experts regarding the importance of statements that describe helping actions a young person can take, and information they should have, to support a friend with a mental health problem. There were two expert panels, one consisting of 36 youth mental health consumer advocates and the other of 97 Youth MHFA instructors. Panelists rated each statement according to how appropriate it would be as a basic Mental Health First Aid message for both a junior adolescent (12-15 years) and a senior adolescent (16-18 years). Out of 98 statements, 78 were endorsed as key basic MHFA messages for junior adolescents and 81 were endorsed for senior adolescents. The study has identified key messages for adolescents on how they can help a peer.

These messages will form the basis of the curriculum for an MHFA course for adolescents.



**Young people’s Mental Health First Aid intentions and beliefs prospectively predict their actions: Findings from an Australian National Survey of Youth**

*Yap, M.B.H. & Jorm, A.F. Young people’s mental health first aid intentions and beliefs prospectively*

*predict their actions: Findings from an Australian National Survey of Youth Psychiatry Research, 2012; 196; 315–319*

This study examined whether young people’s first aid intentions and beliefs predicted the actions they later took to help a close friend or family member with a mental health problem. Participants in a 2006 national survey of Australian youth (aged 12-25years) reported on their first aid intentions and beliefs based on one of four vignettes: depression, depression with alcohol misuse, psychosis, and social phobia. At a two-year follow-up interview, they reported on actions they had taken to help any family member or close friend with a problem similar to the vignette character since the initial interview. Of the 2,005 participants interviewed at follow-up, 608 reported knowing someone with a similar problem. Overall, young people’s first aid intentions and beliefs about the helpfulness of particular first aid actions predicted the actions they actually took to assist a close other.

However, the belief in and intention to encourage professional help did not predict subsequent action. Findings suggest that young people’s Mental Health First Aid intentions and beliefs may be valid indicators of their subsequent actions.

## 2011



### **Youth Mental Health First Aid: A description of the program and an initial evaluation**

*Kelly, C.M., Mithen, J.M., Fischer, J.A., Kitchener, B.A., Jorm, A.F., Lowe, A., Scanlan, C. Youth mental health first aid: a description of the program and an initial evaluation. International Journal of Mental Health Systems, 2011; 5:1; 4.*

In this study, the Youth Mental Health First Aid program was evaluated through an uncontrolled trial with 246 adult members of the Australian public, who completed questionnaires immediately before attending the 14 hour course, one month later, and six months later. Outcome measures were: recognition of schizophrenia or depression; intention to offer and confidence in offering assistance; stigmatizing attitudes; knowledge about adolescent mental health problems; and knowledge about the Mental Health First Aid action plan. Most results were maintained at follow-up.




### **Impact of Mental Health First Aid Training on Pharmacy Students' Knowledge, Attitudes and Self-Reported Behaviour: A controlled trial**

*O'Reilly, C.L., Bell, J.S., Kelly, P.J., Chen, T.F. Impact of mental health first aid training on pharmacy students' knowledge, attitudes and self-reported behaviour: a controlled trial. Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry, 2011 45(7): 549 - 557.*

The aim of this study was to assess the impact of delivering Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training



	<p>for pharmacy students on their mental health literacy and stigma toward mental illness. A non-randomized controlled design was used, with all third-year pharmacy students at the University of Sydney (n=272) in 2009 invited to participate in one of two MHFA training courses, each of 12 hours duration. Of these, 174 students applied for MHFA training, of whom 60 were randomly selected and offered MHFA training. Outcome measures that were completed by all participants in the MHFA and non-MHFA groups before and after the MHFA training included an evaluation of mental health literacy, the 7-item social distance scale, and 16 items related to self-reported behavior. This study demonstrated that MHFA training can reduce pharmacy students' mental health stigma, improve recognition of mental disorders, and improve confidence in providing services to consumers with a mental illness in the pharmacy setting.</p>
?	<p><b>Mental Health First Aid for college students: A multi-campus randomized control trial</b> <i>Eisenberg, D., Speer, N. Mental Health First Aid for college students: A multi-campus randomized control trial. Final Report for NIMH1RC1MH089757-01, 2011.</i></p> <p>The project implemented a randomized control trial of MHFA on 32 campuses representing a range of higher education institutions, from community colleges in rural areas to research universities in large, urban areas. Residential advisors (RAs) received MHFA training, and data was collected from campus mental health services and pre- and post-intervention surveys to assess service utilization, knowledge, attitudes, and help-seeking behavior among college students as a result of the training. RAs reported that the training increased their confidence in recognizing and responding to developing mental health problems and crisis situations. Results did not show any reported influence of the intervention of RAs' interaction with students. There were no reported changes in referrals for mental health services from RAs, or reported increases in interactions with RAs by students or RAs.</p>
	<p><b>Mental health literacy: Empowering the community to take action for better mental health</b> <i>Jorm, A.F. Mental health literacy: Empowering the community to take action for better mental health. American Psychologist 2011; doi:10.1037/a0025957</i></p> <p>For major physical diseases, it is widely accepted that members of the public will benefit by knowing what actions they can take for prevention, early intervention, and treatment. However, this type of public knowledge about mental disorders (mental health literacy) has received much less attention. There is evidence from surveys in several countries for deficiencies in (a) the public's knowledge of how to prevent mental disorders, (b) recognition of when a disorder is developing, (c) knowledge of help-seeking options and treatments available, (d) knowledge of effective self-help strategies for milder problems, and (e) first aid skills to support others affected by mental health problems.</p>

