

Research and Evaluation of Youth Mental Health First Aid

Conducting research and evaluation activities on Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) are useful to understand the program's effectiveness, implementation, and to identify areas for improvement. This resource outlines the results of studies conducted on Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA), which have found positive effects in youth-facing adults across the country.

31
*peer-reviewed
studies*

273,000+
learners represented

*Participants from
across the United
States represented*



Participants have included social services employees, school personnel, parents, youth workers, social work students, mental health professionals, and juvenile justice employees.

Overview of findings for Youth MHFA

Studies of Youth MHFA have found that individuals trained in the program:

- Show increased mental health literacy¹⁻⁵, which include:
 - Knowledge of signs, symptoms and risk factors of mental health and substance use challenges
 - Ability to identify appropriate types of professionals and self-help resources
- Increase their confidence/self-efficacy in and likelihood to help a young person in distress¹⁻⁵
- Show reduced stigma/increased empathy toward youth with mental health challenges^{4,5}
- Use MHFA skills after training³



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Selected Results from **Youth** MHFA Studies



In a study of YMHFA training with **graduate social work students**, those who took the training saw improved attitudes, beliefs, self-confidence, and knowledge around MHFA. These benefits were still evident compared to the control group even at 5 months after training.¹

In a study of **893 child-serving professionals** in child welfare, education, support services, and justice fields, participants from all four occupational groups experienced significant increases in confidence, intentions to intervene, preparedness, and literacy after YMHFA training.²



In a study on YMHFA training for Asian American parents and youth workers, participants' mental health literacy and ability to recognize mental health disorders and seek mental health help improved after training. Focus group participants also shared the reduction of stigma and enhanced self-efficacy around intervening in youths' mental health.⁵

In a statewide rollout of YMHFA to **2,057 youth-serving adults** across Ohio, confidence, helping attitudes, awareness of mental health support/treatment resources, and positive attitude toward individuals with a mental health problem were increased after the training.

39%

72%

39-72% of participants reported using specific YMHFA practices at 12 months after the training.³



In a quasi-experimental longitudinal study of **429 YMHFA educators** and staff from the California Department of Education, those who completed the training had significantly greater gains in confidence from baseline to follow-up 1-2 months than those who didn't complete the training. Confidence improved equally for educators and non-educators.⁵

Learn more about [research and evaluation initiatives](#) at **MHFA USA on our website.**



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