Nevertheless, there is evidence that a range of interventions can improve mental health literacy, including whole-of-community campaigns, interventions in educational settings, Mental Health First Aid training, and information websites. There is also evidence for historical improvements in mental health literacy in some countries. Increasing the community's mental health literacy needs to be a focus for national policy and population monitoring so that the whole community is empowered to take action for better mental health.



**The influence of stigma on first aid actions taken by young people for mental health problems in a close friend or family member: Findings from an Australian national survey of youth**

*Yap, M.B.H., Jorm, A.F. The influence of stigma on first aid actions taken by young people for mental health problems in a close friend or family member: Findings from an Australian national survey of youth. Journal of Affective Disorders 2011; 134: 473 – 477.*

Young people are an important source of first aid for mental health problems in people they are close to, but their first aid skills remain inadequate. This study examined the influence of stigma on first aid actions taken by young people to help someone close to them with a mental health problem. Participants in a national telephone survey of Australian youth (aged 12-25 years) reported on their stigmatizing attitudes based on one of three disorders in vignettes: depression, depression with alcohol misuse, and social phobia. At a two-year follow-up interview, they were asked if they knew a family member or close friend with a problem similar to the vignette character since the initial interview, and those who did reported on the actions taken to help the person. Of the 1,520 participants interviewed at follow up, 507 reported knowing someone with a similar problem. Young people's stigmatizing attitudes (weak-not-sick, social distance, and dangerousness/unpredictability) influenced their first aid actions. Reducing stigma may help to improve the first aid that people with mental health problems can receive from young people who are close to them.

**2010**



**Mental Health First Aid training for high school teachers: A cluster randomized trial**

*Jorm, A.F., Kitchener, B.A., Sawyer, M.G., Scales, H., & Cvetkovski, S. Mental Health First Aid training for high school teachers: A cluster randomized trial. BMC Psychiatry, 2010; 10:51.*

A Mental Health First Aid training course was modified for teachers in South Australian high schools and evaluated in a cluster randomized trial. Teachers at 7 schools received training and those at another 7 were wait-listed for future training. The effects of the training on teachers were evaluated using questionnaires pre- and post-training and at 6 months follow-up. The questionnaires assessed

mental health knowledge, stigmatizing attitudes, confidence in providing help to others, help actually provided, school policy and procedures, and teacher mental health. The indirect effects on students were evaluated using questionnaires at pre-training and at follow-up which assessed any mental health help and information received from school staff, and also the mental health of the student. The training increased teachers' knowledge, changed beliefs about treatment to be more like those of mental health professionals, reduced some aspects of stigma, and increased confidence in providing help to students and colleagues. There was an indirect effect on students, who reported receiving more mental health information from school staff. Most of the changes found were sustained 6 months after training. However, no effects were found on teachers' individual support toward students with mental health problems or on student mental health.



**Evaluation of Mental Health First Aid training by e-learning: A randomized controlled trial**

*Jorm, A.F., Kitchener, B.A., Fischer, J., Cvetkovski, S. Mental Health First Aid training by e-learning: A randomized controlled trial. Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry 2010; 44: 1072-1081.*

A randomized controlled trial was carried out with 262 members of the Australian public. Participants were randomly assigned to complete an e-learning CD, read a Mental Health First Aid manual, or be in a waiting list control group. The effects of the interventions were evaluated using online questionnaires pre- and post-training and at 6-months follow-up. The questionnaires covered mental health knowledge, stigmatizing attitudes, confidence in providing help to others, actions taken to implement Mental Health First Aid, and participant mental health. Both e-learning and the printed manual increased aspects of knowledge, reduced stigma, and increased confidence compared to the control group. E-learning also improved first aid actions taken more than the control group, and was superior to the printed manual in reducing stigma and disability due to mental ill health.



**Improving football coaches' recognition and response to mental health problems in others: An investigation of the impact of the Coach the Coach project**

*Pierce, D., Liaw, S.T., Dobell, J., Anderson, R. Australian rural football club leaders as mental health advocates: an investigation of the impact of the Coach the Coach project. International Journal of Mental Health Systems 2010; 4:10.*

The Rural Health Academic Centre in the rural city of Ballarat in Victoria delivered the MHFA course to 36 football coaches from 12 rural clubs in Victoria. More than 50% of club leaders who undertook the training showed increased capacity to recognize mental illness and 66% reported increased confidence to respond to mental health difficulties in others. The study concluded that rural football clubs appear to be appropriate social structures to promote rural mental health awareness. Club leaders, including many coaches, benefit from MHFA training, reporting increased skills and confidence. Benefit to club players from this approach was less obvious. However, the generally

positive findings of this study suggest further research in this area is desirable.



**Evaluation of Mental Health First Aid training with members of the Chinese community in Melbourne, Australia: Effects on knowledge about and attitudes toward people with mental illness**

*Lam, A.Y.K., Jorm, A.F., Wong, D.F.K. Mental health first aid training for the Chinese community in Melbourne, Australia: effects on knowledge about and attitudes toward people with mental illness. International Journal of Mental Health Systems 2010; 4: 18.*

This is the third published paper on an evaluation of a cultural adaptation of the MHFA Australia program. MHFA Hong Kong Instructor Angus Y Lam spent some time studying in Melbourne. Whilst here, he carried out an evaluation of the 12-hr MHFA delivered to 108 people from the Chinese community in Melbourne. Angus used the adapted Chinese translated MHFA manual from the MHFA Hong Kong Program. He also conducted the course in Cantonese, which was simultaneously translated into Mandarin by another participant. Pre and post measurements in this uncontrolled trial found this training to be effective in improving recognition of mental disorders, in reducing negative stigmatizing attitudes, and in changing beliefs about the helpfulness of treatment.

**2009-2001**



**Evaluation of Mental Health First Aid training with members of the Vietnamese community in Melbourne, Australia**

*Minas, H., Colucci, E., Jorm, A.F. Evaluation of Mental Health First Aid training with members of the Vietnamese community in Melbourne, Australia. International Journal of Mental Health Systems 2009; 3: 19.)*

This is the second published paper on an evaluation of a cultural adaptation of the MHFA Australia program. Pre and post measurements in this uncontrolled trial of the Vietnamese MHFA program found significant reductions in stigmatizing attitudes, improved knowledge of mental disorders and improved knowledge about appropriate forms of assistance to give to people in the Vietnamese community with mental disorder.



**Enhancing the knowledge and skills of Advisory and Extension Agents in mental health issues of farmers**

*Hossain, D., Gorman, D., Eley, R. Enhancing the knowledge and skills of Advisory and Extension Agents in mental health issues of farmers. Australian Psychiatry 2009; 17: 116-20.*

The aim of this study was to increase knowledge and skills of Advisory and Extension Agents (AEAs) in

recognizing the symptoms of mental disorders, providing initial help, and offering the referral pathway for appropriate professional help. Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training was provided to AEs and knowledge and skills pre-training were compared to 6-months post-training. The MHFA training improved the AEs' ability to recognize a mental disorder, increased their confidence level in providing help to someone with a mental health problem, decreased social distances, and positively changed their beliefs about treatment. MHFA training is effective in enhancing the mental health knowledge and skills of AEs. The agents, who are a main line of contact for farmers, are able to recognize mental disorders of people and help them appropriately. They are more willing to work with stigmatized people and know who to refer people to for help.



### **Improving mental health capacity in rural communities: Mental Health First Aid delivery in drought-affected rural New South Wales**

*Sartore, G.M., Kelly, B., Stain, H.J., Fuller, J., Fragar, L., Tonna, A. Improving mental health capacity in rural communities: Mental health first aid delivery in drought-affected rural New South Wales. Australian Journal of Rural Health 2008; 16: 313–318.*

The Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health in NSW evaluated the effectiveness of the MHFA training in drought-affected rural and remote Australia, as part of a strategy to improve capacity among farming communities to provide early intervention for mental health problems. Data were obtained from 99 participants recruited across 12 New South Wales towns, before and after delivery of MHFA seminars emphasizing the role of front-line workers from agricultural-related services.

Surveys assessed knowledge of, confidence in dealing with, and attitude toward people experiencing mental illness, along with the impact of training on response to mental health problems among the target population of farmers and farming families. A majority of responses reflect a concern with giving appropriate advice and support well outside narrow job definitions.

Participants' ability to identify high prevalence disorders and endorse evidence-based interventions for both high and low prevalence disorders increased following MHFA training, as did their confidence in their ability to provide appropriate help. The study concluded that MHFA training can form an effective part of a strategy to improve systems of care and pathways to early intervention in rural communities by using local networks to provide mental health support.



### **Mental Health First Aid training: Review of evaluation studies**

*Kitchener, B.A., Jorm, A.F. Mental Health First Aid training: review of evaluation studies. Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry 2006; 40: 6-8.*

This paper reviewed studies evaluating Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training. The results found that most Mental Health First Aiders tend to be middle-aged women whose work involves people

contact. All trials found the following statistically significant benefits 5–6 months post-training: improved concordance with health professionals about treatments, improved helping behavior, and greater confidence in providing help to others, and decreased social distance from people with mental disorders. Only one trial evaluated the mental health benefits to participants and this found positive effects. The paper concluded that although MHFA training has been found to change knowledge, attitudes, and helping behaviors, and even benefit the mental health of participants, there has not yet been an evaluation of the effects on those who are the recipients of the first aid.



**Experiences in applying skills learned in a Mental Health First Aid training course: A qualitative study of participants' stories**

*Jorm, A., Kitchener, B., Mugford, S.K. Experiences in applying skills learned in a mental health first aid training course: a qualitative study of participants' stories. BMC Psychiatry 2005; 5: 43.*

People who have completed the Mental Health First Aid course often tell stories about how they have used their first aid skills to help someone. These stories are particularly interesting because they tell about the effects of the first aid on the person helped. In order to systematically analyze such stories, 131 former course participants were approached 19-21 months following the course and asked to complete a questionnaire about their experiences; 94 of these people responded. It was found that 78% had used their first aid skills. Many positive effects were reported, including increased empathy and confidence and being better able to handle crises. There was no evidence that people were over-reaching themselves because of over-confidence. Participants were very positive about the benefits of the course and keen to see it repeated and extended.



**Mental Health First Aid Training in a Workplace Setting: A Randomized Controlled Trial**

*Kitchener, B.; Jorm, A. (2004). Mental Health First Aid training in a workplace setting: A randomized controlled trial. BMC Psychiatry, 4(23). doi: 10.1186/1471-244X-4-23.*

**AUTHOR ABSTRACT:**

Background. The Mental Health First Aid training course was favorably evaluated in an uncontrolled trial in 2002 showing improvements in participants' mental health literacy, including knowledge, stigmatizing attitudes, confidence, and help provided to others. This article reports the first randomized controlled trial of this course. Methods. Data are reported on 301 participants randomized to either participate immediately in a course or to be wait-listed for 5 months before undertaking the training. The participants were employees in two large government departments in Canberra, Australia, where the courses were conducted during participants' work time. Data were analyzed according to an intention-to-treat approach. Results. The trial found a number of benefits from this training course, including greater confidence in providing help to others, greater likelihood

of advising people to seek professional help, improved concordance with health professionals about treatments, and decreased stigmatizing attitudes. An additional unexpected but exciting finding was an improvement in the mental health of the participants themselves. Conclusions. The Mental Health First Aid training has shown itself to be an effective way to not only improve participants' mental health literacy but also improve their own mental health. It is a course that has high applicability across the community.



**Mental Health First Aid training of the public in a rural area: A cluster randomized trial**

*Jorm, A., Kitchener, B., O'Kearney, R., Dear, K. B.G. Mental health first aid training of the public in a rural area: a cluster randomized trial. BMC Psychiatry 2004; 4: 33.*

A trial was carried out with members of the public in a large rural area of New South Wales, as a partnership between the New South Wales Southern Area Health Service and the Centre for Mental Health Research. Eight of 16 local government areas on the Southern Area Health Service received the course immediately and the other 8 were placed on a waiting list to receive the training later in the year (the controls). There were 753 participants in total in the trial: 416 were in areas that received the course immediately and 337 in the control group. People who did the course showed a number of changes relative to the control group, including better recognition of disorders from case descriptions of a person with either depression or schizophrenia, less negative attitudes toward people with mental disorders, greater confidence in providing help to someone, and increased likelihood to actually provide help to someone. The course did not change the number of people with mental disorders that the participant had contact with, or advising people to seek professional help.